

Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



Serving the people. Securing the land.

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13 April 2016

Wednesday

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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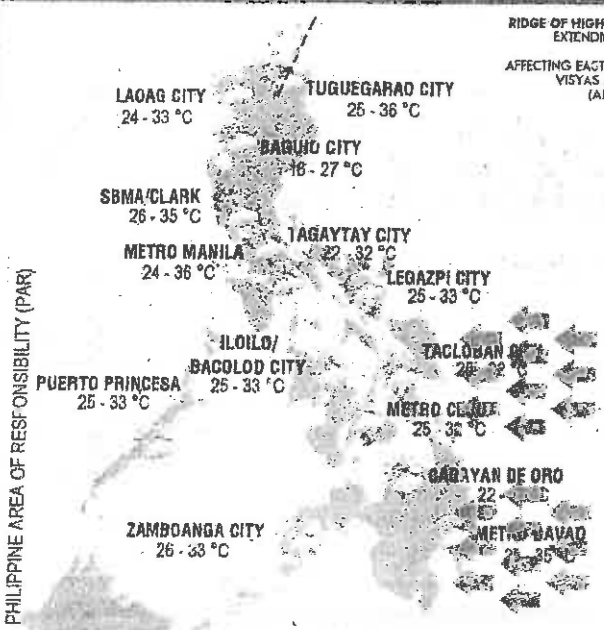


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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 13, 2016 | WEDNESDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA
EXTENDING OVER LUZON
EASTERLIES
AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF
VISTAS AND MINDANAO
(APRIL 12, 5:00 PM)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:44 AM	6:10 PM

MOONRISE	MOONSET
10:55 AM	11:07 PM

NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
APR 7 7:24 PM	APR 14 11:56 AM

LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 10:34 PM -0.10 Meter	1:40 PM 1.03 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

Partly cloudy to clear skies with occasional showers

Cloudy skies with occasional showers and/or thunderstorms

	APR 12	APR 13	APR 14	APR 15	APR 16	APR 17
METRO MANILA	24-35°C	24-35°C	21-31°C	21-31°C	25-35°C	25-35°C
TUQUEGARAO	26-37°C	25-37°C	25-32°C	25-33°C	22-35°C	23-33°C
LAOAG	24-33°C	25-33°C	26-34°C	26-34°C	25-34°C	26-35°C
BAQUIO	16-26°C	16-26°C	25-30°C	25-34°C	26-34°C	25-34°C
SBMA/CLARK	26-35°C	26-35°C	26-35°C	25-32°C		
TAGAYTAY						
LEGAZPI						
PUERTO PRINCESA						
METRO DAVAO						
CAGAYAN DE ORO						
METRO CEBU						
TACLOBAN						
ILOILO/BACOLOD						
ZAMBOANGA						

AIR 21

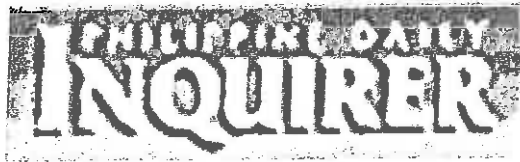
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People's Television

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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Duterte on a roll; Poe trails

Davao mayor tops second nationwide survey

By Ana Roa
Inquirer Research

HE APPEARS to be on a roll.

Less than a month before the presidential election, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte came out on top in a nationwide survey for the second time in as many days, getting strong support from the upper and middle classes.

Duterte also fared strongly in Metro Manila and Mindanao, allowing him to overtake erstwhile front-runner Sen. Grace Poe, results of a Pulse Asia survey conducted from March 29 to April 3 showed.

In the vice presidential race, Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. has taken the solo lead while Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo and Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero were in a statistical tie in second place.



The survey found 30 percent of the 4,000 respondents (registered voters 18 years old and above and with biometrics),

DUTERTE/A12

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Duterte on a roll; Poe trails

From page A1

saying they would support the tough crime-fighting Duterte.

Duterte enjoyed a five-point lead over Poe, who got 25 percent.

Statistically tied in third place were Vice President Jejomar Binay, running under United Nationalist Alliance and Mar Roxas, the standard-bearer of the ruling Liberal Party, who got 20 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago received 2 percent.

Pulse Asia asked the respondents, "If the coming 2016 elections were held today, whom would you vote for as President of the Philippines?"

On Monday, a survey by Social Weather Stations showed Duterte on top with 27 percent of 1,500 respondents. Poe was in second place, losing four points to 23 percent.

About 54 million people in the country of a little more than 100 million are eligible to vote to choose a President, Vice President and more than 18,000 local government executives and lawmakers on May 9.

Close race

"I'm inclined to think this is going to be a close race. Duterte's lead over the next candidate is still pretty manageable. Anything can still happen," said Edmund Tayao, a political science professor at the University of Santo Tomas.

The survey, commissioned by ABS-CBN and the results of which were released yesterday, had a margin of error of plus-or-minus

1.5 percentage points.

Tayao said how the candidates performed at the second presidential debate in Cebu City last month had an impact on the perception of voters.

Besides facts and figures, the candidates' delivery of the message and their demeanor were also important, Tayao said.

Compared with the Pulse Asia survey on March 15-20, Duterte gained 6 points from 24 percent, while Poe and Binay dropped 3 points from 28 percent and 23 percent, respectively. The ratings of Roxas and Santiago were both unchanged.

"The debate gave an idea how the candidates perform or make decisions under pressure... During the debate, the Vice President and, to some extent, Poe showed some kind of irritation," Tayao said.

In the case of Poe, the issue surrounding her citizenship lingers despite the Supreme Court ruling allowing her to run.

"If she wins the elections, the legal issue will continue to hound her so this may have had an impact on the perception of voters," Tayao said.

Regions, socioeconomic classes

More than half (55 percent) of respondents from Mindanao chose Duterte, who was also the top choice of those in Class ABC (41 percent) and Class D (31 percent).

Respondents from Luzon outside Metro Manila were most supportive of Poe (31 percent) while Roxas led in the Visayas (34 percent).

The leading candidates in Metro Manila were Duterte (32 percent) and Poe (30 percent) while among Class E the favored candidates were Poe (29 percent), Duterte (26 percent) and Binay (23 percent).

The respondents were also asked, "If your chosen candidate does not pursue his/her candidacy for whatever reason, whom among the remaining people would you vote for President of the Philippines if the 2016 elections were today?"

Poe emerged as the top second-choice of voters with a rating of 31 percent, followed by Binay with 19 percent, Duterte with 15 percent, Roxas with 13 percent and Santiago with 5 percent.

Seventeen percent of the respondents "don't know," refused to answer or have no alternate candidate.

Pulse Asia said Poe would gain the most



TEEN SPIRIT
Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, the tough-talking presidential candidate, listens to his daughter Veronica during a rally in Taguig City on Monday night. GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

should Duterte decide to cancel his candidacy, as 41 percent of those whose first choice was Duterte named Poe as their alternative candidate.

Poe was also the second choice of 41 percent of Binay's original voters, 41 percent of those who expressed support for Roxas and 35 percent of those who picked Santiago.

Among Poe's original voters, 33 percent named Binay their alternative candidate.

Results of the survey also showed 28 percent saying they would vote for Marcos, a 6-point lead over Robredo and up three percentage points from the March 15-20 survey.

Robredo got 22 percent, up a point from the previous survey while Escudero scored 21 percent, down from 25 percent.

Marcos' lead could be attributed to the media and public attention accorded to him, whether good or bad, as well as his advance and vigorous campaign, Tayao said.

Tayao noted Robredo's steady rise, saying that if this continues, she could likely beat Marcos and Escudero.

"She doesn't have the baggage and there's still time to convince the public," he said.

"Like the presidential race, the race for Vice President is also tight," Tayao said.

Vice presidential aspirant Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano got 15 percent from 14 percent, while Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV obtained 5 percent from 4 percent and Sen. Gringo Honasan, 4 percent from 5 percent.

Marcos was the leading candidate in Metro Manila (47 percent), Class ABC (39 percent) and Class D (29 percent), while Robredo topped the Visayas (36 percent) and Cayetano was the most favored in Mindanao (30 percent).

In the rest of Luzon, Marcos and Escudero were statistically tied (34 percent and 25 percent, respectively) while those in Class E were most supportive of Robredo, Marcos and Escudero.

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Election rivals pounce on executioner' Rody

Duterte hits back, challenges VP to debate

By HELEN FLORES and ALEXIS ROMERO

As he surged to the top of the latest surveys, presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte is now in the crosshairs of his rivals, who called the Davao City mayor the nation's executioner, a threat to democracy and a liar as they tried to persuade the people not to vote for him.

Vice President Jejomar Binay, who earlier tagged Duterte as the "pambansang berdugo" or national executioner, reminded voters that it is their moral obligation not to pick a president who advocates violence and killing people, including children, on mere suspicion.

Duterte's closest rival, Sen. Grace Poe, also twitted the mayor, saying the country needs justice and not violence in order to attain



peace and order.

The camp of Liberal Party standard-bearer Manuel Roxas II warned the electorate that a Duterte presidency would pave the way for the return of martial law.

Law experts called for government action and resolution of cases of extrajudicial killings as they criticized the kind of leadership that Duterte is propagating in his bid for the presidency.

"As a human rights lawyer and a Catholic, it is my moral responsibility to oppose the policy of summary executions being espoused by Duterte," Binay said during a

Turn to Page 12

Election

The tough-talking Duterte is currently leading various surveys on presidential preference.

Roxas said Duterte represents the "biggest danger to the country" since the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

follow him, you will be insulted, pelted with bad words or bullets," Roxas told journalists during a briefing in Misamis Occidental yesterday.

The LP standard-bearer called Duterte a liar for claiming Davao is crime-free.

Speaking to a crowd of about 50,000 at the Food Terminal Inc. complex in Taguig City

While he admitted that criminals did get killed in Davao City for opting to shoot it out with police officers, Duterte said Binay's act was worse.

"We don't need to defend the mayor against Binay and Roxas because they were the ones who feel threatened, not the democracy," Cayetano said.

to Binay and Roxas when they were courting him for an endorsement, before the mayor decided to run for president.

"I have advocated the right to life, while Duterte advocates killing people. Such a policy victimizes the poor," Binay said.

He said Duterte's victims were poor, particularly children and old people.

dren, saying they were sent to rehabilitation facilities after they were caught in anti-drug operations.

Duterte challenged Binay to a one-on-one debate on morality and graft and corruption.

Former University of the East law dean Amado Valdez and lawyer Raymond Fortun condemned what they described as "illegal and bloody" means to solve widespread criminality in the country.

Valdez said extrajudicial killings are criminal acts that cannot be justified, as states allowing them could be held liable under international law.

He said the US courts have jurisdiction to hold heads of states liable under the US Alien

Torture Act, citing a case where the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos was ordered to pay billions in damages to human rights victims during the martial law years.

Valdez, chairman emeritus of the Philippine Association of Law Schools, said the investigation to be launched on extrajudicial killings should be "non-political."

"With the political environment, an independent commission is in order," he suggested, adding that members of academe would be best suited to handle the probe because they are "the least politicized."

– With Mike Frialde, Edu Punay, Robertzon Ramirez, Christina Mendez

13 April 2016

The Manila Times

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Army to give P3M to victims' families

THE Philippine Army has released more than P3 million to be given personally to the bereaved families of the 18 soldiers killed during an encounter with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Basilan province over the weekend.

"The SFA [Special Financial Assistance] of the Army is computed based on their [18 soldiers] individual monthly earnings. This is an immediate monetary assistance which will be given to a soldier who [is] killed or [dies] in line of duty," Col. Benjamin Hao, Army spokesman, said on Tuesday.

He disclosed that based on the service records of the 18 soldiers, the family of the late 1st Lt. Remigio B. Lecenia, an Army officer killed in the clash, will receive P 282,303.95, while the family of late Private First Class Done Mark Gil A. Saldivar, the most junior personnel, will receive P145,074.10.

Other assistance to be received by the families of the slain soldiers includes P50,000 cash from the Armed Forces of the Philippines Mutual Benefits Association Inc. (AFPMBAI); P100,000 cash from the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFCPIC); P80,000 funeral services support; and scholarship grants to their children.

At the same time, the Army Dragon Boat Team, also known as the Army Dragon Warriors, offered their four golds and a silver medal they bagged during the recent 10th International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) World Club

Crew Championships to the 18 dead soldiers.

"We are dedicating our win to our fellow soldiers who offered the ultimate sacrifice in Basilan," said Staff Sgt. Usman Anterola, team captain of the Philippine Army Dragon Boat Team, Mighty Sports.

Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano, Army commander, commended the team for proving once again that Army soldier-athletes are world-class.

"The whole country is very proud of you, but most especially the Philippine Army. Although we have an ongoing battle in Basilan, your win in Australia will bring up the morale of our troops. Congratulations from the bottom of our hearts. Keep up the good work," he said.

The team, composed of 20 members, won the gold medal in the 2,000-meter Men's Small Boat, 500-meter Mixed Small Boat, 200-meter Mixed Small Boat and 200-meter Men's Small Boat.

It bagged the silver medal in the 500-meter Men's Small Boat.

The Philippine Army fielded female soldier-athletes to participate in mixed events in this year's world championships.

Meanwhile, Hao said the Army will also give full military honors especially funeral honors, vigil, arrival and departure honors to the slain soldiers.

"Appropriate military honors are the least the Army can do for the men who fought gallantly for the country," he added.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

13 April 2016

The Manila Times

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4 abducted sawmill workers freed in Lanao

KIDAPAWAN CITY: Four of the six sawmill workers who were abducted by jihadists in Lanao del Sur last week on suspicion that they were government spies were freed on Monday following series of negotiations.

Philippine Army deputy commander of the Marawi City-based 103rd Infantry Brigade (103IB), Col. Manolo Samarita, confirmed to *The Manila Times* the release of Julieto Hanobas, also known as (aka) Buloy; Alfredo Anoos aka Isoy, Gabriel Permites, and Adones Mendez.

However, he said, Salvador Hanobas aka Tado and Makol Hanobas aka Macky were still in the hands

of the captors, and their status was not certain.

He added that they were still monitoring the situation and verifying reports that the remaining captives were reportedly beheaded.

Samarita said the four, suspected by the group to be spying for the government, were safely released at about 10:15 a.m. in Barangay Sandab, the same place where they were abducted, and were handed over to their employer Haja Anisa Unda accompanied by Butig town Mayor Ibrahim Macadatu.

Negotiations were reportedly conducted by Macadatu, Col. Roseller Murillo of the 41st Infantry Battalion

and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaders who lobbied with young generation jihadists for the safety of the hostages.

The abductors, calling themselves the Dawlah Islamiyah or Islamic State in Lanao headed by Abdullah Maute alias Abu Hasan, demanded the release of their comrade, whom they identified as 13-year-old Ayman, who was allegedly captured by the military last February.

Military and police officials, however, said no jihadist was captured during and after the recent clash in Butig.

Their release came a day after the deadline set by the abductors

expired, with threat to decapitate the hostages if their demand failed to be delivered on Sunday.

They also uploaded photos of the hostages wearing prisoners' orange uniforms similar to the Islamic State (IS's) captives in Syria and Iraq.

It was learned that the jihadists raised suspicions on spies in Butig after shooting down a military spy drone hovering over their controlled area a day before the abduction on April 4.

The military and other authorities did not comment on the surveillance camera reportedly recovered by the militants.

MOH SAADUDDIN

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13 April 2016



Pahina. 2

Nasawing sundalo sa Basilan ikinumpara sa Mamasapano ni Gatchalian

Nakisimpatya si Nationalist Peoples Coalition (NPC) senatorial bet Win Gatchalian sa pamilya ng nasawing 18 sundalo sa pakikipaglaban sa mga Abu Sayyaf Group sa Tipo-tipo, Basilan matapos hindi ito bigyan ng funeral honors bago iuwi ang mga labi sa kanilang mga tahanan.

"I share the dismay of the families and comrades-in-arms of the 18 slain Army soldiers who were denied the funeral honors before their remains were sent to their respective homes," wika ni Valenzuela City Rep. Gatchalian.

Nagdesisyon ang Western Mindanao Com-

mand (Wesmincom) noong Linggo na kanselahin ang public viewing ng Pacquiao-Bardley fight sa camp gym para dun iburol at bigyan ng funeral honor at vigil ang mga nasawing sundalo pero kinansela na rin.

Naglunsad ng all-out operations ang military laban sa ASG para sa kanilang high-value target na si Isnilon Hapilon sa Tipo-tipo, Basilan ng tambangan sila ng may 100 ASG kung saan ay 18 ang nasawi sa panig ng sundalo at marami ang nasugatan.

"In the Mamasapano massacre, Malacañang initially refused to rec-

ognize the gallantry of the SAF 44 and the Department of Justice even filed administrative and criminal charges against several SAF officers and men before the Office of the Ombudsman," wika ni Gatchalian matapos maalala ang hindi pagsisipat ni Pangulong Aquino sa arrival honors ng nasawing SAF 44 sa Villamor air base.

Maliban kay platoon leader na si Lt. Remegio Liceña na sinakay sa military cargo plane ang labi para iuwi sa Luzon, ang mga nasawing sundalo ay isinakay lamang sa military trucks para dalhin sa mga bahay ng mga ito. (Rudy Andal)

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Zambo siege awardee named special ops chief

From *Malaya Business Insight* (Apr 12)

AN Army general who played a key role in quelling the Zamboanga siege by Moro National Liberation Front fighters in September 2013 had been designated as the new commander of the Army's Special Operations Command.

Brig. Gen. Danilo Gines Pamonag took over as the chief of the elite unit yesterday in rites presided by Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano at the SOCOM headquarters in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija.

Pamonag will remain as the concurrent commander of the US-trained Light Reaction Regiment, pending the appointment of a replacement at the LRR, said Army spokesman Col. Benjamin Hao.

Pamonag was the commander of the military's Joint Special Operations Group that led the operations against hundreds of MNLF that seized Zamboanga City and held about 160 hostages as part of MNLF's cause for independence.

Pamonag had been conferred by President Aquino with the Distinguished Conduct Star, the second highest military decoration in combat behind the Medal for Valor, for his feat during the Zamboanga siege.

The operations resulted in the death of at least 200 MNLF fighters and rescue of around 195 civilians held captive by the group. Dozens of soldiers and civilians also died in the 20-day campaign.

Pamonag is a member of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1985 and was the first Filipino awardee of the US Special Operations Command medal.

Last year, he was selected by the Metrobank Foundation as among the Ten Outstanding Philippine Soldiers in recognition of feat during the Zamboanga siege.

"We expect Brig. Gen. Pamonag to increase the training readiness of the SOCOM. He plans to build a world-class counter-terrorist training facility," said Hao.

Asked about the qualities of Pamonag that prompted his designation as SOCOM commander, Hao said: "Ang sabi ni CGPA (Commanding General, Philippine Army) is kanyang katapangan at pang-unawa."

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Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

<http://www.inquirer.net>

Army releases P3.2-M aid for kin of 18 soldiers killed in Basilan

By: Frances Mangosing



Ruben Monte stands by the coffin of his son, Pfc. John Monte of Salang, Baroi, Lanao del Norte province, one of the 18 soldiers killed in a recent encounter in Basilan province. JULIE S. ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

The Philippine Army has released P3.2 million worth of financial assistance for the families of 18 soldiers killed in the recent encounter in Basilan, the biggest combat loss in a single-day operation for the military in five years.

Army spokesperson Col. Benjamin Hao on Tuesday said a total of P3,289,254.50 would be given to the bereaved families.

"The [special financial assistance] of the Philippine Army is computed based on their (18 soldiers) individual monthly earnings. This is an immediate monetary assistance which will be given to a soldier who was killed or died in line of duty," Hao said.

For instance, the family of the late 1st Lt. Remigio B. Licenia will receive P282,303.95, while the family of the late Pfc. Done Mark Gil A. Saldivar, the most junior personnel among those killed, will receive P145,074.10.

Other assistance to be received by the families of the slain soldiers include P50,000 from the AFP Mutual Benefits Association Inc., P100,000 from the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative, P80,000 funeral services support, and scholarship grants to their children.

They would also be given full military honors, said Hao.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, in an ambush interview after the turnover of a US C-130 to the Philippine Air Force, denied reports that the funeral honors for the slain soldiers were cancelled.

"We did give them honors in Zamboanga City before they left and then they were given honors when they arrived to their hometowns," he told reporters.

Local media reports said the funeral honors for the fallen soldiers were called off and the media was also barred from interviewing the families of the victims. RC

<http://dwdc.com.ph>

HERO18 II Phil Army denies cancelling military honors for troops killed in Basilan

Lui

MANILA — The Philippine Army has denied reports it has cancelled military honors for the troops killed in clash against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan last April 9.



"Please be informed that the Philippine Army denies it. Our instruction is to give full honors to all those who were killed in action in Basilan, especially funeral honors, vigil, the arrival and departure honors," Army spokesperson Col. Benjamin Hao said.

"We understand that there were Muslim soldiers that were immediately buried based on their culture and practices, but for the rest, we will give them honors because they deserve it," he added.

Of the 18 fallen troopers, 13 were Christians while five were

Muslims.

Another 53 were wounded in the almost 10-hour fighting.

Hao said giving appropriate military honors is the least the Army can do for the men who fought gallantly for the country.

Initial benefits to be received by families of the slain troopers include six months worth of payment depending on their salary grades; PHP50,000 worth cash assistance coming from their Mutual Benefits Association, Inc.; scholarships for their children; and another PHP100,000 coming from various organizations.

Soldiers wounded slightly in the battle will receive PHP50, 000 while those critically hurt will get PHP100, 000.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

4 abducted sawmill workers freed in Lanao

From the Manila Times (Apr 12)

Four of the six sawmill workers who were abducted by jihadists in Lanao del Sur last week on suspicion that they were government spies were freed on Monday following series of negotiations.

Philippine Army deputy commander of the Marawi City-based 103rd Infantry Brigade (103IB), Col. Manolo Samarita, confirmed to The Manila Times the release of Julieta Hanobas, also known as (aka) Buloy; Alfredo Anoos aka Isoy, Gabriel Permites, and Adones Mendez.

However, he said, Salvador Hanobas aka Tado and Makol Hanobas aka Macky were still in the hands of the captors, and their status was not certain.

He added that they were still monitoring the situation and verifying reports that the remaining captives were reportedly beheaded.

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Negotiations were reportedly conducted by Macadatu, Col. Roseller Murillo of the 41st Infantry Battalion and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaders who lobbied with young generation jihadists for the safety of the hostages.

The abductors, calling themselves the Dawlah Islamiyah or Islamic State in Lanao headed by Abdullah Maute alias Abu Hasan, demanded the release of their comrade, whom they identified as 13-year-old Ayman, who was allegedly captured by the military last February.

Military and police officials, however, said no jihadist was captured during and after the recent clash in Butig.

Their release came a day after the deadline set by the abductors expired, with threat to decapitate the hostages if their demand failed to be delivered on Sunday.

They also uploaded photos of the hostages wearing prisoners' orange uniforms similar to the Islamic State (IS's) captives in Syria and Iraq.

It was learned that the jihadists raised suspicions on spies in Butig after shooting down a military spy drone hovering over their controlled area a day before the abduction on April 4.

The military and other authorities did not comment on the surveillance camera reportedly recovered by the militants.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Php3.2-M worth of SFA out for families of 18 fallen soldiers

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr12)

The Philippine Army (PA) on Tuesday said it has released Php3, 289,254.50 worth of special financial assistance (SFA) to the families of the 18 soldiers killed in Tipo Tipo, Basilan during an encounter with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists last April 9.

Army spokesperson Col. Benjamin Hao said the money was personally given to the bereaved families. "The SFA of the PA is computed based on their (18 soldiers) individual monthly earnings. This is an immediate monetary assistance which will be given to a soldier who were killed or died in line of duty," he added.

"Based on the service records of the 18 soldiers, the family of the late 1st Lt. Remigio B. Lecenia, an Army officer killed in the encounter will receive Php 282,303.95, while the family of late Private First Class Done Mark Gil A. Saldivar, the most junior personnel will receive Php 145,074.10," the PA spokesperson enumerated.

Other assistance to be received by the families of the slain soldiers includes Php50,000 cash from the AFP Mutual Benefits Association, Inc. (AFPMBAI); Php100,000 cash from the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFCPIC); Php 80,000 funeral services support; and scholarship grants to their children.

Hao said the PA would continue to provide necessary assistance to the bereaved families aside from giving military honors especially funeral honors, vigil, arrival and departure honors to the slain soldiers.

"Appropriate military honors is the least the Army can do for the men who fought gallantry for the country," he added.

Meanwhile, the PA Dragon Boat Team, also known as the Army Dragon Warriors, offered their four golds and a silver medals, won during the 10th International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) World Club Crews Championships, to the fallen troopers.

"We are dedicating our win to our fellow soldiers who offered the ultimate sacrifice in Basilan," PA Dragon Boat Team-Mighty Sports team captain Staff Sgt. Usman Anterola said.

While Army commander Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año commended the team for proving once again that Army soldier-athletes are world-class.

"The whole country is very proud of you, but most especially the Philippine Army," he added.

"Although meron tayong labanang nagaganap ngayon sa Basilan, your win (in) Australia will bring up the morale of our troops. Congratulations from the bottom of our hearts. Keep up the good work," Año said.

The team, composed of 20 members, won the gold medal in the 2,000-meter Men's Small Boat, 500-meter Mixed Small Boat, 200-meter Mixed Small Boat, and 200-meter Men's Small Boat; while winning the silver medal in the 500-meter Men's Small Boat.

The PA fielded female soldier-athletes to participate in mixed events in this year's world championships.

For Capt. Francis Mirabelle T. Samson, who has been with the Philippine Army Dragon Boat Team for three years now, the 10th IDBF Club Crews Championships was her first international competition.

"It is an honor to be part of a world-class Army team," said Samson. "We are very happy to win the golds and bring honor to the Philippines," she added.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

"Late last year, four groups that are based in the Philippines came together. They unified at the request of the Islamic State, and they pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. They appointed Isnlon Hapilon, the deputy leader of Abu Sayyaf group, who broke away from Abu Sayyaf, as their leader," said Gunaratna.

But the military maintained there is no presence of ISIS in the country.

They said Hapilon is an Abu Sayyaf leader and there's no direct link between his group and ISIS.

The military also said they have killed 24 Abu Sayyaf fighters since Saturday.

In the past two days, though, there have been no reports of direct clashes between the bandits and government troops.

Only sporadic gunfire has been reported since Monday.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

Officer killed in Basilan quit teaching to join army

From Rappler (Apr 12)



AFTERMATH. Army soldiers arrive in Basilan to reinforce military troops after the April 9 clash. File photo by Richard Falcatan/Rappler

ISABELA, Philippines -- "Bright and kind."

This was how his family described slain Army Lieutenant Remigio Licena, who was among the 19 soldiers killed in the 10-hour clash between government troops and terrorists in Basilan last April 9.

Licena was the highest ranking soldier among the casualties and the only one from Luzon, according to his brother Javier Licena. He was 28.

The lieutenant's remains arrived via a military plane at the Cauayan City airport on Monday afternoon, April 11. He was brought to his home in the village of Rang-Ayan in Ilagan City also in Isabela province.

The family is pleading for justice, adding the government should immediately punish the gunmen behind the attack.

Licena graduated cum laude in Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from the International School of Asia and the Pacific in Tuguegarao City.

Before entering the military, he taught for two years in Rang-Ayan National High School, Ilagan police chief Superintendent Manuel Bringas told Rappler in phone interview.

According to Basilan clash survivor Sergeant Erico Paglinawan, Licena was killed after the Abu Sayyaf stormed the military routes with gunfire and M203 grenades.

The military said the attack in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan also wounded at least 52 soldiers and 20 terrorists, including Abu Sayyaf leader Radzmil Janatul, aka Kubayb, and notorious Abu Sayyaf kidnapper Furuji Indama.

Of the 19 soldiers killed, 18 of them died during the clash while one died hours after being brought to the hospital. Four of the soldiers were beheaded in the fighting.

The military said 13 of the terrorists were also killed in the clash.

A terror expert earlier told Rappler that the clash was the first major attack of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS, IS, ISIL, or Da'esch, in the Philippines.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Authorities clueless on Buluan bombing try

BULUAN, Maguindanao: Authorities here on Monday remain clueless as to the motives and the suspects behind the bombing attempts that could have threatened thousands of people celebrating the town's 80th founding anniversary.

But officials belied insinuations that the bombing attempt has something to do with politics as election day nears.

Approximately 10,000 people were commemorating the foundation day of Buluan on Saturday with Davao City mayor and presidential candidate Rodrigo Duterte when two improvised explosive device (IEDs) were uncovered.

Philippine Army bomb experts recovered the IEDs planted along roadside fences in Barangay Poblacion at about 8:30 p.m., kilometers away from the crowd.

The IEDs were rigged with two plastic bottle containers filled with 2 kilos of black powders, blasting caps, detonating cords, triple AAA batteries, concrete nails, bolts, nuts, wireless remote control and other explosive components.

Buluan Municipal Police Chief Senior Insp. Gani Miro said they are closely looking into the incident to identify the culprits.

Meanwhile, Buluan Vice Mayor King Jhazzer Mangudadatu belied reports that the attempts were related to politics in Maguindanao, which was recently cited as among areas of concern by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Mangudadatu, eldest son of Maguindanao Gov. Esmael "Toto" Mangudadatu, did not mention possible culprits but hinted that they usually target camps of government forces.

"It was not a politically motivated attack as the bombs were planted near the police station, away from the crowd," he said.

The known threat group operating in the province are members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) who have a record of harassing military and police detachments.

It is also feared that the rebel group, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), will stage disturbances during the election.

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

Army overruns rebel camp in Samar

From the Manila Times (Apr 12)

TACLOBAN CITY: Philippine Army's 20th Infantry Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Hilarion Palma, the New People's Army (NPA) in Northern Samar suffered a big blow after its camp was overrun by troopers recently.

Recovered from a rebel camp in Catoto-ogan village, Las Navas were 10 bunkers and four observation posts, an improvised explosive device, five blasting caps, battery, 12 empty shells of AK47 rifle, 20 empty shells of M16 rifle, personal belongings and foodstuff.

Soldiers uncovered the lair after they caught some rebels planting landmines along the village roadside.

The NPA settlement was seized by 81st Reconnaissance Company under the supervision of 20th IB led by 2nd Lt. Jojo Consorte.

<http://dwdd.com.ph>

CIVILIAN SUPPORT II 8ID Troopers Seized NPA Camp in Northern Samar

Alvin Santiago

Camp Lukban, Catbalogan Samar (DWDD) – A New People's Army camp was seized by 81st Reconnaissance Company under the supervision of 20th Infantry (We Lead) Battalion at Brgy Catotogan, Las Navas, Northern Samar on April 6, 2016.



According to Lt Col. Hilarion Palma, commanding officer of 20th Infantry Battalion, the security patrols conducted by the troops led by 2Lt Jojo C Consorte are based on the information from civilian populace regarding the presence of armed groups believed to be the members of Eastern Visayas Regional Party Committee of Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

Recovered from the enemy camp are: ten (10) bunkers, four (4) observation posts, one (1) Improvised Explosive Device (IED) made of PVC pipe with 10" diameter and height, five (5) blasting caps, one (1) nine (9) volts battery, one (1) battery case, twelve (12) empty shells of AK47 rifle, twenty (20) empty shells of M16 rifle, personal belongings and foodstuff.

Lt Col. Palma said that the CPP/NPA repeatedly violated the prohibition or restriction of using anti-personnel mine as stated in the Ottawa treaty and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) jeopardizing the safety of innocent and defenseless civilians specially the children.

20IB conducted dialogues (Pulong-pulong) to the populace of nearby barangays to ensure the safety and security of the populace and for the peaceful resolve of the conflict.

Major General Jet B Velarmino, Commander 8ID lauded the troops for their ultimate sacrifices and professionalism in protecting the community and its constituents in Eastern Visayas. **8DPAO / MCAG**

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com/>

Soldier dies in clash vs NPA rebels

From the Sun Star-Zamboanga (Apr 11)

A SOLDIER was killed in a clash with New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the province of Zamboanga Sibugay, the police reported Monday.

Superintendent Rogelio Alabata, Police Regional Office-Zamboanga Peninsula information officer, said the clash broke out around 7:15 a.m. in the village of Palinta, Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay.

Alabata said based on the report they received the troops were on security patrol when they encountered a group of NPA rebels.

According to Alabata, the firefight lasted for about 50 minutes after which the NPA rebels fled towards the north direction.

He said the slain soldier was identified as Private First Class Gerald Catalan of the Philippine Army's 15th Division Reconnaissance Company.

He said all the police stations were placed on alert to and was tasked to closely monitor the situation in coastal areas and safe havens of threat groups.

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Troops close in on Sayyaf

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Government troops are closing in on more than 60 Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan following last week-end's bloody clashes that left 18 soldiers dead and 56 wounded.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., the designated ground spokesman for the on-

going military offensive in Basilan, said troops from the Army's Special Forces, Rangers and the Light Reaction Company (LRC) were poised to strike against the remaining Abu Sayyaf holed up in the jungles of Tipo-Tipo.

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Troops

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"Our forces were positioned in tactical area to limit the maneuvering space of the Abu Sayyaf," Tan said.

He said the military has also placed additional troops on standby and ready to be deployed when needed.

Tan said the troops are running after the remaining 60 Abu Sayyaf led by Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama.

"There is a very large operation going on to get the remnants of this Abu Sayyaf group," Tan said.

According to Tan, Indama was wounded and was in critical condition following the encounter with government troops.

There were reports that Indama later died from his wounds. Tan, however, said they cannot confirm the information at the moment.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, however, clarified Indama is still alive but in critical condition along with several

of his men.

Padilla added 11 more bandits were killed and 20 others wounded as the military continued artillery attacks to soften the known positions of the Abu Sayyaf in the area.

"There's no significant engagement on the ground yesterday but ground troops are still in the area, continuously delivering suppressive artillery fire," Padilla said.

He said Indama was hit during last Sunday's fighting with government troops while trying to retrieve the body of Moroccan terrorist Mohammad Khattab.

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There were reports the bandits are now running out of medical supplies to treat their wounded, as soldiers are also closely watching over procurement of trauma medicine in all pharmacies in the province.

As of yesterday, the running total of Abu Sayyaf bandits killed in the last two days of fighting is now at 24. Five were killed on the spot, while four others were critically wounded and subsequently died.

In addition, soldiers also killed four of the bandits in last Sunday's fighting and 11 more who were critically

wounded in the two days of military ground assaults have also died.

"These are the reports coming in from the field, from local government units and from our intelligence operatives on the ground. We have also other ways, which I could not disclose, in getting our reports on the ground," Padilla said.

The military said the Abu Sayyaf initially suffered 13 killed and 26 others wounded while the government casualty remained at 18 killed and 56 wounded since the encounter Saturday at Barangay Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo.

Malacañang, on the other hand, said it would be "inappropriate" at this point to conduct any investigation on the deaths of 18 soldiers in the Basilan clashes with the Abu Sayyaf.

"It is inappropriate, in the meantime, to probe the encounter on Saturday, as there are still continuing and ongoing operations. The focus is on neutralizing and disabling these lawless elements," Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said yesterday. - With Jaime Laude, Delon Porcalla

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AFP pounds Abu Sayyaf positions with artillery fire

By ELENA L. ABEN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday reported that the number of slain Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits has increased to 24 as government forces continue to pound known locations of the militant group in Basilan.

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said pursuit operation against the bandit group has been continuous, although no significant engagement was reported on Tuesday.

"Today (Tuesday), our troops delivered artillery fires on known positions of the ASG," Padilla said, adding that government forces were still in the area in Tipo-Tipo town where the bloody encounter that left 18 Army troopers and nine militants dead occurred last Saturday.

The fighting continued until Sunday, wherein four militants were reported killed. And on Monday until yesterday, Padilla said aerial operations and shelling were conducted against the ASG.

"Patuloy pa rin ang ating suppressive fire na kailangang gawin bago po gumalaw ang ating mga tropa," Padilla said. This, he said, was aimed at suppressing possible resistance from militants who may still be in the area.

When pressed for details on the 11 additional fatalities on the enemy side, Padilla said it was possible that many of the 20 ASG earlier wounded in the fight have succumbed to their injuries, adding to the bandits' death toll.

Among the slain militants was Moroccan terrorist Mohammad Khattab, a bomb expert and supposedly a conduit of the ASG with a "Middle East interna-

tional terrorist group".

Earlier, both Padilla and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said ASG leader Furuji Indama, who was among the 20 bandits critically wounded in the April 9 battle, expired due to wounds he had sustained.

But this was later clarified by the AFP as merely information received from the ground, and that there are indications that the bandit leader was still alive despite being critically wounded.

Padilla also declined to comment on reports the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaked details of Saturday's operations to the ASG, saying he has no data on the matter.

Eighteen soldiers were killed and 53 others were wounded in the 10-hour clash between military units and ASG bandits in Barangay Baguidan, Tipo-Tipo last Saturday.

Meanwhile, the government said it preferred to pursue the military offensive against the ASG, before any investigation should be conducted into the Basilan clash.

Presidential Communications Operations Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said it was "inappropriate" to look into the Basilan incident with operations against the lawless elements still under way.

"We understand the grief and pain of the widows and bereaved families of our brave soldiers, who fought courageously and died in line of duty," Coloma said.

"However, it is inappropriate, in the meantime, to 'probe' the encounter on Saturday, as there are still continuing and ongoing operations. The AFP's focus is on neutralizing and disabling

these lawless elements," he added.

Families of the 18 slain soldiers have reportedly called for an investigation to ferret out the truth and seek justice for their loved ones who perished in Basilan last weekend.

The number of military casualties was reportedly the biggest in recent years. The handling of the Basilan operation was criticized by some groups since it echoed the Mamasapano incident that left 44 police commandos dead.

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The Manila Times

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Jihadists own up to Basilan attack

BY MOH SAADUDDIN
CORRESPONDENT

KIDAPAWAN CITY: Local and foreign jihadists, calling themselves Jundul Khilafah (JK) or soldiers of the caliphate, claimed responsibility for the attack in Basilan on Saturday.

In owning up to the attack, the group said three of their brothers – Muhammad Khattab Al-Maghribi Al-Muhajir, Wilson Asbi Al-Ansari and a certain Abu Ubaydah Al-Basilaniy – whom they described as martyrs, were confirmed killed in the skirmishes.

In their forum website, the JK said many were also wounded from their side, including their commander Abu Dujana, who sustained slight wound in the forehead.

They also claimed to have recovered from fallen soldiers one dozen of M4 rifles and a 90mm recoilless rifle.

The attack occurred at about 8 a.m. in Sitio Bayoko, Barangay Baguindan, Tipo-Tipo town of Basilan province, in the troubled Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

A nine-hour firefight ensued that lasted until about 4 p.m., when the attackers fled towards different directions in 10 groups.

At least 18 troopers were killed, while more than 50 soldiers were wounded in the firefight.

The soldiers, belonging to the 44th Infantry Battalion, the 4th Special Forces Battalion, and 14 Cavalry units – were attacked while conducting military operations against the ASG headed by Isnilon Hapilon and Indama.

The army recovered the body Asbi and Khattab, wearing a black shirt with IS logo print.

In their recent videos, the group said the ASG has been divided into two factions – Harakatul Islamiyah in Basilan and Jundul Tawhid in Sulu. The JK had aligned themselves with the IS, which declared an Islamic caliphate state in Syria and Iraq in June 2014.

The militants in Basilan are headed by Isnilon Hapilon, while Sulu jihadists are being led by Malaysian national Mohd Amin Baco.

Last month, Baco appeared in a video released online by IS's Al-Fu-

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rat Media Foundation, pledging allegiance to the IS's self-proclaimed caliph along with dozens of young Filipino militants.

"We Jundul Tawhid, affiliate of the ASG, are joining Abu Abdullah al-Filibini [or Ismailon Hapilon] under Jundul Khilafah in the Philippines and under the vision of Khilafah Islamiyah that are following the leader and caliph of Muslims Al-Sheikh Abu Bakr al-

Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Qurashi," Baco said as he read a script written in the Arabic language.

Baco has been in the country for years and traveling in different parts of Mindanao.

He was sighted in Maguindanao together with Zulkifli Bin Hir alias Marwan and Abdul Basit Usman and other members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), prior the infamous

Mamasapano tragic operation in January 2015.

He was first seen in Lanao del Sur with the militant group Khilafah Islamiyah Movement (KIM), now known as Dawlah Islamiyah or Islamic State in Lanao, being led by Abdullah Maute alias Abu Hasan.

Baco's recent video succeeded another video last January of his fellow national Mohd Najib Hu-

sen alias Abu Annas Al Muhajir, division head of the Ansar al-Sharia of the IS.

Husen was killed in Basilan when his forces engaged with the military last December. The IS's Al-Furat Media Foundation confirmed his death.

Husen had witnessed the "official" pledge of allegiance of Hapilon's group to the IS.

Baco and Husen were with Mahmud Ahmad, Muhammad Joraimie Awang Raimee and Jeknial Adil, who fled to the Southern Philippines in 2014.

The Malaysian government has been tracking their whereabouts because of their ties with the IS and for recruiting militants to join their cause.

Baco, Hapilon and Maute were named commanders after IS hinted last year that it was planning to expand its caliphate in the Southeast Asian region.

No public pronouncement has been made by the leaders of the groups of the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), the Ansaru Khilafah in Sarangani (AKS) and the BIFF in Maguindanao, but they were believed to be headed by Ahmad Santos, Ismael Abubakar and Muhammad Jafaar Maguid respectively.

All the groups had unified their cause to the black banner of the IS after they vowed support to the IS

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Troops shell Sayyaf positions in Basilan

BY VICTOR REYES

THE military yesterday shelled Abu Sayyaf positions in Tipo-Tipo town in Basilan as troops continued pursuit operations for the group that killed 18 soldiers and wounded 53 others in a fierce gun battle last Saturday. "Suppressive fires" were delivered by the military to

prevent possible resistance by the enemy, said Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, Armed Forces spokesman.

"Our (pursuit) operations are ongoing, though there is no significant engagement that occurred today. What our troops delivered were artillery fires to

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known positions of the ASG," said Padilla.

Padilla said the artillery fire, mostly from howitzers, was delivered based on intelligence information gathered by the military as to the whereabouts of the Abu Sayyaf.

Padilla said the military also conducted ground and aerial bombardment on other Abu Sayyaf positions last Monday. Padilla said there were no aerial operations conducted yesterday.

Government forces clashed for about 10 hours with about 120 Abu Sayyaf men in Barangay Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo last Saturday, leaving 18 soldiers, and wounding of 53 other troops from the 44th Infantry Battalion.

The military initially reported that five terrorists died in the fighting, including Moroccan Mohammad Khattab. On Monday, it said the Abu Sayyaf fatalities in the firefight increased to nine.

Officials said six Abu Sayyaf were also wounded, includ-

ing Abu Sayyaf leader Furuji Indama, the No. 2 man of the bandit group.

At noon yesterday in Villamor Air Base after the blessing of C-130 plane acquired from US government, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Padilla announced that the number of fatalities from the side of the Abu Sayyaf has risen to 25, including Indama.

Two hours later, Padilla apologized and said Indama was "critically wounded" and not killed. He said he received erroneous reports that said Indama is dead.

Padilla said the number of enemy fatalities is 24 or 11 more than the accumulated number of Abu Sayyaf men killed in the fighting last Saturday and Sunday.

Padilla said the additional Abu Sayyaf fatalities were earlier counted as wounded who might have died due to loss of blood.

Of the 24, only two bodies have been recovered, including that of Khattab. He said the death of the rest were validated by various sources.

Army spokesman Col. Benjamin Hao belied reports that the military cancelled funeral honors for the 18 slain soldiers.

Hao said the soldiers were given honors at the headquarters of the Army's 1st Infantry Division in Labangan town in Zamboanga del Sur.

He said soldiers were not given honors when they were transported to Zamboanga City, home to the AFP's Western Mindanao Command, because they had to be autopsied and dressed first.

Hao said departure honors were also accorded as soldiers' bodies were transported to their provinces and arrival honors when they reached their destination. He said honors will also be given to the soldiers when they will be laid to rest.

"Please be informed that the Philippine Army denies this (purported cancellation of honors). Our instruction is to give full honors to all those who were killed in action in Basilan, especially funeral honors, vigil, the arrival and departure honors," said Hao.

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24 dead Abu Sayyaf in Basilan

The military said yesterday that 24 Abu Sayyaf Group bandits have been killed as government forces continue to pound known locations of the militant group in Basilan.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, spokesman, Armed Forces of the Philippines, said pursuit operations against the bandit group are continuing although no significant engagement was reported yesterday.

"Today (Tuesday), our troops delivered artillery fires on known positions of the ASG," Padilla said.

He said that government forces are still in the area in Tipo-Tipo where the bloody encounter that left 18 Army soldiers and nine ASG members dead last Saturday occurred.

The fighting continued until Sunday, in which four ASG members were reported killed.

On Monday until yesterday, Padilla said aerial operations and shelling were conducted against the ASG.

"Patuloy pa rin ang ating suppressive fire na kailangang gawin bago po gumalaw ang ating mga tropa," Padilla said.

This, he said, aims to suppress possible resistance from the ASG who may still be in the area. **(Elena L. Aben)**

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4 workers snatched by ASG freed

FOUR of the six sawmill workers kidnapped by the local terrorist Maute Group were released by their captors in Butig town in Lanao del Sur after several days in captivity, a police official disclosed yesterday.

Sr. Supt. Rustom Duran, director of the Lanao provincial police office, said the four kidnap victims were released to their employer, Anisa Gunda, in Butig last Sunday night after negotiations.

Duran said the victims - Gabriel Tomatao, Julito Hanobas, Adonis Mendez, and Alfred Canoos - were in "good physical condition" when received by Gunda.

Duran said the victims were turned over later on Sunday to the officials of the Butig police

station, who in turn turned the kidnap victims over to their families in Iligan City last Monday.

Duran said Gunda facilitated the negotiations to secure the freedom of the workers. Duran could not immediately say if ransom was paid to the kidnapers because the PNP was not privy to the negotiations.

Duran said the PNP is getting the affidavits of the kidnapped victims. He said the affidavits will be part of the case that they are preparing against the members of the Maute Group.

Still in the hands of the group are Salvador Primentes and Jemark Hanonos Primentes. Efforts are still underway to secure the freedom of the remaining kidnap victims.

The six sawmill workers

were snatched by Maute Group members in Purok 4 in Barangay Sandab in Butig last April 5. The victims were later brought to the vicinity of Camp Darul Imam, a camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in barangay Sandab.

The kidnapping occurred more than a month after the military declared the Maute Group was already neutralized. The group has linkages with the Southeast Asian regional terrorist network Jemaah Islamiyah.

The military launched an offensive against the Maute Group members last Feb. 20 when they attacked an Army detachment. The military declared victory last March 1, announcing they killed 24 members of the group. - *Victor Reyes*

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PAF gets another C-130 aircraft

By ELENA L. ABEN

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) formally received on Tuesday the first of two Lockheed C-130 cargo transport planes acquired from the United States under the Excess Defense Articles (EDA) program.

This brings to four the number of C-130 aircraft in the PAF inventory.

In a turnover ceremony held at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, US Ambassador Philip S. Goldberg handed the aircraft's maintenance and operational records and manual to Defense Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin, who then gave the items to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Hernando DCA Iriberri. ▶9

▶9

PAF gets another C-130... ◀1

Iriberry handed the documents to PAF chief Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina.

The two C-130 planes are worth some \$55 million. Of the amount, the Philippines contributed \$20 million while \$35 million was shouldered by the US, Gazmin told reporters in an interview following the ceremony.

The aircraft arrived at Benito Ebuen Airbase in Mactan, Cebu Wednesday last week.

It was flown by PAF pilots headed by Col. Alejandro Baclayon. The other

pilots were Lt. Col. Ian Earth Lamzon, Major Ian Dexter Danes, Major Anthony Amora, and Major Ramil Daet. The plane took off from Tucson, Arizona and made stopovers in California, Hawaii, Wake Island, and in Guam before heading for the Philippines.

The second C-130 is expected to arrive in the country third or fourth quarter of the year.

Military officials said the two aircraft will boost the PAF's heavy lift capability.

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Pahina. 2

C130 ng US itinurnover na sa Pinas

Itinurnover na kapon ng Estados Unidos sa Philippine Air Force (PAF) ang isa sa dalawang Lockheed C130 T Hercules cargo plane sa ilalim ng Excess Defense Article (EDA) program na naglalayong mapalakas pa ang kapabilidad ng hukbong panghimpapawid ng bansa.

Isinagawa ang turnover bago ang itinakdang pagbisita sa bansa ni US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter upang personal na saksihan ang Phil-US Balikatan war games kung saan papuputukin ng US forces ang High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) sa Crow Valley, Tarlac.

Si Carter ay makikipagpulong rin kay Defense Sec. Voltaire Gazmin at Pangulong Aquino.

Inihayag ni Gazmin na ang pagdating ng US cargo plane ay karagdagan sa air assets ng PAF na riasa 90 na ang bilang

na karamihan ay nabili sa ilalim ng administrasyon. Inaasahan namang darating sa bansa ang isa pang US Hercules cargo plane sa Setyembre. Ang

nasabing mga aircraft ay nabili sa halagang \$55M pero \$20 lamang ang ibinayad ng pamahalaan. (Joy Cantos)

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Bahay ng dating Air Force pilot natupok sa sunog

Nasunog ang bahay ng dating piloto ng Philippine Air Force sa Paranaque City noong Lunes ng gabi. Tinatayang nasa ₱1 million halaga ng ar-aralan ang natupok sa sunog. Ayon kay Chief Insp. Wilson Tana ng Paranaque Bureau of Fire Protection naganap ang sunog sa bahay ni Raffy Alvarez sa Nobel St., Phase 1, Barangay Moonwalk, na ngayon ay bahay bakasyon na lamang. Sinabi ni Tana na nagsimula ang sunog sa sala ng bahay. "Sa ngayon ang tinitingnan naming dahilan ng sunog ay short circuit. Ang sabi, dumaan 'yung carstaker para pakainin 'yung mga isda. Tapos lumabas siya para maghapunan at pagbalik niva eh nilalaman na ng apoy 'yung bahay," sinabi ni Tana. "Tupok na tupok 'yung kalaran ng bahay. Pati 'yung SUV' na nasa garahe nasunog. Mabuti at agad nakaresponde 'yung mga bumbero," idinagdag ni Tana. Walang naiulat na namatay o nasaktan sa sunog. Umabot lamang sa first alarm ang sunog at hindi kumalat sa ibang bahay dahil may firewall ang bahay ni Alvarez na ginawa noong 1973. Ipinaalala ni Tana sa publiko na tanggalin sa saksakan ang mga appliances sa bahay pag umaalis. "Lagi po kaming nagpapa-alaala na huwag ilwan ang bahay na may mga nakasaksak na electrical appliances. I-unplug kung may nakasaksak lalo ngayon na sobra ang init ng panahon at mahilis mag-overheat 'yan," sinabi ni Tana. **(Martin A. Sadongdong at Jean Fernando)**

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13 April 2016

The Manila Times

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US Navy officer charged with espionage

WASHINGTON: A decorated US Navy officer faces espionage and other charges after allegedly passing defense secrets to China and Taiwan -- and possibly other nations, a US official said Monday (Tuesday in Manila).

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official told Agence France-Presse the sailor is Lieutenant Commander Edward Chieh-Liang Lin, who has been in the Navy since 1999 and has won several awards including two Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medals.

The Navy declined to confirm

his identity, but provided a heavily redacted copy of a charge sheet that outlined four charges against an officer of Lin's rank.

According to that document, the suspect communicated "secret information relating to the national defense to representatives of a foreign government."

The US official said Lin is ac-

cused of handing secret information over to China and Taiwan, adding it was possible the investigation could also uncover ties to other countries.

A 2008 Navy article says Lin left his birthplace of Taiwan when he was 14 and eventually became a naturalized US citizen.

A Navy biography shows Lin underwent training as a nuclear specialist between 2000 and 2002, when he was still enlisted.

The charges say the accused was later assigned to the Navy's Commander Patrol and Reconnaissance Group, which gather intelligence.

The officer is also accused of

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violating a lawful general order by "wrongfully failing to properly store material classified as secret."

Prostitution charge

A third charge alleges he lied about which foreign country he was going to visit while on leave, and he was also alleged to have committed adultery and procured a prostitute, with "such conduct being... of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces."

The Navy declined to provide the name of the accused's attorney, and additional attempts to find his lawyer were not immediately

successful.

It was not clear how long Lin faces in prison if convicted, though the alleged offenses are "not capital."

Lin appeared before a preliminary Article 32 hearing on Friday, during which a military judge hears initial evidence and then recommends to a commanding admiral whether the case should be referred to a full court-martial.

Lin remains in custody at the naval brig in Chesapeake, Virginia.

The case emerges amid heightened tensions between China and regional neighbors in the South China Sea, where Beijing is build-

ing massive military structures including radar systems and an airstrip over reefs and tiny islands.

China claims almost all of the contested sea, which is important for international shipping and is believed to hold valuable mineral and energy deposits.

Neighboring countries and Washington fear China could impose military controls over the entire South China Sea (West Philippine Sea).

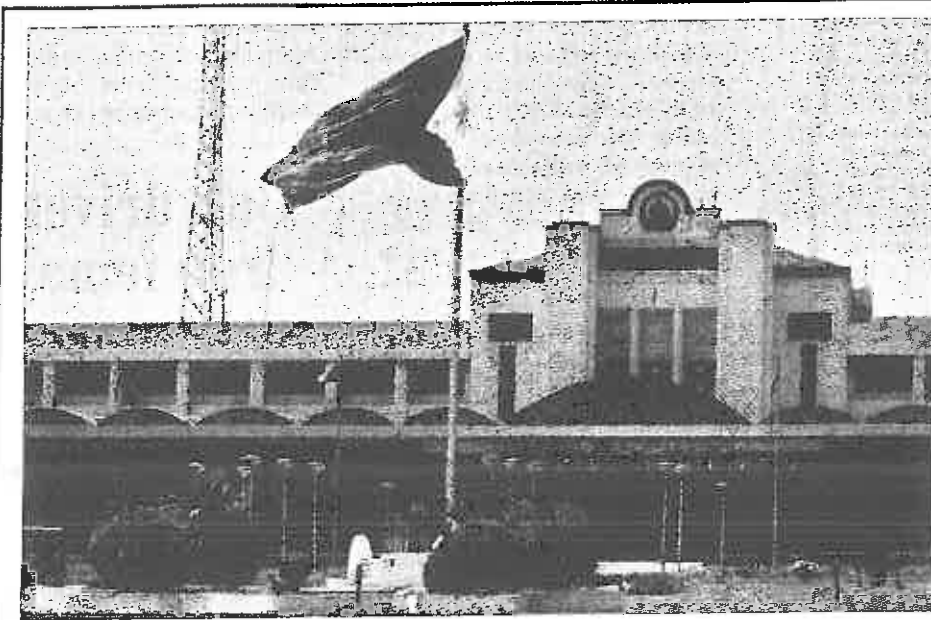
The United States also suspects Beijing is conducting cyber attacks on US interests and passing this information to the private sector for commercial gain.

AFF

13 April 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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**Honor-
ing fallen
soldiers.**
The Philip-
pine flag
flies at half
staff in front
of Camp
Aguinaldo
Tuesday as
the Armed
Forces
mourn the
death of
18 soldiers
in an
encounter
between the
military and
Abu Sayyaf
fighters in
Basilan.

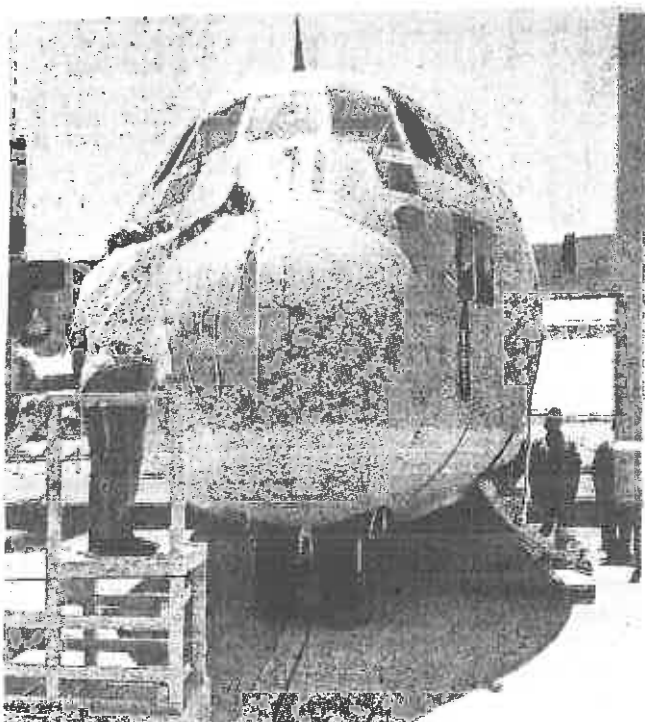
PHOTO BY ART SON

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13 April 2016



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Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin pours champagne on the nose of a C-130T military transport plane during a ceremony at Villamor Air Base in Pasay yesterday. The aircraft is one of the two C-130Ts to be delivered by the US government this year.

RUDY SANTOS

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<http://dwdd.com.ph>

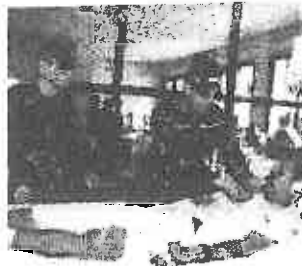
HONORING OUR HEROES II Defense Leadership visits WestMinCom

Alvin Santiago



Camp Navarro, Calarian, Zamboanga City (DWDD) – Secretary of National Defense Voltaire T. Gazmin along with the Chief of Staff, AFP General Hernando DCA Iriberri and Commanding General, Philippine Army Lt Gen Eduardo M. Año checked on the status of the ongoing operations, award wounded personnel medals and extend financial assistance to our wounded troopers and look into the concerns of the families of our troops who died in battle. Two Surgical Teams were brought from higher headquarters to augment the medical staff of Camp Navarro General Hospital (CNGH).

Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) Commander Lt Gen Mayoralgo M Dela Cruz received Secretary Gazmin. He was briefed by Col Rolando Bautista, Commander, Joint Task Group Basilan (JTGB) regarding the operations in Basilan and status of the troops on the ground. The Chief of Staff also had a press conference with the local media and emphasized that the operations will continue without let up. The group then proceeded to CNGH where Gen. Iriberri awarded those wounded in action and extended financial assistance to the troops.



Sec. Gazmin and party visited the WestMinCom Mosque to pay tribute and honor to our deceased Muslim brothers. The cadavers of our muslim brothers were immediately airlifted to their respective hometowns in Sulu and Tawi-tawi for immediate burial as part of their tradition.



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Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

As a form of sympathy, WestMinCom decided to forego with the PAC-BRAD III viewing at the gym to solemnly mourn the loss of the nation. Troopers who were brought home by their families were given appropriate honors, vigil and will be given full military honors during their interment.



During the flag raising, the soldiers mourned and offered prayers. Likewise, the flag was hoisted at half mast. Lt Gen Dela Cruz along with Joint Task Force ZAMBASULTA Commander Maj General Barrientos flew to Basilan Tactical Command Post to oversee the general conduct of operations.

They likewise visited the wounded troops and handed the financial assistance from the AFP Chief of Staff. Officers from Western Mindanao Command went to St. Peter Chapel to condole with the families of our troops that were killed in action.

Meanwhile, JTG Basilan continue its pursuit operations to neutralize the kidnap for ransom group Abu Sayyaf and prevent them from conducting terroristic activities in the future.

WestMinCom Chief ordered to intensify the operations not only in Basilan Area but as well as the whole of Western Mindanao Command Area of Responsibility to free our constituents from the threats posed by these lawless elements. **PIO WESMINCOM / MCAG**

<http://www.philstar.com>

We'll hunt them day and night'

By Jaime Laude (The Philippine Star) | Updated April 12, 2016 - 12:00am



AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry has ordered the troops to conduct sustained operations against the enemy. USARPAC photo/Kyle J. Richardson/File

AFP kills 4 more Abus

MANILA, Philippines - Four Abu Sayyaf members were killed in renewed fighting last weekend in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan as military reinforcements conducting pursuit operations hit hard at the militants that earlier gunned down 18 soldiers, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reported yesterday.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, said soldiers clashed with the bandits Sunday in Barangay Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo town.

The latest killings brought to 13 the death toll of the Abu Sayyaf since fighting started last Saturday. Five bandits were earlier killed.

"The death of four Abu Sayyaf is in line with continuing operations against the bandit group in Basilan as per directive from the top military leadership," Padilla said, adding that scores of bandits were wounded. Additional troops from the AFP's elite anti-terror force, the Light Reaction Company (LRC), and the Army Scout Rangers were dispatched to Basilan to help track down the bandits led by Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama.

AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry has ordered the troops to conduct sustained operations against the enemy.

"We have deployed additional troops to the island. Day and night we will go after these bandits," an informed military source said.

Aside from Basilan-based units, troops from Sulu were also deployed to go after the Abu Sayyaf involved in kidnap for ransom operations in the region and in Sabah.

Informed sources said that last Sunday's fighting broke out when dozens of Abu Sayyaf members were trying to recover the body of a Moroccan terrorist, Mohammad Khattab, who was killed during the encounter with government troops the previous day.

The bandits killed 18 soldiers and wounded 56 others during clashes last Saturday. Some were reportedly beheaded.

Khattab, passing himself off as an Islamic preacher, had been the conduit between the homegrown terrorists in Mindanao and Middle East-based international network, until the troops finally caught up with

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

him in Basilan.

He was killed during the clash with elements of the Army's 44th Infantry Battalion (IB).

Sources said pursuing troops prevented the bandits from retrieving the body of Khattab.

The remains of the Moroccan terrorist are now in military custody and would be buried in accordance with Muslim burial rites.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said operations are continuing against Radullan Sahiron, Indama and their gang.

"The operation is continuous and there is no letup in going after the Abu Sayyaf group," Tan said.

The military said the killing of Khattab has apparently preempted possible bombings and stopped the training of local bomb makers of the Abu Sayyaf.

Khattab was one of two foreign terrorists based in Basilan.

His companion, Malaysian bomb expert Mohammad Najib Hussein alias Abu Anas, was killed last Dec. 15 in Al-Barka, Basilan.

"We preempted pohttp://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/04/12/1571919/well-hunt-them-day-and-nightssibility of bombing attack because we neutralized Mohammad Khattab. He could no longer pass on his terroristic trade craft," Tan said.

Tan said they could not confirm if Khattab and Hapilon are espousing the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

President Aquino directed the military to go after the Abu Sayyaf in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said yesterday that the President gave the instructions to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Iriberry during their meeting in Malacañang last Sunday evening.

"Both officials informed the President that, in accordance with his instructions, pursuit operations are still being conducted and that the troops are fully equipped and adequately supported," Coloma told Palace reporters.

Gazmin and Iriberry briefed Aquino on the progress of the continuing operations against the Abu Sayyaf and other lawless elements in Basilan after the military officials returned from Zamboanga City.

Mourning

Mourning relatives and friends attended the homecoming of Army Lt. Remigio Licenia, 28, one of the 18 fallen troops in Basilan.

Licenia was a former teacher at the Rang Ayan National High School before he was commissioned in the military and became a member of the Army's 44th IB.

Supt. Manuel Bringas, Ilagan City police chief, said Licenia served as a barrio teacher in a local public school for two years before he entered the Army as a commissioned officer.

The other soldiers killed in Basilan were: Staff/Sgt. Makin Jarani , Sgt. Akmad Usman, Sgt. Paterno Oquino , Sgt. Jayson Alani , Corporals Redel Perolino , Reezvi Archcelo Gandawali , Rodelio Bangcain , Noel Else , Dionisio Labial , Rakib Kadil, Daruis Bulan and Ibrahim Palao , Privates First Class Doren Aspurias , Marjun Duhaylungsod , Marjohn Monte and Kevin Rey Verano , and Private Dunemark Gii Saidivar.

Six of the 18 slain soldiers who were Muslims were brought to the mosque inside the Westmincom headquarters and their remains sent to their respective families for traditional Muslim burial rites.

The remains of the other soldiers were brought to the private funeral parlor and placed inside metal caskets before transport to their hometowns aboard military trucks.

The remains of Lt. Liceña were transported via a C-130 military cargo plane last Sunday night to Isabela.

The Army belied reports yesterday that military honors due to dead soldiers killed in action in Basilan have been cancelled.

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Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

"We deny it," Col. Benjamin Hao, Army spokesman said in reference to reports that the slain soldiers were not given honors.

Hao said that instructions from the Army leadership were very clear to render full honors, especially the arrival and departure honors, to all the fallen troopers.

However, Hao said that in the case of Muslim soldiers, they were immediately buried based on their culture and practices.

In fact, in the absence of a regular flight, a C-130 cargo plane was even dispatched to fly the two bodies of Tausug soldiers to Sulu for burial the other day.

"But for the rest, we will give them honors because they deserve it. They fought gallantly for our nation.

Giving them the appropriate military honors is the least we can do for them," Hao said.

He added that the Army would start releasing the initial benefits today to the families of the fallen soldiers.

Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, who is from Sumisip, Basilan also mourned the death of the soldiers.

"We mourn their deaths and pray for the recovery of the soldiers who sustained gunshot wounds and blast injuries during the encounter," said Hataman, chairman of the regional peace and order council.

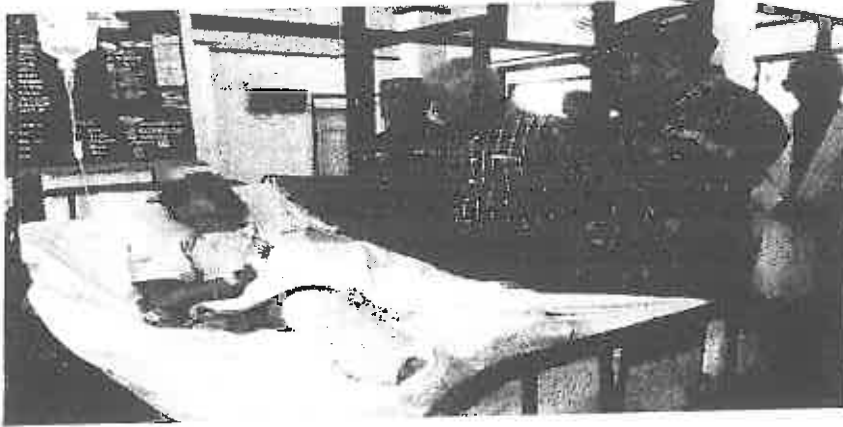
Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad expressed disappointment over the death of 18 soldiers during the encounter with the Abu Sayyaf.

"It is very depressing when our government forces are seemingly defeated with 18 soldiers as casualties," said Jumoad, who has been the Basilan bishop since Jan. 10, 2002.

<http://www.philstar.com>

PNoy to visit wounded soldiers, wake of fallen troopers in Basilan

By Roel Pareño_(philstar.com) | Updated April 12, 2016 - 4:09pm



A wounded soldier talks with Gen. Hernando Iriberrí, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, and Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año at a military hospital in Zamboanga City. Roel Pareño/File photo

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines - President Benigno Aquino III will visit Wednesday the 56 soldiers wounded in the Basilan encounter, according to military official.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said Aquino will also visit the wake of the fallen troopers to extend sympathy to the bereaved families.

Tan said the Office of the President has been coordinating the visit since Sunday after Aquino, as the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), was informed about Saturday's fateful incident when 18 soldiers died and 56 others were wounded in Tipo-Tipo town, Basilan.

The encounter between the government forces and the Abu Sayyaf group occurred almost three weeks after Aquino visited Sumisip town, near Tipo-Tipo, to lead the inauguration of the Basilan Circumferential Road (BRC) last March 21.

On the eve of Aquino's visit, unidentified men fired a rifle grenade in Tumahubong village in Sumisip town, where the president was scheduled to visit. It was not confirmed whether the explosion was intended to disrupt the president's activities.

Tan said Aquino is expected to arrive before lunch Wednesday at Westmincom and will visit the wounded soldiers confined at the Camp Navarro General Hospital.

<http://interaksyon.com>

ROBIN HOOD ALLURE | Abu Sayyaf attracts recruits, maintains mass base - AFP

By: Jaime Sinapit, InterAksyon.com
April 12, 2016 4:50 PM



Armed Abu Sayyaf militants Image from News5 broadcast.

MANILA - The more ransom money delivered to the militant Islamist group Abu Sayyaf for every captive released, the more members potentially recruited and mass bases strengthened.

This was the terse assessment by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman, Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, Monday, as he elaborates on how the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which has been designated as a terrorist group by the United Nations, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States, apparently distributes a portion of their loot in local communities, Robin Hood-style, and uses the bulk of the money to acquire sophisticated armaments.

"Just like the legendary Robin Hood of the old days, the ransom is used in part to maintain their mass base, and to cultivate goodwill in communities. And, since many of the youth in the rural areas lack education amid the difficult life, many get lured into joining them, as a way out of the harsh conditions and the poverty," Padilla explained to journalists in response to a question about whether or not the ASG membership and strength is increasing or decreasing.

The military claims the ASG strength is believed to be somewhere between 300 and 400 gunmen, operating principally in the provinces of Basilan and Sulu.

Some of the ASG recruits are suspected to be minors, although Padilla pointed out that is no evidence yet if the bandits who figured in the clash with Army troops at the weekend in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan had minors with them. The running firefights killed 18 soldiers, 18 bandits and resulted in almost 80 wounded from both sides.

The ASG is believed to have been created in 1991 by its founder Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, who was killed by government troops in 1998.

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Over the years, the military claimed, the handful of Islamist radicals reached 1,000 gunmen in the 2000s, when they started high-profile kidnap-for-ransom activities victimizing foreign and local tourists. Some of their victims were decapitated in cases where ransom money was not delivered.

The government stands pat on its "no ransom policy" against the ASG and all other kidnap-for-ransom groups, amid talk of payments being made by relatives of every single victim released.

Just recently, kidnap victim Fr. Rolando Torchio, an Italian, was released by the ASG amid reports of payment of millions of pesos for his release. The military, however, said they were unaware of such ransom payment.

Padilla said the release of the priest was because of "pressure and deliberate military operations" that forced the bandits to release him. This appears to be the usual "media line" that every military spokesman keeps in mind every time reporters seek to clarify reports of alleged ransom payments.

Meanwhile, the military is also clamping a news blackout about the three foreigners and a Filipina who were threatened in March with beheadings if the ransom money of P3 billion is not met. The ASG had originally set April 8 as the deadline, or else they would start beheading their captives.

<http://interaksyon.com>

Military buries slain Moroccan bomber in Basilan

By: Thom Andrade, InterAksyon.com
April 12, 2016 3:42 PM



Abu Sayyaf fighters on patrol. Reuters file photograph.

MANILA - Reports reaching Manila indicated that the military has buried a Moroccan bomb-making expert who was killed during fierce fighting between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan over the weekend.

"Mohammad Khattab was buried in accordance with Muslim rites, but we buried him and we will not give his remains to anyone)," Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla told reporters at Villamor Airbase on Tuesday.

The weekend firefight saw at least 18 soldiers killed and more than 50 individuals wounded.

Meanwhile, military pursuit operations overseen by Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz of the Western Mindanao Command are continuing against the Abu Sayyaf, who, Padilla said, have so far suffered 25 dead, although he acknowledged that full information on the slain gunmen is still in the process of being gathered.

"The enemy here is terrorism ... terrorism that knows no religion, that knows no nationality, everyone is a victim when we speak of terrorism," Padilla said.

He added that the casualties suffered by the military have only made the soldiers more determined to press the fight.

However, he declined to give the number of troops involved in the operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Military continuously shelling ASG positions

In the ongoing operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan, a total of 24 terrorists have been killed since April 9.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla in a Tuesday briefing said the figures came from Western Mindanao Command head Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo Dela Cruz.

Padilla said that all slain bandits were identified by military and police units involved in the operations in Basilan.

He added that it is also possible that many of the 20 ASG earlier wounded in the fight had succumbed to their injuries, adding to the bandits death toll.

Included in the ASG toll was Moroccan terrorist Mohammad Khatttab, an improvised explosive device expert and supposedly a conduit of a "Middle East international terrorist group".

The former's body was also recovered by ground units.

As this develops, ASG positions in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan were repeatedly shelled in an effort to soften the bandits and prevent them from resisting troops out to flush them.

"Artillery fire (is) meant to suppress possible resistance that may be on the ground in those areas," the AFP spokesperson said.

Earlier, both Padilla and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said ASG leader Furuji Indama, who was among the 20 bandits critically wounded in the April 9 battle, was among the bandits who succumbed to their wounds.

But this was corrected as information received from the ground indicated that the bandit leader is still alive despite being critically wounded.

Padilla declined to comment on claims that members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front leaked details of the April 9 operations to the ASG while coordinating with the MILF, adding that he had no data on the matter.

Eighteen soldiers and 53 others were wounded in the more than nine-hour clash between military units and ASG bandits in Barangay Baguidan, Tipo-Tipo last April 9. The encounter started 7:55 a.m. and lasted until 5:30 p.m.

There was also an ASG attempt to behead two of the slain soldiers but these were prevented by covering fire of surviving troops, Padilla said.

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

ASG death toll in Basilan operations now at 24 - AFP spokesperson

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

AFP to fly flags in half-mast for a week

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 12)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that all its camps nationwide will fly their flags in half-mast for a week in honor of the 18 soldiers killed while battling Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists in Basilan last April 9.

This was stressed by AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla in a briefing Monday.

Placing of all flags in military camps in half-mast started last April 10 and will end on April 17.

All Department of National Defense controlled-facilities will also do the same, he added.

"Flags are flown at half-mast to mourn the death of our soldiers...our heroes who offered the ultimate sacrifice, their lives, last Saturday, our National Day of Valor, in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan in a day long encounter against elements of the kidnap-for-ransom-group ASG. We fly it at half-mast to honor their gallantry and sacrifice," Padilla earlier said.

Around 18 troopers and 53 others were wounded in a more than nine-hour encounter with ASG bandits in Sitio Bayoko, Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan last April 9.

The battle started 7:55 a.m. and ended on 5:30 p.m.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

AFP downplays ISIS hand in Basilan clash

From CNN Philippines (Apr 12)



The Wesmincom said more than 2,000 fully armed soldiers had been deployed in Basilan to hunt down Abu Sayyaf members operating in Tipo-Tipo.

The military said on Tuesday (April 12) it is doing its best to prevent a spill-over of the conflict after the firefight against Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Tipo Tipo, Basilan on Saturday (April 9). The military is deploying troops strategically to keep Abu Sayyaf fighters from slipping into nearby towns. With Furuji Indama reportedly critically injured during an encounter on Sunday (April 10), government troops are on the look-out for Isnilon Hapilon, the Abu Sayyaf Group leader in Basilan who recently pledged allegiance to ISIS.

Also read: Who are the Abu Sayyaf?

The military also confirmed that the viral video showing the intense clash is real. The soldiers seen in the video are members of the 44th Infantry Battalion. A total of 18 soldiers died during the encounter — the biggest death toll in a single military operation since 2011.

"Yung nagpa-fire ng caliber 30, tropa natin 'yun," said Western Mindanao Command spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan. "Nagbibigay sya ng suppressive fire for the troops to maneuver also." In the 10-minute video, a soldier is seen frequently inserting a rod to his caliber 30 machine gun, seemingly fixing something so he may fire his weapon.

But the military clarifies the machine gun did not jam. "Kasi ang caliber 30, naka-link yan so kailangan talaga minsan magpasok ng isang projectile. It has its own mechanism. Pero nakita nyo naman ang putok dire-diretso," said Tan. Soldiers killed Moroccan terrorist Mohammad Khattab and Hapilon's son Ubaida Hapilon during the operation, and operations are now targeted at ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon.

Also read: Fallen troopers honored as AFP pursues ASG in Basilan

In an earlier interview with CNN Philippines, international terror expert Rohan Gunaratna confirmed Hapilon is one of the ISIS leaders in the country.

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<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

First C-130T now formally transferred to PHL

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 12)

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) on Tuesday formally accepted into service one of the two Lockheed C-130T "Hercules" cargo aircraft acquired from the US through the Excess Defense Articles Program. Officially, there are now four C-130 aircraft in the Philippine Air Force (PAF) inventory. US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg handed to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin the maintenance and operational records of the C-130T plus the aircraft manuals. Gazmin then gave the items to Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief-of-Staff Gen. Hernando DCA Iriberry who then handed the documents to the PAF Chief Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina. The defense chief said that the two C-130Ts were acquired from the US for about USD55 million, with the Philippines contributing USD20 million and the American USD35 million. Originally, these two C-130Ts were configured for tanker missions and were later converted for transport missions before being acquired by the Philippines. The fourth C-130 arrived 11: 25 p.m. at Benito Ebuen Airbase, Mactan, Cebu last April 5. It was flown by Filipino pilots headed by Col. Alejandro Baclayon, Lt. Col. Ian Earth Lamzon, Major Ian Dexter Danes, Major Anthony Amora, and Major Ramil Daet. The second aircraft is expected to arrive by this September or October. The aircraft took off from Tucson, Arizona early this week and made stopovers in California, Hawaii, Wake and Guam Islands before heading for the Philippines. Arrival of these planes will boost the PAF's heavy lift capability. "Remember if we need to move a big number of troops and supplies (especially) heavy equipment for rapid deployment, it will be much easier as we have additional (C-130) aircraft," PAF spokesperson Col. Araus Roberto Musico earlier said. Originally, these two C-130Ts were configured for tanker missions and were later converted for transport missions before being acquired by the Philippines. Aside from the C-130s, the PAF has three Airbus Military C-295 medium and three Fokker F-27 transports for its logistics and lift missions. As this develops, Gazmin called the visit of US Defense Secretary Ash Carter during the "Balikatan" exercises as a demonstration of the robust defense relations between the US and the Philippines. "(This demonstrates) the iron-clad commitment of the US to the Philippines (in regards to security) as stated by President Barack Obama," he added. Carter is expected to arrive in the Philippines this Wednesday. On the same day, he is set to witness the HIMARS live-fire drills in Crow Valley in Tarlac. The "Balikatan" exercises started last April 4 and will formally end on April 16.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

'Rebels' disarm 4 policemen in Zambo Norte town

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 12)

Combined police and military forces have launched a pursuit operations against a group of "rebels" in an outskirts barangay of this town.

Senior Supt. Edwin Wagan, provincial police director, said this came after around 15 gunmen have waylaid and disarmed four policemen around 9 a.m. Tuesday in Barangay Gubat, 30 kilometers from the town hall.

Wagan disclosed that the policemen were checking the reported presence of unidentified gunmen "going house to house" when they were stopped by a woman in a secluded area.

Wagan said that at least 15 heavily armed men surrounded and disarmed them when they stopped their vehicle.

He said disarmed were the following: SPO4 Joel Diamante; PO3 Roland Dadan; PO3 Jose Laput; and, PO1 Tristan Adaza.

Taken from them were four M-16 Armalite rifles, two caliber .45 pistols, two 9-mm pistols and three hand-held radio transceivers.

The four policemen were also sent to Barangay Gubat "to conduct clearing operations" since the local Liberal Party (LP) candidates led by Mayor Jan Hendrik Vallecer are set to conduct late Tuesday a political rally in the area.

LP's second congressional district candidate Glona Labadlabad is set to join Vallecer's group. She is the wife of District 2 Rep. Resendo Labadlabad.

Wagan said one of the gunmen claimed they were rebels, but did not mentioned specific group. The rebels fled towards the direction of Barangay Lipakan.

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Indonesian hostages in southern Philippines safe, says foreign minister

The 10 Indonesians held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf in southern Philippines are reportedly safe following an intense shootout between the local army and the terrorist group, Indonesia's foreign affairs minister said today.

"As of Monday noon, we received information that the Indonesian boat crews are in good condition," China's Xinhua news agency quoted Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Retno LP Marsudi as saying in a statement.

The Indonesian hostages were not on the Basilan Island in southern Philippines during the nine-hour gunfight on Saturday, which killed 18 Philippine soldiers and five Abu Sayyaf militants.

The Indonesian government has been stepping up efforts to rescue the kidnapped seamen of the Indonesian-flagged tugboat Adnan 12 since the vessel was hijacked by the rebels while it was en-route to the Philippines from Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan which is the Indonesian part of Borneo island.

"We will continue to intensify our communications with the Philippine authorities, and our coordination with related institutions in Indonesia," Retno said.

The 10 sailors have been held hostage since March 25 by the militant group.

The Abu Sayyaf group, which has long been notorious for carrying out kidnappings, beheadings, bombings and extortion, demanded a ransom of an equal US\$1.1 million (RM4.28 million) from the company that owned the vessel for the release of the crew members.

Retno said that the government would not pay the ransom.

"The Indonesian president and vice president are paying close attention to the rescue efforts, and have instructed to strengthen coordination," he said. — Bernama

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

April 12, 2001: American hostage freed in Philippines

From the Gulf News (Apr 12)



Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo greets rescued American hostage Jeffrey Schilling during their meeting at the Presidential guest house in Baguio city, northern Philippines

An American who had been held captive by Abu Sayyaf rebels for nearly eight months was set free but there was confusion as to whether his freedom came as a result of government negotiations, or the use of force.

Jeffrey Schilling, who was kidnapped in August 2000, is a free man.

One source said Schilling was released following high-level negotiations between local government officials in Jolo and representatives of the Abu Sayyaf group.

The source claimed Schilling **was** handed over by the group but none of the group's infamous leaders was arrested.

However, Brig-Gen Romeo Dominguez, who heads the military task force against the Abu Sayyaf, said Schilling was rescued following a successful military raid on the Abu Sayyaf camp in Luuk town, 55km south-west of Jolo.

After two hours of fighting, Schilling was abandoned by his captors, headed by Abu Sayyaf spokesman Abu Sabaya.

He was seen walking alone in the mountains of the picturesque town of Luuk, said Dominguez.

<http://retiredanalyst.blogspot.com>

Jihadists own up to Basilan attack

From the Manila Times (Apr 12)

Local and foreign jihadists, calling themselves Jundul Khilafah (JK) or soldiers of the caliphate, claimed responsibility for the attack in Basilan on Saturday.

In owning up to the attack, the group said three of their brothers – Muhammad Khattab Al-Maghribi Al-Muhajir, Wilson Asbi Al-Ansari and a certain Abu Ubaydah Al-Basilaniy – whom they described as martyrs, were confirmed killed in the skirmishes.

In their forum website, the JK said many were also wounded from their side, including their commander Abu Dujana, who sustained slight wound in the forehead.

They also claimed to have recovered from fallen soldiers one dozen of M4 rifles and a 90mm recoilless rifle.

The attack occurred at about 8 a.m. in Sitio Bayoko, Barangay Baguindan, Tipo-Tipo town of Basilan province, in the troubled Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

A nine-hour firefight ensued that lasted until about 4 p.m., when the attackers fled towards different directions in 10 groups.

At least 18 troopers were killed, while more than 50 soldiers were wounded in the firefight.

The soldiers, belonging to the 44th Infantry Battalion, the 4th Special Forces Battalion, and 14 Cavalry units – were attacked while conducting military operations against the ASG headed by Isnilon Hapilon and Indama.

The army recovered the body Asbi and Khattab, wearing a black shirt with IS logo print.

In their recent videos, the group said the ASG has been divided into two factions – Harakatul Islamiyah in Basilan and Jundul Tawhid in Sulu. The JK had aligned themselves with the IS, which declared an Islamic caliphate state in Syria and Iraq in June 2014.

The militants in Basilan are headed by Isnilon Hapilon, while Sulu jihadists are being led by Malaysian national Mohd Amin Baco.

Last month, Baco appeared in a video released online by IS's Al-Furat Media Foundation, pledging allegiance to the IS's self-proclaimed caliph along with dozens of young Filipino militants.

"We Jundul Tawhid, affiliate of the ASG, are joining Abu Abdullah al-Filibini [or Isnilon Hapilon] under Jundul Khilafah in the Philippines and under the vision of Khilafah Islamiyah that are following the leader and caliph of Muslims Al-Sheikh Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Husseini al-Qurashi," Baco said as he read a

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Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

script written in the Arabic language.

Baco has been in the country for years and traveling in different parts of Mindanao.

He was sighted in Maguindanao together with Zulkifli Bin Hir alias Marwan and Abdul Basit Usman and other members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), prior the infamous Mamasapano tragic operation in January 2015.

He was first seen in Lanao del Sur with the militant group Khilafah Islamiyah Movement (KIM), now known as Dawlah Islamiyah or Islamic State in Lanao, being led by Abdullah Maute alias Abu Hasan.

Baco's recent video succeeded another video last January of his fellow national Mohd Najib Husen alias Abu Annas Al Muhajir, division head of the Ansar al-Sharia of the IS.

Husen was killed in Basilan when his forces engaged with the military last December. The IS's Al-Furat Media Foundation confirmed his death.

Husen had witnessed the "official" pledge of allegiance of Hapilon's group to the IS.

Baco and Husen were with Mahmud Ahmad, Muhammad Joraimee Awang Raimie and Jeknal Adil, who fled to the Southern Philippines in 2014.

The Malaysian government has been tracking their whereabouts because of their ties with the IS and for recruiting militants to join their cause.

Baco, Hapilon and Maute were named commanders after IS hinted last year that it was planning to expand its caliphate in the Southeast Asian region.

No public pronouncement has been made by the leaders of the groups of the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM), the Ansarul Khilafah in Sarangani (AKS) and the BIFF in Maguindanao, but they were believed to be headed by Ahmad Santos, Ismael Abubakar and Muhammad Jafaar Maguid, respectively.

All the groups had unified their cause to the black banner of the IS after they vowed support to the IS.

<http://www.philstar.com>

Navy officer accused of passing secrets to China or Taiwan

By Robert Burns (Associated Press) | Updated April 12, 2016 - 6:41am

WASHINGTON — US defense officials say a Navy officer with access to classified information is accused of passing military secrets to China or Taiwan, or both.

A document that describes multiple charges against Lt. Cmdr. Edward C. Lin accuses him of failing to report foreign contacts and says that on multiple occasions he gave or attempted to give secret national defense information to representatives of a foreign government. He is in pretrial confinement.

Uncensored portions of the charge sheet do not identify whom he is accused of spying for. Three US officials said China or Taiwan, and possibly both, are involved. The officials were not authorized to discuss an ongoing investigation and requested anonymity.

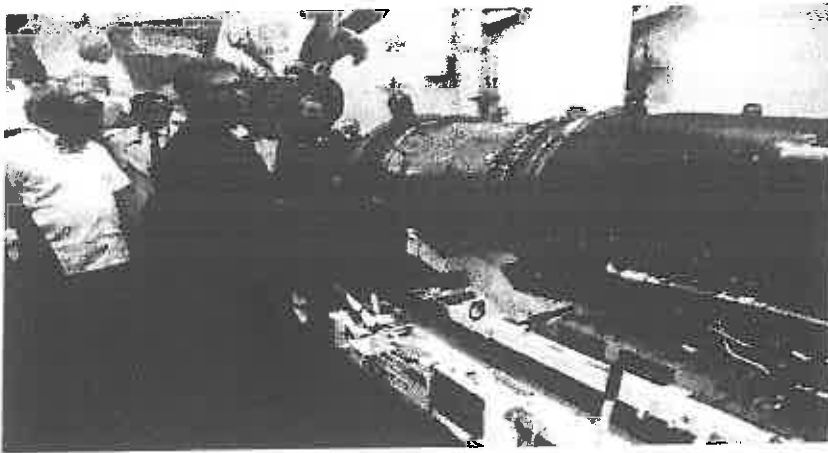
A Navy admiral must decide whether there is enough evidence against Lin to pursue a court martial.

<http://interaksvon.com>

India, US reach preliminary agreement on sharing military logistics amid China challenge

By: Yeganeh Torbati and Tommy Wilkes, Reuters

April 12, 2016 8:36 PM



India's Minister of Defense Manohar Parrikar (L) and US Defense Secretary Ash Carter (C) inspect a jet engine in the hanger deck of the USS Eisenhower off the coast of Virginia, in the Atlantic Ocean, December 10, 2015. REUTERS/Mark Wilson/Pool

NEW DELHI - India and the United States have agreed in principle to share military logistics, the countries' defense ministers said on Tuesday, as both sides seek to counter the growing maritime assertiveness of China.

Washington has for years urged New Delhi to sign a Logistics Support Agreement that allows the two militaries to use each other's land, air and naval bases for resupplies, repair and rest.

India has had concerns that a logistics agreement would commit it to hosting US troops at its bases, or draw it into a military alliance with the United States and undermine its traditional autonomy.

But after years of delays, the two sides said an agreement was in hand, although not yet ready for signing.

"We have agreed in principle that all the issues are resolved," US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told reporters in New Delhi after talks with his Indian counterpart, Manohar Parrikar.

The two sides would finalize the text of an agreement in coming weeks, Carter said.

Cementing defense cooperation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, faced with an assertive China expanding its influence in the South China Sea and into the Indian Ocean, has signaled its desire to draw closer to the United States. China is also a close ally of India's arch rival, Pakistan.

Modi is also keen to access US technology for his "Make in India" plans to build a domestic industrial base and cut expensive arms imports.

The US military has made clear it wants to do more with India, especially in countering China. Carter is on his second visit to India in less than a year, aimed at cementing defense cooperation in the final months of Barack Obama's presidency.

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Washington's desire for deeper security cooperation with India has been tricky without the signing of the logistics agreement, as well as two other pacts that would allow for secure communications and the exchange of nautical and other data. The agreements are considered routine between the United States and its other defense partners.

Reaching the logistics agreement would make it easier to conclude the other two pacts, a senior US defense official said.

"There's increasing recognition on the Indian side that there's real mutual benefits to doing them, so I do think that the prospects are good," the official said, on condition of anonymity.

Carter said the two countries would also soon conclude an agreement on exchanging information on commercial shipping.

Collaboration on aircraft carrier

He said the two countries were also advancing collaboration in aircraft carrier design and technology, potentially the biggest joint project since they launched a Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) in 2012.

India, which operates a re-tooled Russian-built carrier, plans to build its biggest indigenous carrier, for which is it looking at US technology to launch heavier aircraft.

"We have decided to take forward discussions under DTTI more aggressively on key areas such as jet engine technology. We will also continue our very useful and productive discussions on cooperation ... on aircraft carriers," Parrikar said.

India is concerned about China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, traditionally New Delhi's backyard, and it said on Tuesday that it had agreed with the United States to launch discussions between the countries' two navies on anti-submarine warfare and submarine safety.