U.S. and Philippine Coast Guards Conduct Maritime Cooperative Activity



The Legend-class USCGC Stratton (WMSL 752), middle, sails with Philippine Coast Guard Teresa Magbanua-class patrol vessel BRP Melchora Aquino (MRRV-9702), top, in the Sulu Sea, May 20, 2025. Stratton is deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. (Courtesy photo)

By Commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15, May 21, 2025

SULU SEA – The Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine Coast Guard, and the United States Coast Guard (USCG), demonstrating a collective commitment to strengthen regional and international cooperation in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific, conducted a bilateral Maritime Cooperative Activity (MCA) within the Philippines' Exclusive

Economic Zone, May 20.

This iteration builds upon previous MCAs and our continuing operations together, which strengthen the interoperability of our defense/armed forces doctrines, tactics, techniques, and procedures.

MCAs are conducted in a manner that is consistent with international law and with due regard to the safety and navigational rights and freedoms of all nations.

Participating units included the Legend-class cutter USCGC Stratton (WMSL-752) and a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft from the U.S. Navy, as well as the Philippine Navy's Gregorio del Pilar-class patrol ship BRP Ramon Alcaraz (PS16); Acero-class patrol gunboats BRP Gener Tinangag (PG903) and BRP Domingo Deluana (PG905); an AW109 naval helicopter; the Philippine Air Force's Super Tucano and Sokol helicopters; and the Philippine Coast Guard's Teresa Magbanua-class patrol vessel BRP Melchora Aquino (MRRV 9702).

"Maritime Cooperative Activities help us continue to build strong military-to-military ties with our Philippine navy allies," said Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. "With each iteration, these operations further advance our collective efforts to preserve regional stability in this critical part of the world."

This iteration of the MCA included exercises in maritime domain awareness, division tactics, maneuvering, and Visit, Board, Search and Seizure.

"The U.S. Coast Guard has a significant presence in the Indo-Pacific region," said Capt. Brian Krautler, Stratton's commanding officer. "On our Western Pacific deployments, we frequently engage with partner nations through professional exchanges and capacity building, as shown with this operation.

This is an opportunity to reinforce vital links with our counterparts who mutually value the preservation of a free, secure and open maritime environment.”

The U.S., along with our allies and partners, upholds the right to freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the sea related to those freedoms.

USCGC Stratton is underway in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.