

ENVOY SAYS COMMUNIST ATTACKS WILL BOOST U.S.-PHILIPPINE TIES.By **Chaitanya Kalbag**

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MANILA, Nov 25, Reuter - The communist rebel killings of three Americans near a U.S. military base in the Philippines last month will strengthen ties between the two countries and speed up aid from Washington, a U.S. official said on Wednesday.

"These killings will have the opposite effect from that which the terrorists intended; they will not intimidate us; they will not change our policies; they will, instead, strengthen even more the relationship (between Manila and Washington). They will make it easier to get resources from our Congress for the Philippines," U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Platt said.

He told a meeting of businessmen in the mountain city of Baguio that contrary to charges by some Filipinos, President Reagan's administration, the U.S. Congress and the Pentagon were united in their support for President Corazon Aquino.

Communist gunmen killed the three Americans, two active servicemen and one retired soldier, outside Clark Air Base north of Manila on October 28. It was the first time during the 18-year-old communist insurgency that military personnel serving at U.S. bases in the country had been attacked

Platt's remarks were made two days after the communist National Democratic Front claimed responsibility for the Clark attacks.

NDF spokesman Saturnino Ocampo said in a radio interview that guerrilla attacks were launched on Americans because of stepped-up U.S. military aid and the "interventionist policy of the Reagan administration."

The Clark killings coincided with a chilling in U.S. ties with the Philippines and the withdrawal by Washington of a military attache posted in Manila who was accused of interference in an August 28 coup attempt against Aquino.

In a reference to growing Filipino criticism of the bases, which are governed by a treaty expiring in 1991, Platt said: "People ask me what I think of emerging Filipino nationalism, and whether that means a growth of anti-American sentiment.

"I respond that Filipino nationalism is nothing new."

He said such feelings had been evident since 1898, when the United States defeated the Philippines' Spanish colonial rulers and itself took over the country.

Platt quoted Manuel Quezon, who headed the government when the United States granted the Philippines commonwealth status in 1935, as saying: "I would prefer a government run like hell by Filipinos to one run like heaven by Americans."

On Monday the government announced that 5,473 communist rebels had surrendered to authorities under an amnesty program, but a military spokesman said the surrendering men had probably been replaced by recruits.

The government also said about 36,000 rebel sympathisers were given jobs and medical services between March and October.

The announcements were made as a congressman from Aquino's ruling coalition called for a Christmas truce with the rebels. A 60-day ceasefire, the first in the insurgency, expired on February 8 this year amid a breakdown of peace talks initiated by the government.

Six communist guerrillas were killed and nine wounded by government troops in three separate incidents on the southern island of Mindanao, the military said.

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