

Philippines Announces Locations of Four New US Bases

Three bases are in the north, facing Taiwan, and one is in the South China Sea province of Palawan

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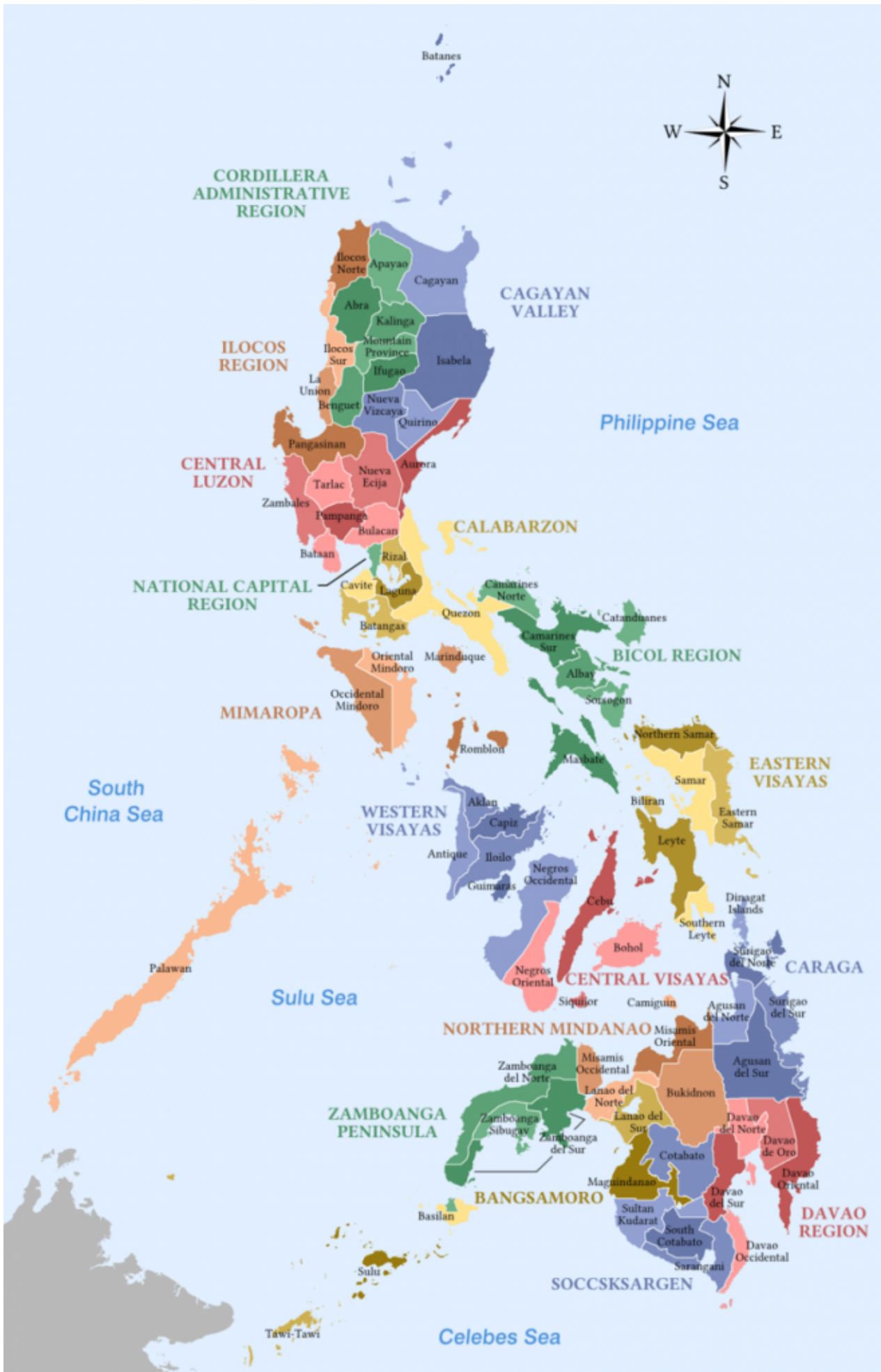
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The Philippines on Monday [announced the locations of four military bases](#) that the US will now have access to under a deal Washington and Manila signed in February.

Three of the Philippine bases [will be located in northern Philippine provinces](#), a move that angers China since they can be used as staging grounds for a fight over Taiwan. The US will be granted access to the Lal-lo Airport and the Naval Base Camilo Osias, which are both located in the northern Cagayan province. In the neighboring Isabela province, the US will gain access to Camp Melchor Dela Cruz.

The US military will also be able to expand to Palawan, an island province in the South China Sea, disputed waters that are a major source of tensions between the US and China. The US will be granted access to Balabac Island, the southernmost island of Palawan.

The new locations are on top of five bases the US currently has access to, bringing the total number of bases the US can rotate forces through in the Philippines to nine. The expansion in the Philippines is a significant step in the US effort to build up its military assets in the region to prepare for a future war with China.



The US expansion is being done under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Arrangement (EDCA), a deal Washington and Manila signed in 2014 to give the US greater access to the Philippines and allow it to build military facilities. The EDCA built on the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which provides the legal basis for the US military presence in the Philippines.

Philippine **President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.**'s decision to allow the US to expand significantly departs from the policies of his predecessor, **Rodrigo Duterte**, who threatened to scrap the VFA and kick US troops out of the country over US sanctions on Philippine officials related to the country's drug war.

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