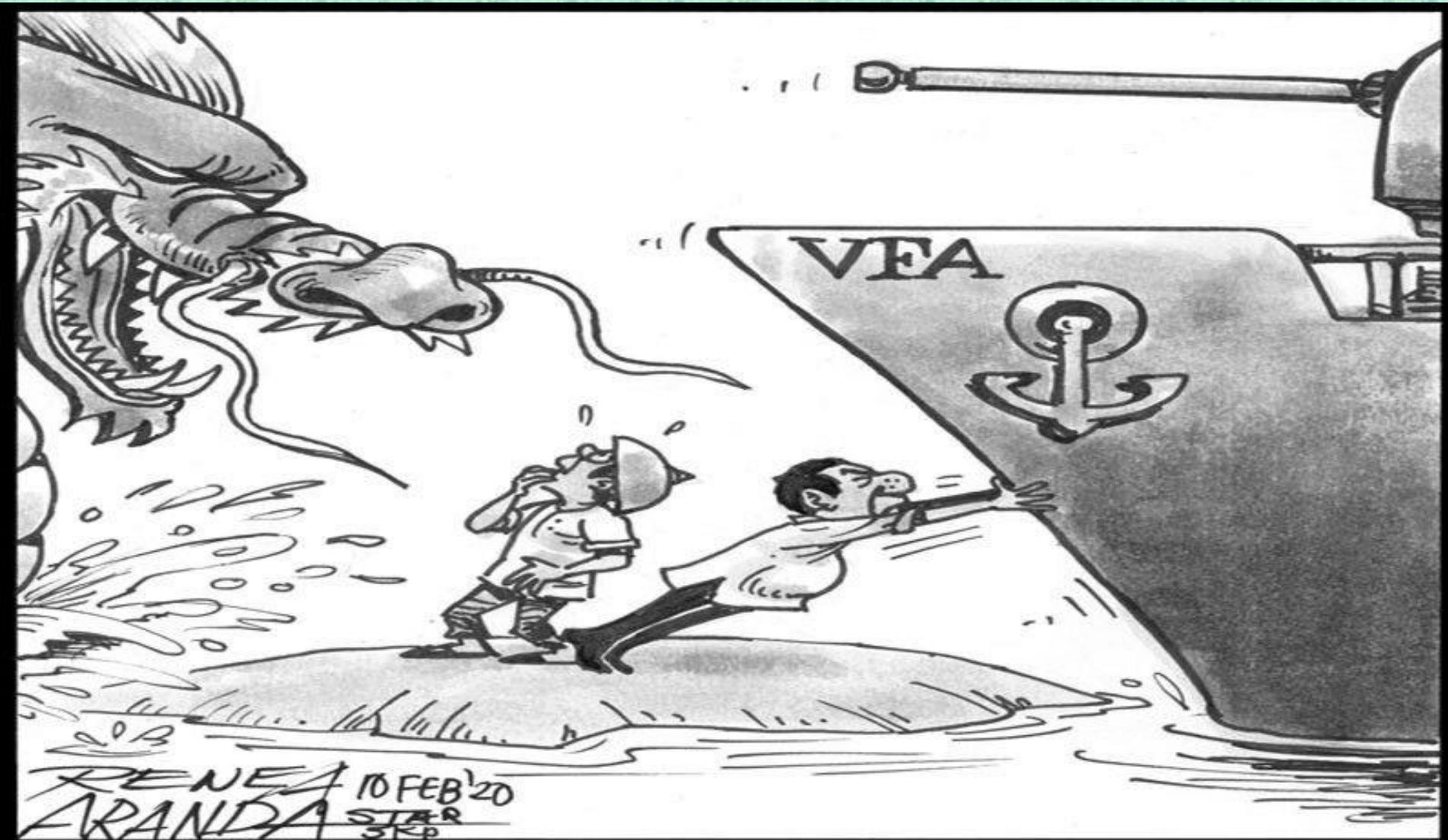


Transforming Philippine-U.S. Security Relations from an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



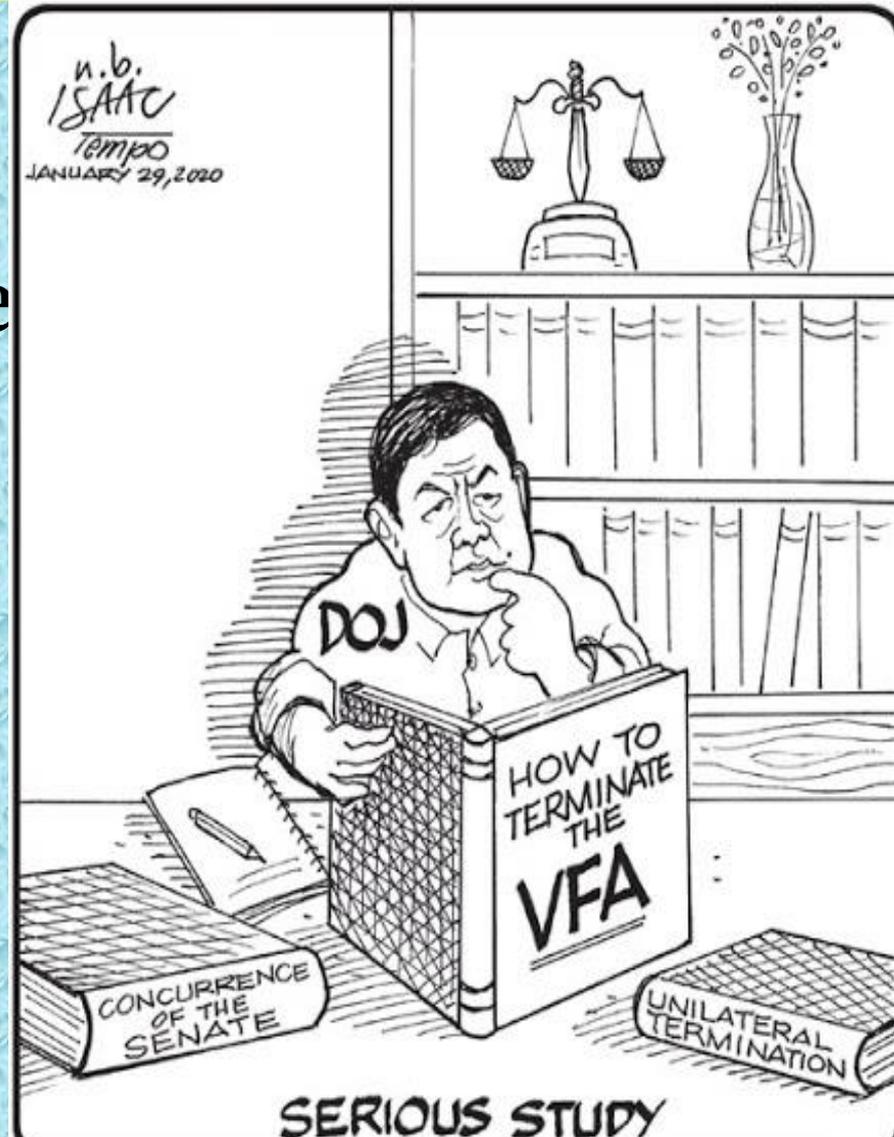
Introduction



On February 11, President Rodrigo Duterte instructed Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin to formally inform the U.S. that he is terminating the VFA. As a result of this action, the termination of the VFA will take place 180 days or six months after the U.S. government had received the written notification.

Introduction

A day earlier, on February 10, Philippine Senate President Vicente Sotto II and twelve senators filed Senate Resolution 312 requesting the president to reconsider his decision abrogating the VFA.



Introduction

Roni Santiago
MANILA BULLETIN
FEBRUARY 11, 2020



The resolution cited Secretary Locsin's arguments, during the Senate hearing, that the agreement is beneficial to the allies as it ensures the operability of Philippine-U.S. defense agreements and modalities of cooperation, and allows the U.S. to provide a total package approach in providing defense articles to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Introduction

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo announced that “the President will not entertain any initiative coming from the U.S. government to salvage the VFA; neither will he accept any official invitation to visit the United States.



Introduction



By directing his foreign secretary to serve the notice on the above-mentioned date, President Duterte has effectively rendered the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) and the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) as nothing but merely “pieces of papers” as the VFA is the implementing document (of these two security treaties).

Introduction

In the light of the crisis in Philippine-U.S. security relations, this presentation explores an alternative security arrangement to the alliance, security partnership.



Introduction

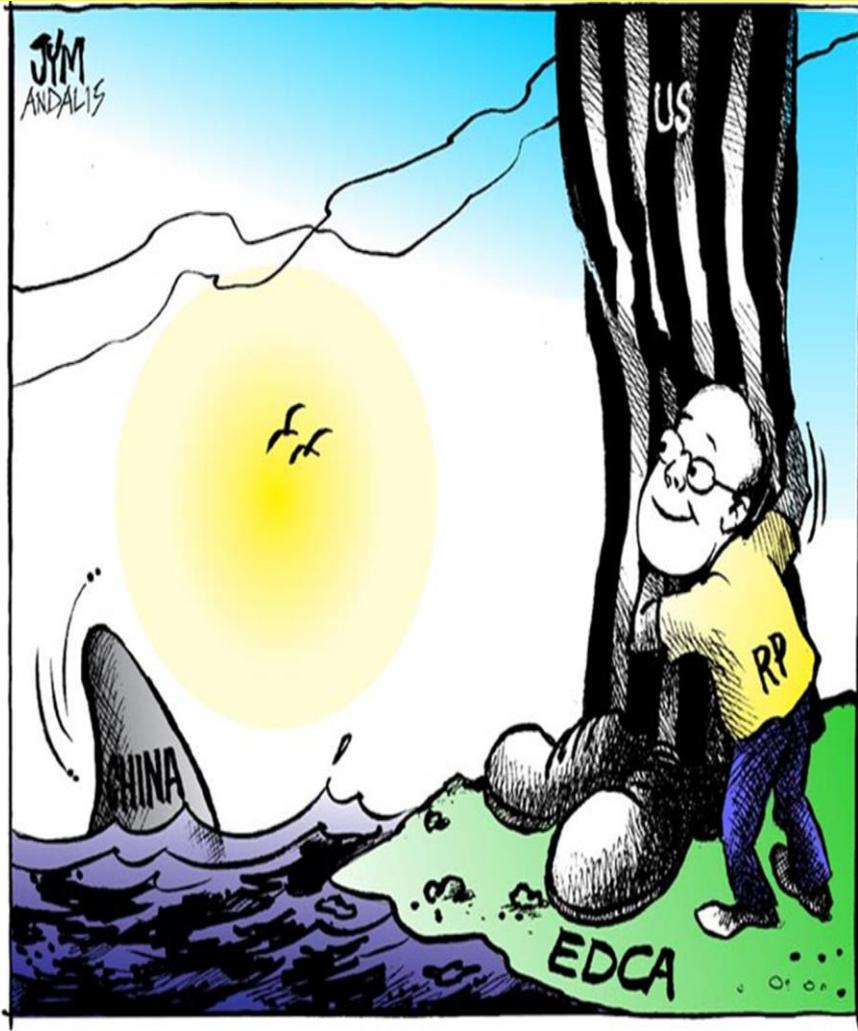


This presentation raises the problem. Is a security partnership a viable alternative to the Philippine-U.S. alliance?

Alliance versus Security Partnership



Alliance versus Security Partnership



“Alliance is a formal or an informal arrangement for security cooperation between two sovereign and independent states.”

» Stephen Walt,
1983

Alliance versus Security Partnership

In an alliance, states explicitly or implicitly define the terms under which they combine their security efforts, resources, and residual rights, and decide when and how to use these common goods in war and in peace.



Alliance versus Security Partnership



A security or strategic partnership is a relationship where partners strengthen their respective capabilities without any commitment to go to each other's assistance in times of war.

Alliance versus Security Partnership

Security or strategic partnerships are informal alliances or alignments or ententes through which countries engage in periodic meetings, joint exercises, and other limited security activities without entering into a formal military alliance



Alliance versus Security Partnership



However, security partners need not make any mutual pledge or commitments to come to each other's rescue or participate in another's conflict.

Alliance versus Security Partnership

There is no need for them to pool their resources together since there is no formal commitment to assist each other during conflicts.



Alliance versus Security Partnership



States enter into security partnerships because they fear losing their autonomy and they are not willing to accept the cost that would be incurred by strengthening one's relations to one great power over another.

Alliance versus Security Partnership

Security partnerships are considered as soft, rather than hard form of balancing since it has a security component and is explicitly aimed at balancing the power or threatening behavior of another state but below the level of a formal treaty alliance.



The Philippine-U.S. Alliance at Work: The Issue of Security Guarantee



Published: September 22, 2013

For the Philippines, America is the heavy lifter.”

The Philippine-U.S. Alliance at Work: The Issue of Security Guarantee



The 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) was negotiated signed by the U.S. and the Philippines as part of the Truman Administration sought the diplomatic support of Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines for the U.S.-Japanese peace treaty, the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951.

The Philippine-U.S. Alliance at Work: The Issue of Security Guarantee

The Cold War



The MDT extends American security guarantee to the Philippines. The MDT, however, does not provide any automatic response from both sides.

The Philippine-U.S. Alliance at Work: The Issue of Security Guarantee

The MDT obligates the allies to consult each other and determine what military or diplomatic action, if any, both would take.



The Philippine-U.S. Alliance at Work: The Issue of Security Guarantee



U.S. officials have consistently assured their Filipino counter-parts and critics of the 1951 MDT that Washington would regard any attack on the Philippines and its public vessels as a *casus foederis* for implementing the treaty.

Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT

All alliances are afflicted by “the alliance security dilemma.”



Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT



This refers to the allies' constant fear of either abandonment and entrapment.

Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT

In November 2011, then Secretary Hilary Clinton on board the U.S.S. Fitzgerald announced that the U.S. would honor both its mutual defense treaty and its long-standing strategic alliance with the Philippines.



Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT



In April 2014, President Barack Obama declared that “Our commitment to defend the Philippines is ironclad and the United States will keep that commitment because allies never stand alone.”

From the www.opinion.inquirer.net

Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT

In November 2015, President Obama, on board the *BRP Del Pilar* announced: “We have a treaty obligation, an iron clad commitment to the defense of our ally, the Philippines. You can count on the U.S.”



Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT

As a matter of policy, the U.S. tries its best to address legitimate Philippine concerns about the absence of a clear guarantee of military support in case of an armed confrontation in the South China Sea.



Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma: The Case of the Philippine-U.S. MDT



The U.S. , however, also avoids giving an explicit and carte blanche security guarantee that could tempt the Philippines to act provocatively against China based on its broad interpretation of its sovereignty over the islands it controls in the South China Sea and on a mistaken assumption about the prospect of an “automatic American armed response” in case of an outbreak of armed hostilities in the disputed waters.

Addressing the Alliance Security Dilemma

The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) is a 10-year agreement which is a calculated effort by Manila and Washington to make the Philippines a major staging base for projecting American naval and air power in the face of China's maritime expansion in the South China Sea and Southeast Asia.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

President Duterte initiated efforts to show his sensitivity to Chinese security interests as he watered down the previous administration's efforts to strengthen the Philippine-U.S. alliance.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



President Duterte initiated efforts to show his sensitivity to Chinese security interests as he watered down his predecessor's geo-political agenda on China by halting joint Philippine-U.S. naval patrols, limiting the number and scope of interactions between the Philippine and U.S. militaries, and threatening to unilaterally abrogate EDCA.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

On May 16, 2018, President Duterte signed the Philippines' first National Security Strategy (NSS) since it became an independent republic in 1946. The NSS paints a realist picture of the country's external environment.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



It notes that the Philippines has not been confronted by any direct threat of foreign aggression since the end of the Second World War.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



The NSS observes that *Pax America* is about to end because of the geo-strategic competition among the great powers in the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and the transformation of international order from a unipolar to a multipolar one.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

The NSS calls for the Philippines to adopt a more nuanced and flexible approach in its in dealing with the great powers in the region.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



It proposes that the Philippines must chart its own role in an increasingly multi-polar global order: while at the same time, strengthening and pursuing comprehensive and strategic alliances or cooperation with the Philippines' friends and partners in the international community.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

The 2018 NSS provides the strategic basis for President Duterte and his administration's key officials to pursue their efforts to solidify ever closer relations with China while keeping the U.S. at arm's length as possible.

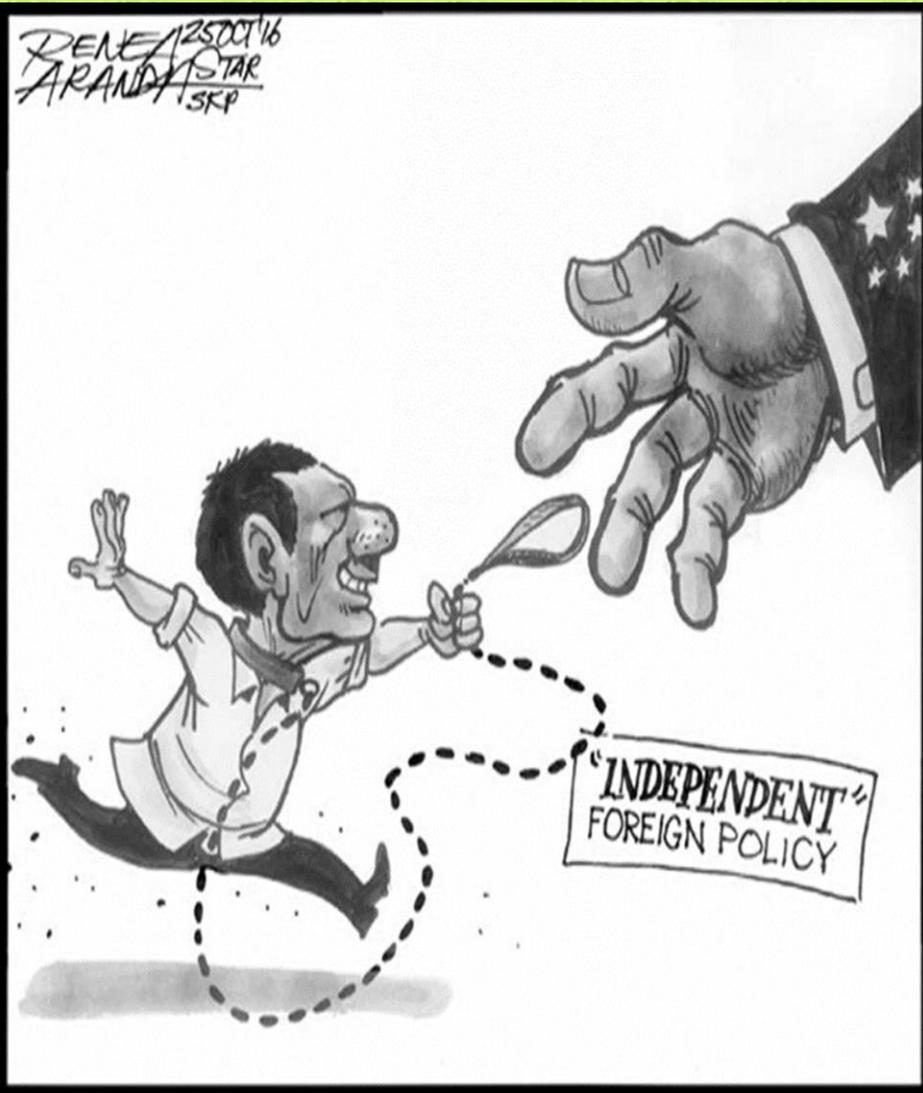


Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



The Duterte administration raised the prospect of a joint development with China on sharing resources in the contested waters of the South China Sea.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



At the same time, he gave statements implying that the Philippines will not get involved in any military dispute between China and the U.S. in the South China Sea.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

In December 2018, Philippine Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana announced that the Department of National Defense (DND) wants to review the 1951 MDT with the United States.

Accordingly, since it is high-time for both sides to look into its provisions given the the South China Sea dispute.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



According to Secretary Lorenzana “Manila should review its defense agreement with Washington to clarify whether or not the United States will come to its aid (or assistance), as tension in the South China Sea is the Philippines’ “most difficult” security challenge.”

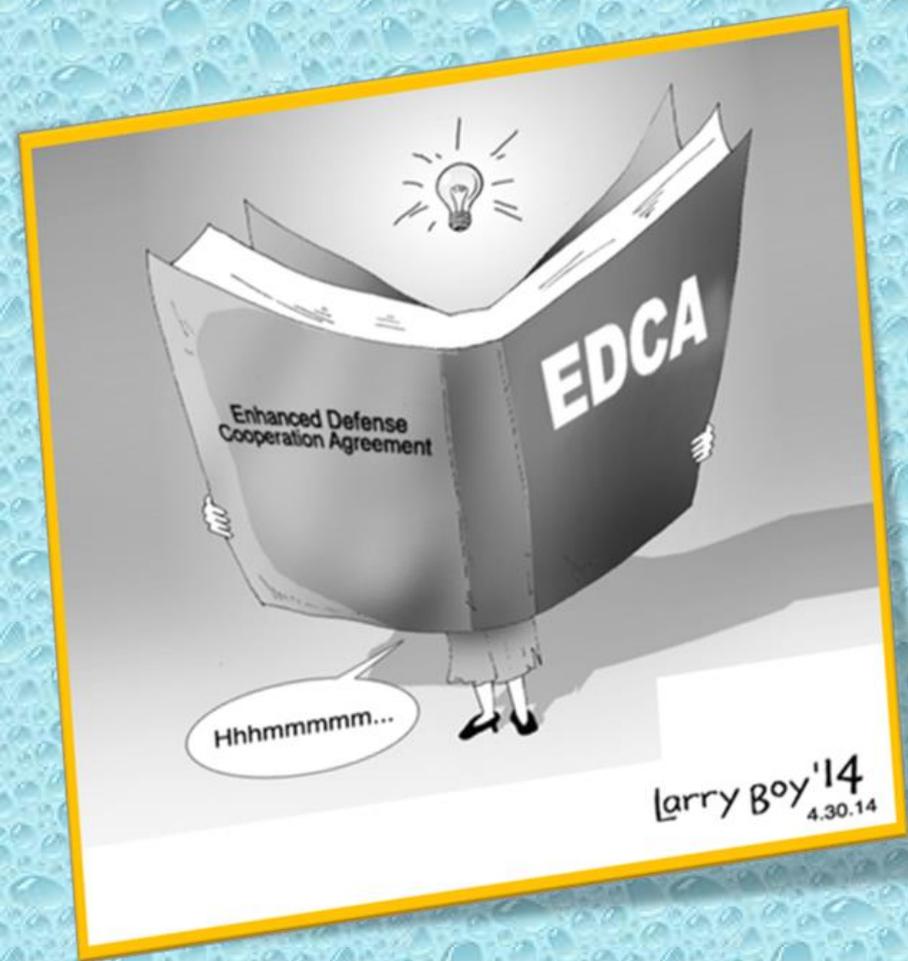
Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

He added “We believe its time to sit down with our U.S. counter-parts and revisit the terms of our alliance. We are partners. We had deep historical ties. We must clearly define our roles and responsibilities when the need arises to be joined in arms.”



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

According to Secretary Lorenzana, the end goal of the review is either to maintain it, (or) strengthen it, or scrap it.”



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

Secretary Lorenzana and the defense establishment feared that the Philippines might be unnecessarily dragged into an armed confrontation between the U.S. and China.



Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



There are real anxieties about U.S. abandonment within the DND and the AFP despite assurance by American officials that the MDT is an “iron-clad” commitment, which the U.S. will honor, even in the contested islands in the South China Sea.

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire



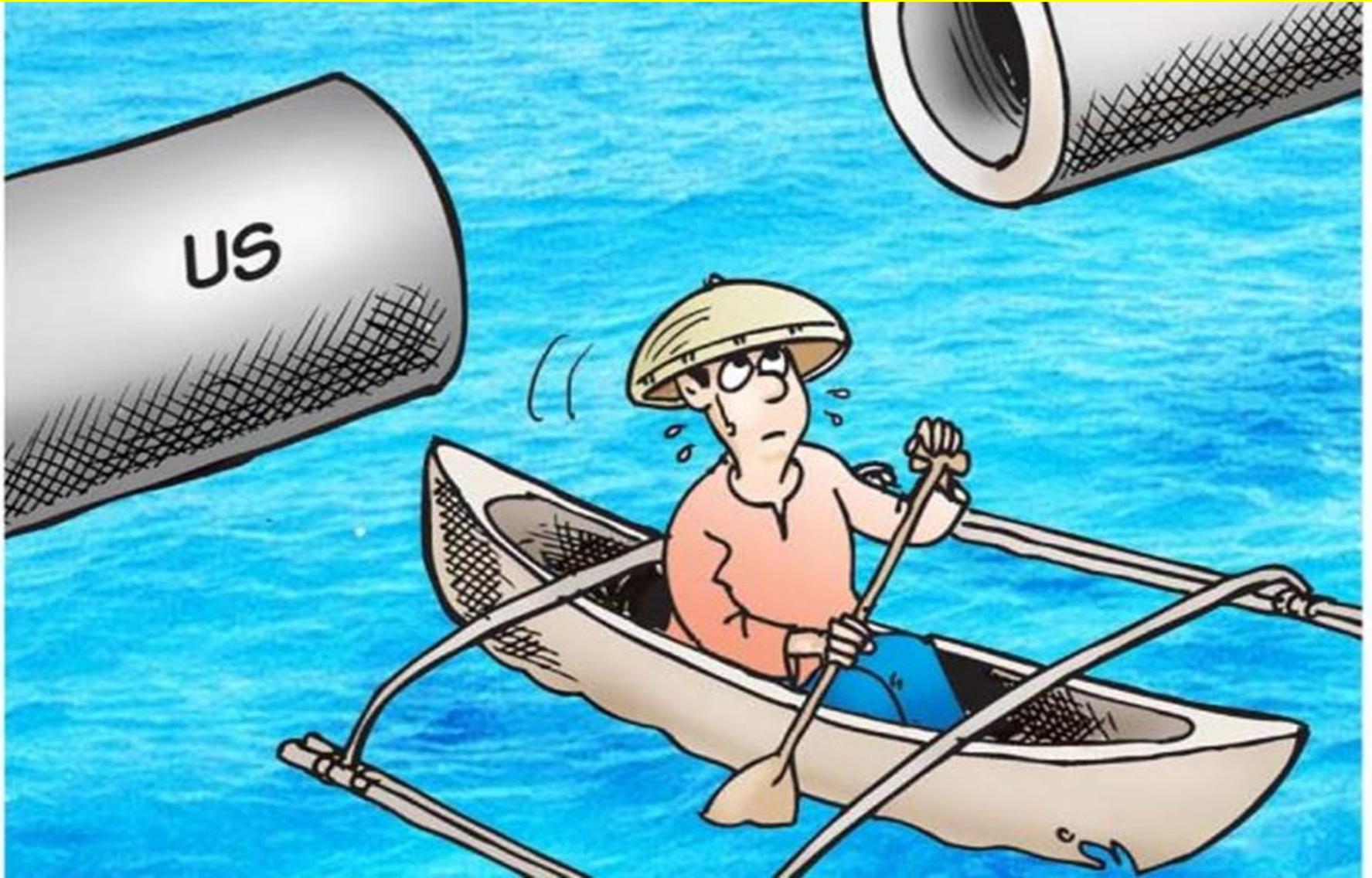
During his March 2019 visit to Manila, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo declared, “As the South China Sea is part of the Pacific; any armed attack on Philippine forces, aircraft or public vessels in the South China Sea will trigger mutual defense obligations under Article 4 of our mutual defense treaty.”

Changing View on the MDT: From Unreliability to a Tripwire

In November 2019, the new U.S. Secretary of Defense, Mark Esper visited Manila and met Secretary Lorenzana. The two defense secretaries discussed the need to be more vocal about Chinese incursions into the Philippines' EEZ, and whether or not the MDT covers any armed attacks on Philippine naval vessels in the South China Sea.



An Alliance in Crisis?



An Alliance in Crisis?



At the start of the 2020, the alliance was in a stable state as the Philippine military and defense establishment considered the country's security relations with the U.S. as an essential foundation of Philippine national security.

An Alliance in Crisis?

Unfortunately, President Duterte does not share his military's positive view of the alliance. In fact, he was alarmed by the AFP's active agenda of joint exercises and other interchanges with the U.S. : while avoiding substantial interchange and joint exercises with its Chinese counterpart.



An Alliance in Crisis?



In late January 2020, President Duterte said in an interview that a conflict in the South China Sea would crush the Philippines, as he is wary that the American troops would take advantage and the conflict would spiral out of control.

An Alliance in Crisis?

He openly expressed his fears of an intervention by the U.S. that would push any conflict in the South China Sea in an unforeseen direction.



An Alliance in Crisis?



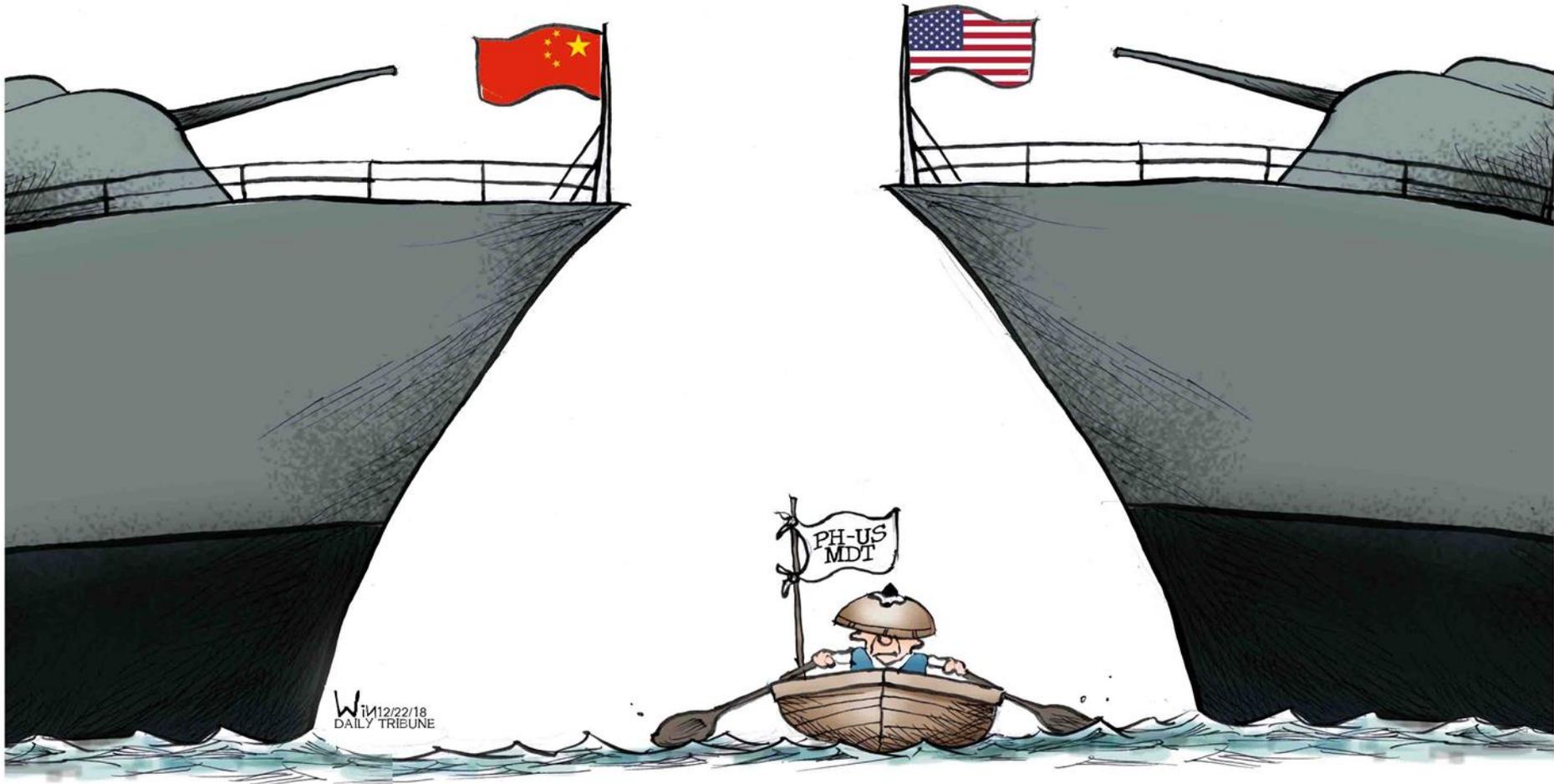
On February 11, President Rodrigo Duterte directed Philippine Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin to formally notify the United States (U.S.) that he is terminating the 1999 Philippine-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

An Alliance in Crisis?

The presidential spokesperson's February 11 pronouncements implied that President Duterte would also cancel the 1951 MDT and the EDCA.



From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



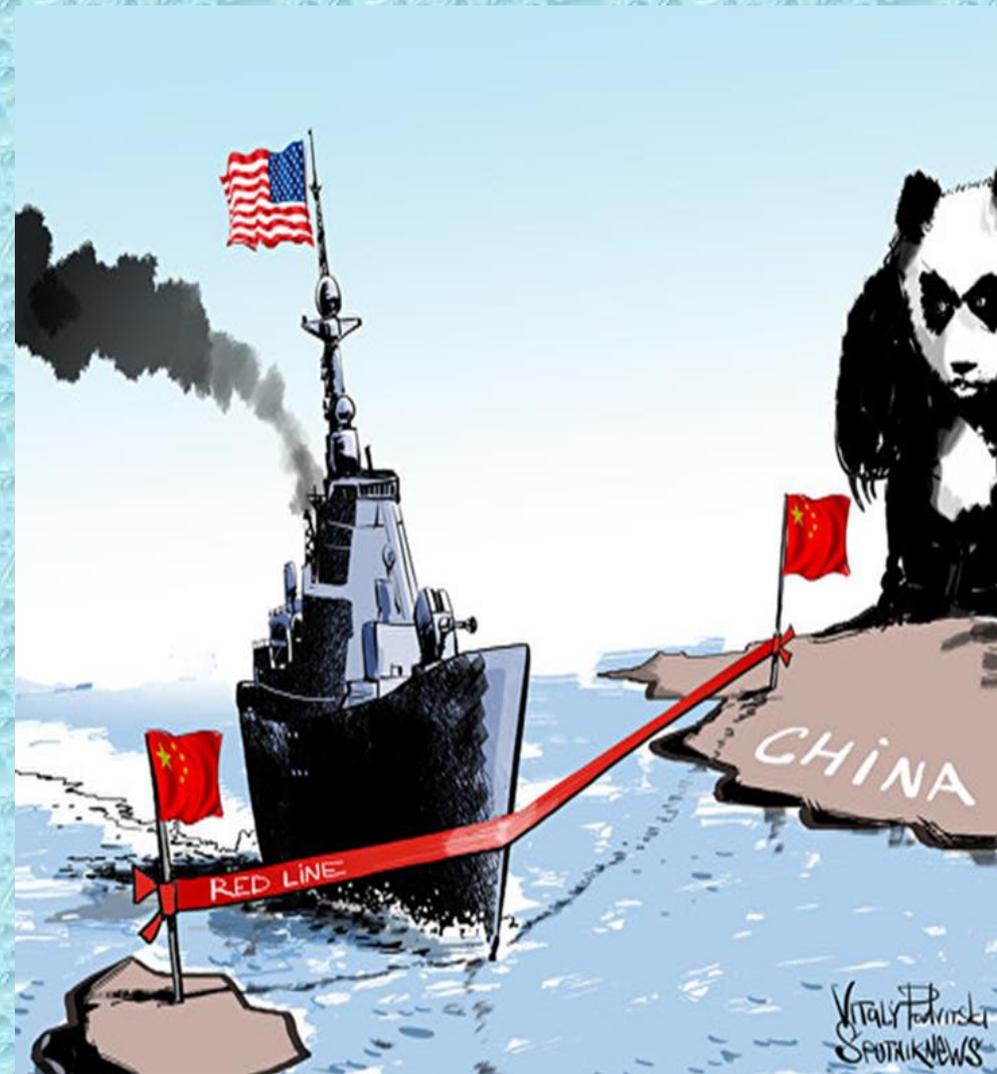
From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



The Philippine-U.S. alliance is a deep crisis. The termination of the VFA would adversely affect more than 300 joint trainings and activities between the AFP and the U.S. armed services.

From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

Aside from its adverse effects on the two allies' military-to-military activities, it will also hamper U.S. military operations such freedom of operations (FONUPS) patrols in the South China Sea.



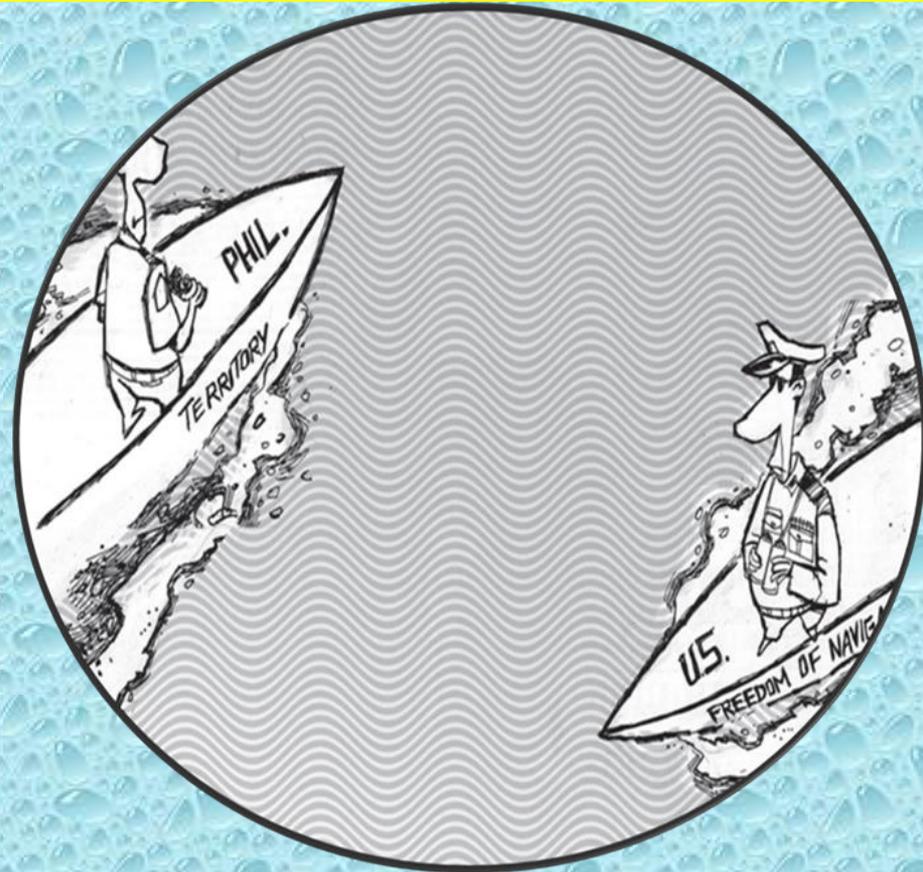
From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



Instead of unravelling the overall security relations, the Philippines and the U.S. might consider downgrading their alliance into a security partnership.

From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

Through a security partnership both countries can still engage in periodic security meetings and consultations, joint exercises, and other limited defense related activities without a formal defense treaty.



From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

Both security partners are not required to extend any mutual pledge to come to each other's assistance or enter in one another's conflict.



From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



Instead of a formal treaty commitment to extend military assistance to each other in a conflict, security partners settle for a loose form of alignment that is simply a signaling device and a vague means of mutual reassurance.

From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

This will require either the suspension or abrogation of the 1951 MDT and its replacement by a joint communique or declaration on the understanding that there exist a security partnership between the two countries.

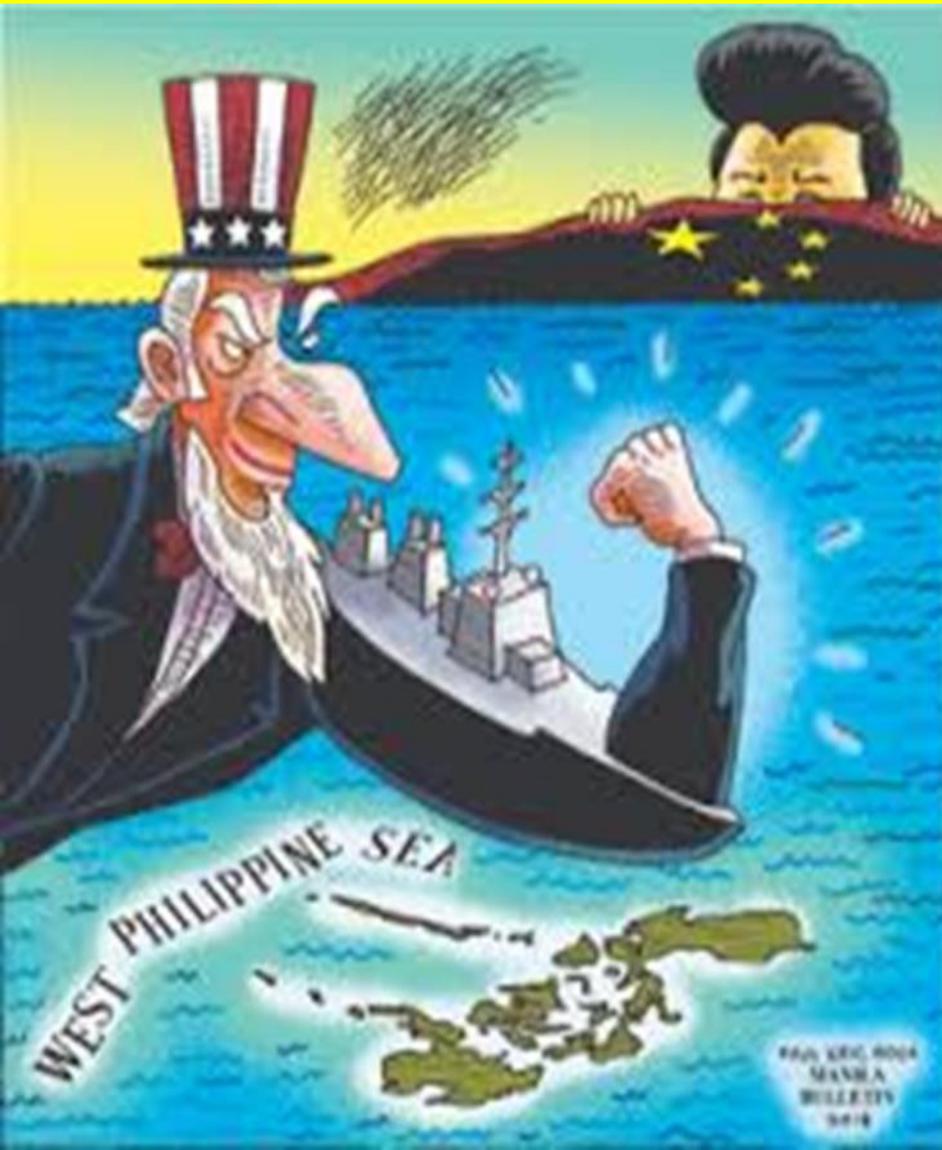


TRADE-OFFs

Gene Sweeney
MOBILE GULF NEWS
MARCH 8, 2018



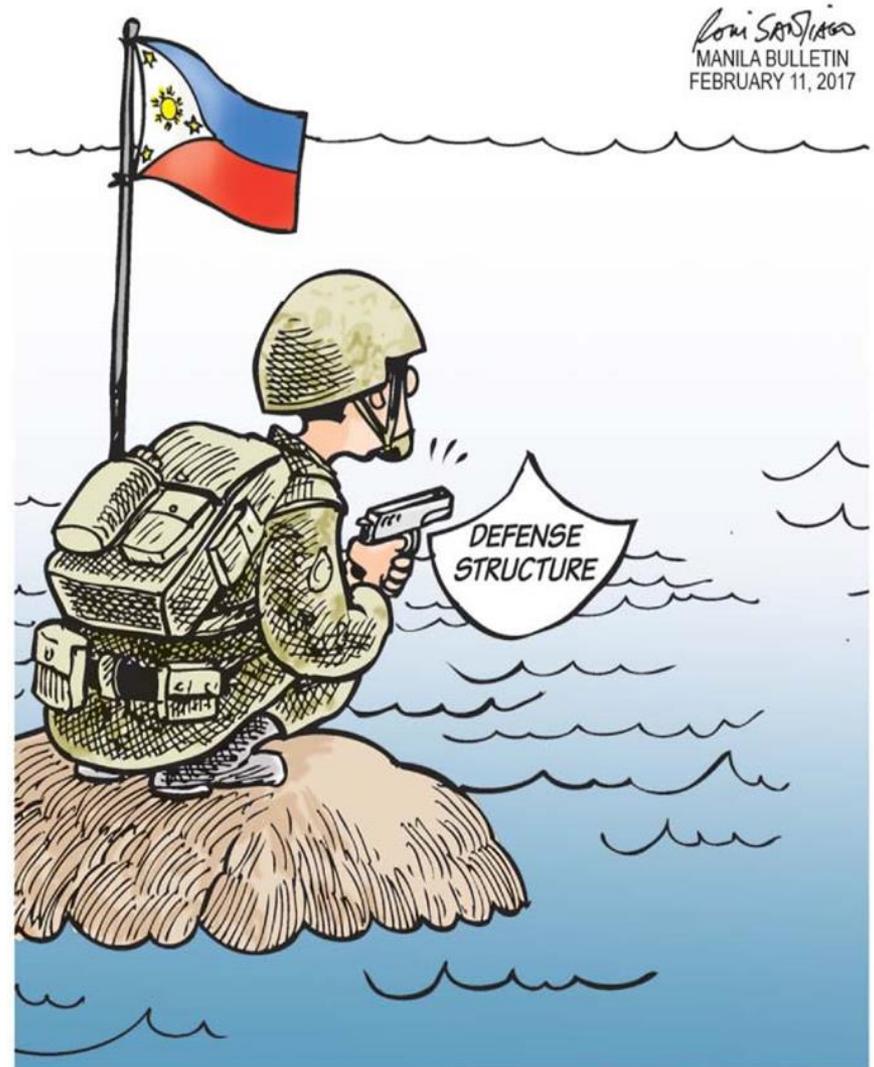
From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



The Philippines will lose the alliance' deterrence effect provided by the most powerful armed forces in the world and by the only superpower in the world.

From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

This will lead to dramatic pressures to increase the Philippine defense budget.



From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?



**It will
undermine the
ongoing AFP
modernization
program.**

From an Alliance to a Security Partnership?

Downgrading the alliance to a security partnership will generate limited support from the Filipino population.



Conclusion



Conclusion

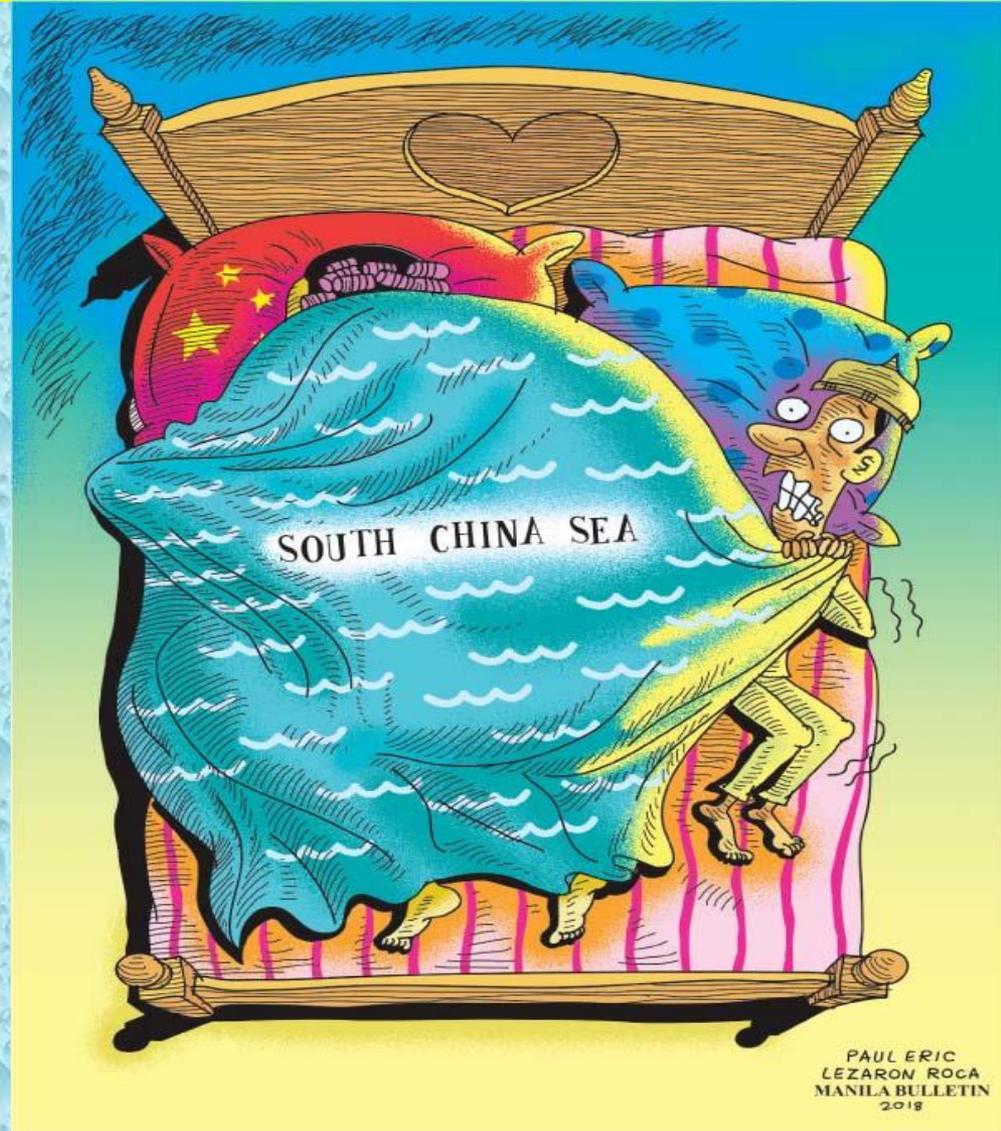
Roni Santiago
SKP
MANILA BULLETIN
JANUARY 23, 2020



The current crisis in the alliance provides opportunities for both allies to reflect on the importance of the alliance. The Philippines and the U.S. should examine the possible choices for the alliance; abrogation or business as usual or transformation to a security partnership.

Conclusion

In examining these options, the Philippines should take into account the following: the deterrence effect of the alliance; its impact on defense spending vis-à-vis overall government spending; on the current AFP program of modernization; and the sentiment and the interest of the Filipino nation.



Conclusion



There is at least one thing worse
than fighting with allies - And that is
to fight without them

— *Winston Churchill* —

Thank you
very much
for your
attention!

