

## **Flip-flopping PH foreign policy**

Written by Manuel Caballero

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**A country's foreign policy is defined as "plan of action adopted by one nation in regards its diplomatic dealings with other countries."**

**Foreign policies are established as a systematic way to deal with issues that may arise with other nations.**

**The Philippines foreign policy under President Rodrigo Duterte, sad to say, is floundering and can be characterized by inconsistencies and flip-flopping, especially in**

**respect of its relationship with the United States.**

**It has been five months since this President assumed office.**

**Many diplomatic issues have arisen between the Philippines and the U.S. but, until now, there is no Filipino ambassador to the United States in Washington, D.C. who is supposed to deal with said issues, most of which, were created by the PH President himself.**

**From the time he left for China, until he returned and thereafter, Mr. Duterte and his interpreters had flip-flopped and had given, at least, four different versions or interpretations of supposed Philippine foreign policy towards the United States.**

**A recent news report from Manila said, “Since assuming office in late June, Mr. Duterte has heaped praises on China (and Russia) and lashed out at the United States, often using vulgar language. All this, said the Philippine leader, whose deadly crackdown on drugs has been criticized by the West (and the world community), was part of his move to chart a more independent foreign policy not tied to America — the Philippines’ most important ally for 70 years.”**

**The other day, a senior Filipino foreign affairs officer tried to “sanitize” an earlier pronouncement by Mr. Duterte.**

**Asked by a reporter if Mr. Duterte’s recent foreign policy moves would affect Asean’s neutrality, the official said: “What the President really meant is that he is increasing the relationships with our other partners, but not to the detriment of our traditional friends.”**

**How can that be when our traditional friends led by the United States and the other potential partners they are mentioning, like China and Russia, are bitter rivals?**

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**There would be a clash of national interests in that dictum. □**

**If President Duterte did not really mean what he has uttered in the last three months, he should not let his subordinates undo them.**

**He should be the one to make definitive statements as to what Philippine foreign policy is, especially with the U.S.**

**Then, let the army of capable and experienced career personnel of DFA execute such policy.**

**There should be no confusing interpretations by his apostles after.**

**There is nothing wrong to change one's beliefs or convictions.**