

## Obama to meet Arroyo July 30 – White House

WASHINGTON – Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will become Southeast Asia's first leader to meet Barack Obama in the White House when she visits Washington on July 30, the US president's office said Saturday.

"The president will receive President Arroyo at the White House on July 30, where they will have an opportunity to discuss ways to enhance US-Philippine cooperation on critical global issues including counter-terrorism and climate change, as well as further the traditionally strong alliance and bond between our nations," the White House said in a statement.



"President Arroyo will be the first leader from Southeast Asia to visit the United States under the Obama administration."

Arroyo, who last visited Washington in June 2008 and met then-president George W. Bush in the White House, is also scheduled to meet "key US government officials and members of Congress," as well as entrepreneurs and business groups. Manila has remained a steadfast US ally in Southeast Asia, notably in Washington's efforts to root out extremists and terror cells.

In early June US Defense Secretary Robert Gates vowed stepped-up support for the Philippines in its battle against homegrown Islamic militant groups linked to Al-Qaeda.

The Philippines and United States are bound by a 1951 treaty that calls on each side to help the other in times of war.

US special forces advisers have trained and equipped their Philippine counterpart.

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