

U.S. legislators oppose Duterte visit

Written by Manuel Caballero
Friday, 21 July 2017 16:07



“And I certainly believe very strongly that a man with the human rights record of Mr. Duterte should not be invited to the White House. If he comes, I will lead the protest. We ought to be on the side of advocating for human rights, not explaining them away,” Massachusetts Rep. James McGovern (pictured above) said.

Above was the opening statement of Rep. McGovern during the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives Thursday, which dealt with President Duterte’s poor human rights record.

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In May, 12 U.S. senators wrote the White House and asked President Trump to delay the Philippine President's visit, which the American chief executive extended to Duterte in an earlier phone conversation.

The senators' letter read in part: "Our relationship (with the Philippines) is based on historical connections, shared values, and mutual strategic interests. President Duterte's campaign of killing threatens the fundamental fabric of our relationship."

In a nutshell, the unpopularity of Mr. Duterte among Americans is reflected by the actions and words coming from members of the two houses of the U.S. Congress.

Defending his boss, Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano, said in a reported statement that the Americans do not have the right to investigate President Duterte's anti-drugs and anti-crime campaigns.

The former senator added, "They are not our boss."

A lawyer of his stature, the ex-senator sounded like he was playing dumb.

He must be well aware that those who condemn rulers who don't have respect for life and law are not trying to boss it over the Philippines.

They simply believe in and adhere to the universal principles of rule of law and respect for life.

That's what modern democracy is about.

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It is unfortunate that the positive achievements of the Duterte team are overshadowed by the reported extrajudicial killings which, as of latest count, have reached 12,000 poor Filipino suspected drug addicts and traffickers.

By any measure, especially to believers of law and life, these killings are far from being regarded as good and decent governance.