



**Date and Time:** Tuesday, June 19, 2018 4:44:00 PM EDT

**Job Number:** 68671844

## Document (1)

1. [Trump's Invitation to Rodrigo Duterte Makes Sense;Op-Ed Contributor](#)

**Client/Matter:** -None-

**Search Terms:** (Rodrigo and Duterte) and publication(New York Times) and publication-type(Newspapers)

**Search Type:** Terms and Connectors

**Narrowed by:**

**Content Type**  
News

**Narrowed by**  
Timeline: Jan 01, 2017 to May 31, 2018; Language:  
English; People: Rodrigo Duterte; People: Donald Trump

## [Trump's Invitation to Rodrigo Duterte Makes Sense; Op-Ed Contributor](#)

The New York Times - International Edition

May 2, 2017 Tuesday

Copyright 2017 International Herald Tribune All Rights Reserved

**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1013 words

**Byline:** RICHARD JAVAD HEYDARIAN

**Dateline:** MANILA

### **Body**

---

#### **ABSTRACT**

It's a necessary step toward restoring the alliance with the Philippines and maintaining U.S. leadership in Asia.

#### **FULL TEXT**

MANILA - Over the weekend, President Trump provoked an avalanche of criticism at home and abroad by extending a formal invitation to his Filipino counterpart, **Rodrigo Duterte**, to visit the White House. The two leaders are reported to have had a "very friendly conversation" by phone, prompting denunciations by human rights groups and the liberal establishment in both America and the Philippines.

To the chagrin even of administration officials, the White House, in a statement announcing the invitation, appeared not only to play down Mr. **Duterte**'s brutal crackdown on illegal drugs - which rights groups say has claimed 1,000 lives a month since it started last July - but also went so far as to praise his efforts to rid his country of drugs. (For his part, Mr. **Duterte**, after visiting Chinese warships in his hometown Davao City, said on Tuesday that he might be too "tied up" to go to Washington because of planned trips to Beijing and Moscow.)

Mr. Trump's invitation to Mr. **Duterte**, however, is a sensible one when understood against a broader geopolitical backdrop. First of all, it was part of a package of invitations handed out to Southeast Asian leaders, including Prime Ministers Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore and Prayuth Chan-ocha of Thailand. In other words, Mr. **Duterte** wasn't the only foreign leader invited.

Nor is this the first time that Mr. Trump has invited a controversial head of state. The Egyptian strongman Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has been a guest, and Mr. Trump is scheduled to welcome President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in coming weeks. Both leaders have questionable human rights records.

Moreover, the invitation to Mr. **Duterte** was particularly timely since there is growing concern that the Trump administration is neglecting smaller regional states in favor of Northeast Asia and Europe, two regions quickly visited by top officials, including Vice President Mike Pence, Defense Secretary James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. What's more, Mr. Trump has already hosted Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and President Xi Jinping of China. In contrast, the Obama administration placed Southeast Asia at the center of its regional diplomacy.

To the delight of Southeast Asian leaders, however, Mr. Trump finally confirmed, during his conversation with Mr. **Duterte**, that he would attend the East Asia Summit, an annual gathering of Asia-Pacific heads of state, in November.

## Trump's Invitation to Rodrigo Duterte Makes Sense; Op-Ed Contributor

As former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton once memorably put it, sometimes "half of diplomacy is showing up" at meetings.

We must also bear in mind that as the chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Mr. **Duterte** is the host of the East Asia Summit, and so a meeting between him and Mr. Trump is almost inevitable. Inviting Mr. **Duterte** to visit the White House, therefore, was crucial to setting the stage.

More specifically, Washington is also rightly worried about Mr. **Duterte's** rapprochement with China. Other regional partners could easily follow in his steps. For instance, Thailand, America's other treaty ally in Southeast Asia, is expanding its security cooperation with China and has purchased advanced naval hardware from Beijing. Malaysia is also tightening its military cooperation with China and deepening investment relations there.

Mr. Trump has realized that Washington's leadership in the region can no longer be taken for granted. The reality is that Southeast Asia has become the main strategic battlefield for China and America.

Inviting regional heads of state and personally listening to their concerns is not only necessary to the preservation of the (American-led) liberal order in Asia, but it could also deepen Mr. Trump's (still minimal) understanding of America's global role as an anchor of stability and prosperity.

There are also more immediate strategic imperatives. As the Trump administration ramps up its defense policy in Asia, particularly in the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea, it desperately needs to revive security cooperation with regional allies like the Philippines, the former site of some of America's largest overseas military bases.

As a concession to China, Mr. **Duterte** has already downgraded security cooperation with America, having canceled major joint military exercises, limited United States access to Philippine military bases and barred the United States warships from using Philippine naval facilities to conduct exercises in the South China Sea. As a result, the United States Navy's ability to effectively push back against Chinese maritime assertiveness in the area has been noticeably constrained. Indeed, Mr. **Duterte** is considering long-term military cooperation and joint military exercises with China and Russia. Revived relations with Washington diversify the Philippines' strategic options, strengthen the hand of the largely pro-American military establishment in the country and limit Sino-Russian strategic forays into Southeast Asia.

Above all, a diplomatic reset could allow Washington to exert a more constructive influence not only on Mr. **Duterte's** foreign policy but also on domestic policies, including the heavy-handed campaign against illegal drugs.

Notwithstanding Mr. Trump's own worryingly illiberal rhetoric on law and order issues, the American government, along with allies such as Japan and the European Union, would be in a better position to nudge the Philippines toward a more humane, public-health-focused drug policy if bilateral relations returned to the way things were before.

Diplomacy is the art of the possible. Mr. Trump's invitation to Mr. **Duterte** is an indispensable step toward restoring one of the world's oldest alliances and maintaining American leadership in Asia.

*Follow The New York Times Opinion section on Facebook and Twitter (@NYTopinion), and sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter.*

*Richard Javad Heydarian is the author of "Asia's New Battlefield: The U.S., China and the Struggle for the Western Pacific."*

## Classification

---

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: **Newspaper**

## Trump's Invitation to Rodrigo Duterte Makes Sense; Op-Ed Contributor

**Subject:** HEADS OF STATE & GOVERNMENT (89%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (89%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2016 (78%); TALKS & MEETINGS (78%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (78%); US PRESIDENTS (78%); PRIME MINISTERS (77%); HUMAN RIGHTS (77%); ASEAN COUNTRIES (76%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (76%); CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES CRIME (75%); HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (71%); LIBERALISM (71%); ILLEGAL DRUGS (70%); DEFENSE DEPARTMENTS (66%); INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS (60%)

**Industry:** MILITARY VESSELS (68%); NAVAL VESSELS (68%); DEFENSE DEPARTMENTS (66%)

**Person:** DONALD TRUMP (89%); PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA (79%); XI JINPING (79%); ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISSI (79%); REX W TILLERSON (79%); RODRIGO DUTERTE (79%); HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON (79%); RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN (79%); BARACK OBAMA (78%); JAMES MATTIS (78%); MIKE PENCE (58%); SHINZO ABE (50%); LEE HSIEN LOONG (50%)

**Geographic:** MANILA, PHILIPPINES (79%); BEIJING, CHINA (71%); NORTH CENTRAL CHINA (79%); ASIA (96%); SOUTH-EASTERN ASIA (94%); UNITED STATES (93%); PHILIPPINES (92%); EASTERN ASIA (92%); SINGAPORE (79%); THAILAND (79%); CHINA (79%); EUROPE (79%)

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2017

---

End of Document