

Philippine Christian leaders criticize possibility of more US troops

Catholic News Service | Jun. 11, 2012



President Barack Obama shakes hands with Philippine President Benigno Aquino on Friday in the White House. (CNS/Reuters/Larry Downing)

MANILA, Philippines -- Christian leaders criticized the possibility of more American troops arriving in the Philippines after President Benigno Aquino and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed to increase military cooperation between the two countries.

The Ecumenical Bishops Forum said Monday the agreement would threaten Philippine independence and sovereignty, reported the Asian church news agency UCA News.

"The return of U.S. troops to Philippine soil undermines our peoples' sovereignty," the bishops said in their statement.

"The continued subservience of our political leaders to the U.S. and its international instrumentalities betrays our freedom and sovereignty," the statement added.

In early June, the U.S. Senate approved a resolution calling for enhanced defense and security cooperation with the Philippines under the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty.

In April, approximately 6,000 U.S. troops joined the Philippine army in joint military exercises in the country.

During their meeting Friday in Washington, Obama assured Aquino of the importance of strengthening the alliance between their two countries in light of recent conflicts in the South China Sea and the U.S. expansion plan in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Ecumenical Bishops Forum, an organization of Catholic and Protestant church leaders, said it was unacceptable for the Aquino administration to submit the country's freedom to the United States in the guise of mutual defense ties.

"With all this, can we say that we as a people are free and sovereign? Are we truly independent?" said the forum statement.

"Where the right to independence of peoples and nations [is] tarnished by the domination of foreign powers, their freedom and sovereignty is a sham. This holds true as far as our nation is concerned," the statement added.

Source URL (retrieved on 12/08/2013 - 13:14): <http://ncronline.org/news/philippine-christian-leaders-criticize-possibility-more-us-troops>