

Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.
(As prepared for delivery)
Ceremony Announcing Anti-Kidnapping and Hostage Negotiation and Rescue
Training and Anti-Terrorism Equipment and Vehicles
to Philippine National Police,
Camp Crame, Quezon City, October 1, 2010

General Bacalzo, congratulations on your appointment as the new PNP Director. We look forward to working with you closely, as we did with your predecessors. On a daily basis we greatly appreciate the PNP's support for U.S. Embassy security, including my own protective detail.

I would like to thank you and your staff for your tremendous efforts and support in the continuous fight against crime and terrorism.

President Aquino has just returned from his trip to the U.S., the first overseas trip of his administration. U.S.-Philippine relations now are stronger than ever.

We are partners with the Philippines in so many ways, but I am particularly proud of our law enforcement cooperation. Strengthening rule of law, governance and public security forms a key part of President Aquino's objectives, and we are glad to be able to support those very worthwhile goals.

Today's world is more globally interconnected than ever before, complicating the already numerous challenges faced every day by people like you, the police – the men and the women who dedicate their careers to serving their communities.

Crimes may occur in local communities, but more and more they are linked to national and international crime networks that engage in smuggling of drugs, weapons, and even people. What is worse is that the illicit proceeds of those crimes often provide funding for terrorism.

Even without links to international criminal organizations, crimes can become international incidents, as we saw in the tragic events of August 23. Threats cross our borders – on land, in the air and at sea. No single country can face them alone.

So how do we confront these threats together? The U.S. Embassy law enforcement agencies work closely with the PNP to exchange experiences and best practices. We are also fortunate to be able to provide training, critical infrastructure and equipment grants that give you the tools you need to succeed.

Our overarching goal is to support you, the men and women of the Philippine National Police (PNP), as you prevent and investigate criminal and terrorist activities. We know how important your role is, we know you want to do your best. We want to help you achieve that.

So today I am delighted to say that we are able to offer three explosive-ordnance device response vehicles and six motorcycles. This means that the EOD experts who are called to neutralize a dangerous explosive on a public street, or perhaps near a religious building, can get to the site quickly, and with the right equipment at hand. Quick action can save lives, and that's everyone's priority.

We are also offering today equipment for your digital forensic investigation lab. I am a fan of CSI, so I have learned the importance of forensics to police investigations. Good forensics work can help you identify criminals, and that's another priority we share.

I am also glad to announce that we can offer \$1,400,000 in training and equipment to the PNP to help develop a comprehensive Anti-Kidnapping/Hostage Negotiation Training Program. The program includes training for handling particularly difficult hostage situations, managing anti-kidnapping and hostage negotiations, and rescue and recovery operations. This is the latest installment of almost \$25 million in training and equipment to law enforcement made available by the U.S. government over the past 7 years. It marks another chapter in our partnership that goes stronger every day.

Magsamasama tayong lahat para tiyakin ang maayos, matatag, at masaganang kinabukasan (Together, we will ensure a safe, stable, and prosperous future.) Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.