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Gov't gratified with U.S. State Dep't Report on Freedom, Democracy in RP

MANILA, June 9 (PINOYGLOBAL) - The Philippine Government is gratified with the recently released United States' 2008 State Department Report on Freedom and Democracy which cited the continuing commitment and indisputable gains of the Arroyo administration in pursuing freedom, democracy and human rights.

In a statement, Press Secretary and Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio R. Bunye said the State Department report noted that the "Philippines has struggled with EJKs (extra-judicial killings) and forced disappearances for most of its modern history."

"We welcome the US 2008 State Department Report on Freedom and Democracy—it recognizes our continuing commitment and our indisputable gains in pursuing freedom, democracy and human rights," he said.

The report, Bunye pointed out, "identifies the remaining challenges that face us as a nation and reiterates the commitment of the American government to assist and stand by us," adding that the State Department report also "pinpoints and emphasizes the burden of history that we must overcome."

He pointed out that the State Department recognized that "freedom and democracy are core values at the heart of the governance of President Arroyo and her Administration."

The Malacanang official noted that the "vast majority of the 881-word Philippine portion of the Report focuses on the many ways the United States is working with us to triumph over the history and culture of violence that have plagued our country for decades." Bunye added that the



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US State Department report also enumerates the successes of the Arroyo administration and the "elements that place us on the right track," among which are the following:

- a long tradition of democracy.
- generally free elections with high voter turnout.
- 99 percent of seats in the 2007 national and local elections filled without controversy.
- government's respect for human rights.
- intensified efforts that have led to a significant decrease in extrajudicial killings and disappearances and
- government's willingness to work with civil society to fight corruption.

Office of the President - released 6/8/2008