

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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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 December 2016

Monday

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

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

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19 DECEMBER 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

US TO WORK WITH DU30

US Embassy says it will be working closely with the Duterte administration

US and Duterte, however, did not say he will immediately end the military agreement

PEACE, LOVE AND GIANT LANTERNS

UNDERGO MEDICAL EXAM, DUTERTE URGED

Shop, eat, play at malls in PH

Illegally cut logs seized in Lanao

Aces wallop Gin Kings, 101-86

Hotcakes

STANDARD

China to return US drone

Duterte wants 6 executions daily

US told: You want VEA? Pay us

No more taping police gun muzzles for New Year

Body on health: Just fooling media

SBMA eyes 100-km Manila-Subic expressway, rail line

Tribune

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Economy outlook gets ADB upgrade; Jobless at record low

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China warns 'Trump of crushing his own fate' on Taiwan

Speaker Alvarez confident on death penalty passage

China gives in to US

Aguirre willing to quit post over Jack Lam scandal

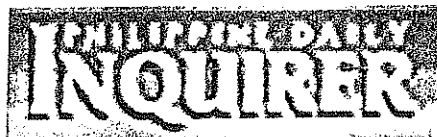
China to return US drone

Aguiar willing to quit post over Jack Lam scandal

China to return US drone

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | DECEMBER 19, 2016 | MONDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF SOUTHERN LUZON
NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON
(As of 4:00 AM - Dec. 18, 2016)

CITIES AND TEMPERATURES:

- LADAG CITY: 24 - 30 °C
- TUGUEGARAO CITY: 21 - 27 °C
- BAGUIO CITY: 14 - 23 °C
- SBMA/CLARK: 24 - 30 °C
- TAGAYTAY CITY: 23 - 28 °C
- METRO MANILA: 24 - 30 °C
- LEGAZPI CITY: 23 - 30 °C
- ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY: 25 - 30 °C
- TACLOBAN CITY: 24 - 30 °C
- PUERTO PRINCESA: 25 - 31 °C
- METRO CEBU: 24 - 34 °C
- CAGAYAN DE ORO: 24 - 31 °C
- ZAMBOANGA CITY: 24 - 32 °C
- METRO DAVAO: 25 - 32 °C

SUNRISE 6:15 AM	SUNSET 5:31 PM
MOONRISE 10:46 PM	MOONSET 10:40 AM
FULL MOON DEC 14 8:08 AM	LAST QUARTER DEC 21 9:56 AM
LOW TIDE 9:08 PM -0.17 Meter	HIGH TIDE MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 12:38 AM 1.11 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Light rains

	DEC 20	DEC 21	DEC 20	DEC 21	DEC 20	DEC 21		
METRO MANILA	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	TAGAYTAY	20 - 29 °C	21 - 29 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 31 °C	25 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	21 - 28 °C	22 - 29 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C
LADAG	24 - 31 °C	26 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 24 °C	15 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 30 °C	24 - 31 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C			

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AIR21
SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

PILIPINASHD

December 2016



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Duterte wants 6 executions daily

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte has threatened to execute "five or six" death row convicts daily once the death penalty is restored.

Duterte, who has launched a bloody war against illegal drugs and criminality, said he wanted capital punishment restored "because I want to use it against you (criminals)."

He implied that capital punishment failed to work as a crime deterrent in the past because only a few executions were carried out.

"Restore it and I will execute criminals every day – five or six. That's for real," he said during the 38th birthday celebration of Sen. Manny Pacquiao in General Santos City Saturday night.

The President has been pushing for the restoration of the death penalty, saying it would serve as retribution for those who committed serious crimes.

Capital punishment was scrapped in 1987 during the presidency of Corazon Aquino but was reimposed in 1993 under then president Fidel Ramos, who now serves as Duterte's adviser.

Crimes that were punishable by death included rape, kidnapping for ransom, murder and drug trafficking.

Capital punishment was abolished anew in 2006 during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, now a Pampanga congresswoman.

Former president Benigno Aquino III also rejected the death penalty, saying it was more important to fix the problems in

Turn to Page 13

Duterte From Page 1

the criminal justice system.

Before assuming the presidency, Duterte said he would like to execute criminals by hanging, believing those who were under the influence of drugs had been reduced to a "bestial state."

"Hang first and then there will be another ceremony for a second time until the head is completely severed from the body. I'd like that because I am mad," Duterte said in a press conference last May.

The Roman Catholic Church, the religion of more than 80 percent of Filipinos, has been opposed to death penalty, saying sinners should not be eliminated but should instead be given a chance to amend their lives.

The Archdiocese of Manila has urged its clergy and the faithful to say a prayer against the revival of the death penalty law in the Philippines.

The bill restoring death penalty has been approved at committee level in the House of Representatives, which is dominated by allies of the President. Senate leaders, however, expect the controversial measure to be subjected to long debates and public hearings.

Free overstaying prisoners

Meanwhile, Buhay party-list Rep. Lito Atienza called on Duterte to release prisoners under the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Atienza pointed out that the slow pace of the justice system and lack of lawyers keeping an eye on their cases had been depriving thousands of inmates of a speedy

BJMP to immediately conduct an inventory of inmates and release those who would already qualify.

"This is one of the reasons why we are absolutely against the death penalty. Because of our defective and disjointed criminal justice system, only the poor who cannot afford lawyers, will be sentenced to death. While the moneyed criminals buy their way through the corruption network and go scot-free," Atienza said.

Atienza also reminded government to focus not only on political detainees, but more so on prisoners suffering in subhuman conditions

trial, as provided for under Article III, Section 16 of the Constitution, stating that, "All persons shall have the right to a speedy disposition of their cases before all judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative bodies."

"Many inmates who were supposed to serve short sentences end up being imprisoned for extended periods. This is contrary to what our Constitution guarantees. This is a classic case of justice delayed is justice denied," Atienza lamented.

Atienza said their release must be done "in the spirit of the Christmas season."

Atienza urged President Duterte to direct the

inside jails.

He invoked Article III, Section 19 of the 1987 Constitution: "The employment of physical, psychological, or degrading punishment against any prisoner or detainee or the use of substandard or inadequate penal facilities under subhuman conditions shall be dealt with by law."

Atienza also cited Article I of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, providing that, "All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person."

- With Delon Porcalla

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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US says it will work with Du30

FROM A1

The United States said on Sunday that it would work with President Duterte to address any concerns after he threatened to terminate a pact that allowed US troops to visit the Philippines.

Mr. Duterte was enraged after a US government aid agency deferred a vote on a renewal of a major development assistance package for the Philippines over concerns about extrajudicial killings in his war on illegal drugs, which has left thousands dead.

Although no decision on the aid package has been taken, Mr. Duterte on Saturday launched an expletive-laden tirade, telling the United States to "prepare to leave the Philippines, prepare for the eventual repeal or the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement."

He was referring to a 1998 accord that governs American forces visiting the Philippines for joint combat exercises. The pact has helped the Philippines contain a violent Moro insurgency in Mindanao and train and equip Filipino forces facing an assertive China in disputed South China Sea waters

"You know, tit for tat ... if you can do this, so (can) we. It ain't a one-way traffic," Mr. Duterte said, adding tauntingly, "Bye-bye America."

The US Embassy in Manila said in a statement overnight that Washington would work closely with the Duterte administration to address any concerns it might have. It did not elaborate.

The White House didn't immediately respond to a request for comment, but spokesperson Josh Earnest said previously that the White House would not react publicly each time Mr. Duterte made an offhand remark.

The 71-year-old President, who describes himself as a left-

wing politician, has made similar threats before and after taking office in June, but he and his officials have walked back on many of his public statements, causing confusion.

"Start packing your things and get out of my country," Mr. Duterte said in a speech at the birthday party of Sen. Manny Pacquiao. "You want to come back here? You pay us. You want bases here? Pay us."

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All about money

Mr. Duterte said that the relationship between the Philippines and the United States should just be transactional. "*Pera-pera na lang tayo, buti pa* (Let it be all about money between us)," he said.

The Philippines is not at war, he said, so there is no reason to allow American troops in the country.

He shrugged off the US training of Filipinos on various exercises. "We are more durable, more brave. I tell you, do not teach us about warfare, we have the longest insurgency problem here," he said.

While calling Americans "sons of bitches" and "hypocrites," Mr. Duterte praised China as having "the kindest soul of all" for offering what he said was significant financial assistance. "So, what do I need America for?" he asked.

He also said Russia could be a very important ally. "They do not insult people, they do not interfere," he said.

The Philippines had been slated for another aid package after its previous five-year, \$434-million, poverty-reduction program was successfully completed in May under Mr. Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III.

A spokesperson for Millennium Challenge Corp., Laura Allen, said on Thursday it would continue to monitor events in the Philippines before the next board review in

March 2017.

The US decision is among the first signs of how concerns about the rule of law and human rights under Mr. Duterte could entail economic costs.

The US government, along with European Union and UN officials, has raised concerns about Mr. Duterte's crackdown on illegal drugs, which has left more than 2,000 suspected drug users and dealers dead in purported gun battles with police.

More than 3,000 other deaths are being investigated to determine if they were linked to illegal drugs.

God's monsters

At a news conference in his Davao hometown, Mr. Duterte was pointedly asked how many crime suspects he had killed in the past when he was still a crime-busting city mayor amid his vague and contradicting accounts of his exploits. The former government prosecutor again gave contrasting replies.

"Maybe one, two three ... I'm saying, maybe my bullets hit them, maybe not, but after the *burum-bum-bum-bum*, they're all dead," Mr. Duterte said.

Replying to another question, he said that he indeed had killed, but did not provide details and tried to justify his act. "When I tell you now that I killed, do not term them as suspects because all of them died while they were fighting government people."

He asked God for forgiveness in advance, saying he may not have time to pray if he's assassinated.

"God, forgive me for killing these idiots," Duterte said, then blamed God for the presence of criminals. "You create a human monster so if you are God, why do you have to create these idiots? That's why they die." —REPORTS FROM AP AND LEILA

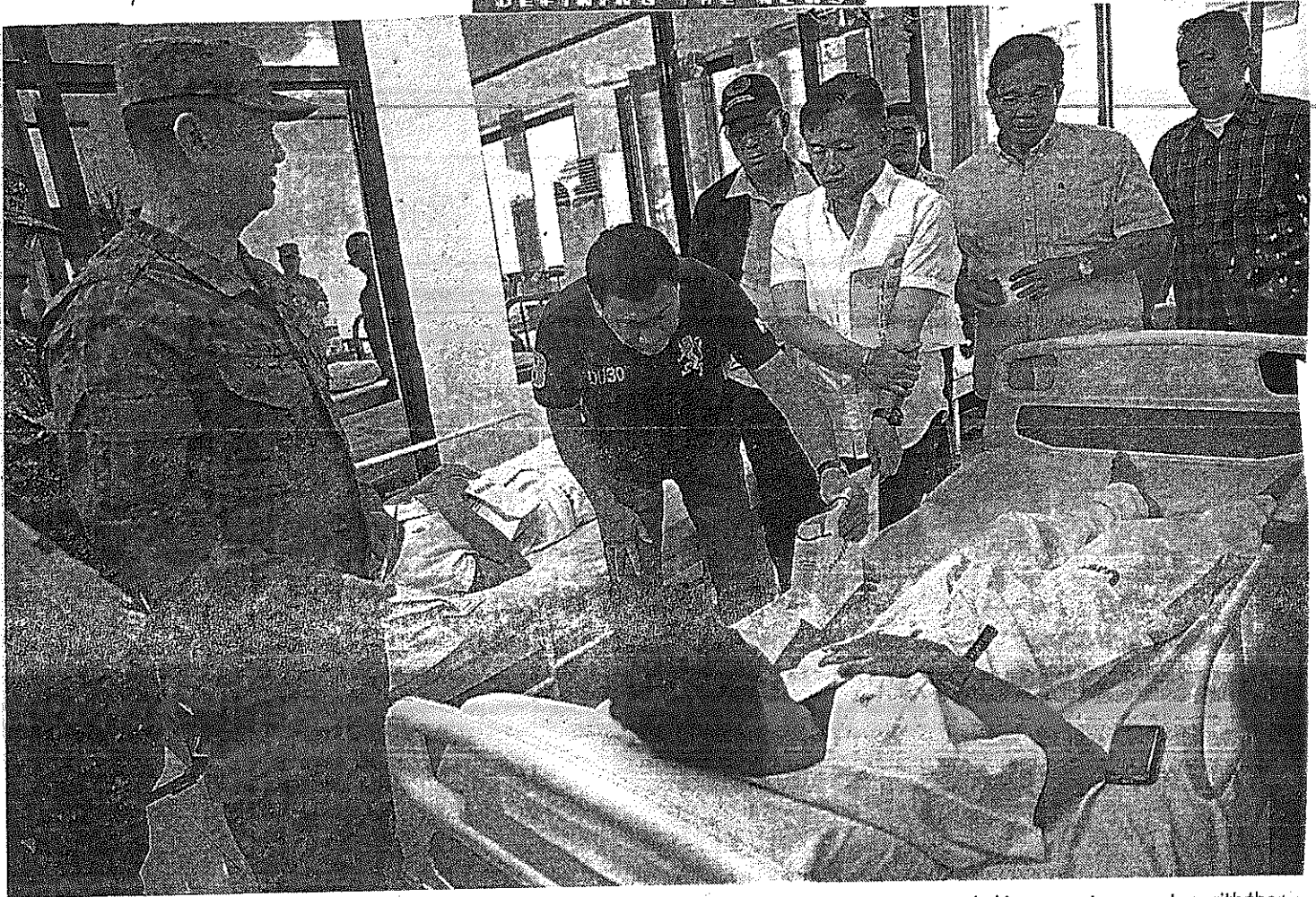
B. SALAVERRIA INQ

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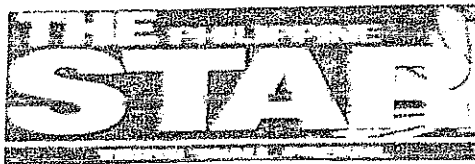
The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

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DIGONG'S GESTURE. President Rodrigo Duterte comes to the aid and comfort of one of the soldiers wounded in a recent encounter with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan during his visit to Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City on December 17, 2016.

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Año orders troops to continue rescue for 23 Abu hostages

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Newly installed Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año has directed ground troops to continue their rescue mission for 23 hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, said Año has not made any new policy yet except to maintain military operations to rescue the 23 victims.

"Our continued guidance about the hostages held captive by the Abu Sayyaf group is to continue the operation with the primary consideration being the safety of the hostages," he said.

Padilla disclosed the order of Año, who came here on Saturday hours ahead of President Duterte's visit.

Padilla explained Año did not impose any timeframe on the troops. The timeframe set by former AFP chief of staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya was a self-imposed deadline because of his scheduled retirement.

"(It's) because we really know and we understand that there are various complications that... may prolong these operations," he said.

Padilla also said Año did not change drastically the policies imposed by Visaya and would continue with the refinements and guidance in the military operations in Sulu and Lanao.

AFP to reshuffle major units

While there is no drastic change

By ROEL PAREÑO

in policies yet, commanders in major units of the AFP will be reshuffled in the coming weeks.

Padilla said the reshuffle is a result of the retirement of officials and movement of others to higher positions.

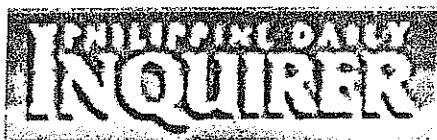
Most of the changes

will be in the major units where officials are scheduled to retire.

Padilla said the AFP could not

confirm the leadership changes until it receives advice from the Board of Generals.

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AFP readies new oplan vs security threats

By Jerome Aning
@JeromeAningINQ

The Armed Forces of the Philippines will replace its counterinsurgency drive, "Oplan Bayanihan," and implement next year a new campaign plan to maintain peace in the countryside

new AFP campaign plan is about the military's possible role in nation-building and defeating the enemies of the state or threats to national security," Arevalo said.

The name of the new campaign plan would be announced by chief of staff Lt.

and deter national security threats.

"We will be implementing the new campaign plan starting January 2017. But there will be no formal launching. The chief of staff is expected to announce it in his anniversary speech," AFP public affairs office chief

Gen. Eduardo Año during the AFP Foundation Day on Wednesday, he added.

Oplan Bayanihan was the code name of the military-led "internal peace and security program" launched in Dec. 22, 2010 under then President Benigno Aquino III.

Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo said on Sunday.

The military official declined to give details of the new campaign. He said a technical working group was earlier formed to conduct a study of Oplan Bayanihan and give assessments.

"In a nutshell, we can say the

However, Oplan Bayanihan, together with its predecessor "Oplan Bantay Laya," have been criticized by human rights groups for alleged extrajudicial killings, abductions, tortures and mass displacements committed by the military and its agents in the countryside. INQ

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The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEW

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Anti-insurgency plan stepped up

By Florante S. Solmerin

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines will intensify its anti-insurgency campaign under the Internal Peace and Security Plan or Oplan Bayanihan with minor additions in addressing threats, a general said on Sunday.

"The whole strategy of the IPSP Bayanihan has been enhanced to cope with the prevailing situation where there were peace talks with rebel groups. Supplemental concepts and operational plans are also new additions to the IPSP especially in dealing with terror-

ism and other lawless elements," the general said in an interview **Manila Standard**.

He asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to talk about the matter. The oplan would be the focal point of the speech of AFP Chief of Staff



Año

Lieutenant General Eduardo Año during the AFP Day this week, he said.

"In general, the AFP will not

be veering away from the concept and strategic objective of Oplan Bayanihan. The AFP will be making a big difference though when it comes to broadening the participation of all stakeholders toward progress and development," the general said.

In Camp Aguinaldo, military public affairs Colonel Ed Arevalo, however, said there would be a new campaign plan.

"We will be implementing the new campaign plan starting January 2017. But there will be no formal launching. The CSAFP is expected to announce it in his Anniversary speech," he said.

Arevalo talked about na-

tional security, defeating the enemies of the state and other threat groups but could not give more details.

He said he doesn't know yet what would be the name of the new campaign plan but emphasized that this was the product of series of consultations with government agencies and the Technical Working Group of the AFP Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations or OJ3.

"We can say it is about the role that the AFP will perform in nation building," he said.

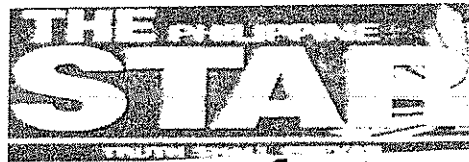
Oplan Bayanihan replaced the Oplan Bantay Laya I and II,

which both failed to eliminate the 48-year-old Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front.

Leftist groups despised both the counter-insurgency plans as the AFP's implementing machines to suppress people's movements criticizing the government up to committing "extrajudicial killings" against activists.

The Duterte administration and the communist movement are currently negotiating for a bilateral ceasefire as part of confidence building for a possible signing of a permanent peace deal.

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Rody urges Sayyaf, armed groups: Take Christmas break

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte has urged the Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups to take a break from fighting during the holiday season.

Duterte even said he was ready to treat members of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf to a dinner if they would pass by his hometown, Davao City.

"You can have a peaceful Christmas. I hope you, Abu

Sayyaf, take a vacation. If you happen to pass by Davao, let me know I'll treat you to a dinner. That's true. Just call my daughter-in-law, my daughter-in-law is from Jolo, Lovely Sankola," he told reporters in Zamboanga City on Saturday when asked to deliver a Christmas message.

"Maybe we can resume fighting some other day,"

Duterte said.

Duterte also extended his holiday greetings to communist rebels and to Muslims.

"I'd like to greet everybody, the Filipino people, the law abiding (people) and of course if they find it in their hearts, this is not something for the Moros, this kind of events is closest to the hearts

of Christians," the President said.

"I'd like to greet everybody, the communists, the Abu Sayyaf, on behalf of the Filipinos, Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year for all."

When asked for his holiday message for criminals, Duterte said: "I will give you one plate of shabu and ask

you to eat it."

"I am angry with criminals, not with revolutionaries. They are driven by, you know, principles."

Duterte, however, vowed to continue the campaign against the Maute gang, whom he described as a "very dangerous group."

"They are a very dangerous group because they... well, allegedly, swore allegiance to the ISIS (Islamic State). That we have to be very careful," the President said during the birthday celebration of Sen. Manny Pacquiao in General Santos Saturday night.

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1947 1988
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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MILF leader claims to support, not defy, gov't

By ELENA L. ABEN

Belligerent Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leader Abdullah Macapaar, also known as "Commander Bravo" has denied establishing his own "government" in Mindanao and claimed that he was actually helping the Duterte administration in its war against illegal drugs. ►6

Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipino Workers and Muslim Concerns Secretary Abdullah "Dabs" Mama-o met with Bravo last Dec. 10 inside a mosque at Bravo's mountain hideout in Lanao del Sur.

The President earlier gave Mama-o 20 days to get rid of Bravo whose group is allegedly getting payoffs from drug dealers and distributors from Metro Manila, Cavite, Batangas, the Visayas, and other parts of the country who had come down to Lanao to hide from the authorities.

Bravo clarified that his operations in the MILF Northwestern

Mindanao Front (NWMF), were, in fact, in support of the President's war on drugs.

Bravo asserted drug syndicates were the ones that cooked up wrong information that reached the President to make it appear he was setting up a separate government.

"He (Bravo) said his command will continue complementing the president's drive against the scourge of drugs," said Mama-o.

"He also said that he abides by the on-going peace process between the government and the MILF," the Presidential Adviser for OFWs and Muslim Concerns further disclosed.

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DU30 like predecessors in naming AFP chiefs of staff

By Mario J. Mallari

Just like his predecessors, President Duterte seemed to be adopting the revolving door policy in the appointment of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chiefs of staff within his six-year tenure.

Only six months after assuming the presidency, Duterte, who is also the commander in chief, has already appointed two AFP chiefs of staff, namely, newly retired Gen. Ricardo Visaya and his successor Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano.

Visaya was named as AFP chief of staff last July 1, serving a little over five months as head of the 125,000-strong military organization. Ano succeeded Visaya last December 7. But Ano would only have until October 2017 before

reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Duterte also approved the appointment of Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda, erstwhile AFP vice chief of staff, as Ano's successor as commanding general of the Philippine Army.

Just like Ano, Miranda is reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56 in October 2017.

Thus, after more than 10 months, Duterte will again be appointing new AFP and Army chiefs.

"We don't have any problem with General Ano as AFP chief of staff, actually he was a very good choice but given the short stint at the helm, he cannot really make a big difference in the service which is what the AFP really need – long-term plans and programs," a ranking military official told the *Tribune*.

"The three-year fixed term for AFP chief of staff should really be considered among the changes the Duterte administration should pursue. It will really benefit the organization," the official added.

Duterte said he will not intervene in the deliberations of the AFP-Board of Generals regarding promotions.

However, *Tribune* sources said such is "highly unlikely."

"The final say remains the sole prerogative and authority of the President," one source said.

"At these rough times when the President is battling all fronts – corruption, illegal drugs *etcetera* – he needs a solid military to back him up. So he should have 100 percent trust in the AFP chief," another official said.

During the previous

administration, former President Aquino also resorted to revolving door policy in appointing AFP chiefs of staff.

In his six-year term, he named five chiefs of staff – excluding retired Lt. Gen. Nestor Ochoa, who served as acting AFP chief of staff, and Miranda, whom Aquino named as acting AFP chief of staff last April vice Gen. Hernando Iriberry due to election ban.

Ochoa was named as acting AFP chief of staff after the late Gen. Delfin Bangit was forced to retire early in 2010 after Aquino publicly announced that he was not inclined to retain Bangit who was identified with former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Arroyo.

On the other hand, Arroyo appointed at least 10 AFP chiefs of staff during her nine-year term.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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China to return seized US drone

BEIJING/WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. – China will return an underwater US drone seized by a naval vessel this week in the South China Sea, both countries said on Saturday, but Beijing complained that Washington had been “hyping up” the incident.

US President-elect Donald Trump, who has vowed to take an aggressive approach in dealing with China over its economic and military policies, jumped on the unusual drone seizure with a pair of provocative tweets, accusing Beijing of stealing the equipment.

The drone, known as an unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV), was taken on Thursday, the first seizure of its kind in recent memory. The Pentagon went public with its complaint after the action and said

CHINA

on Saturday it had secured a deal to get the drone back.

“Through direct engagement with Chinese authorities, we have secured an understanding that the Chinese will return the UUV to the United States,” Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said in a statement.

The drone, which the Pentagon said was operating lawfully, was collecting data about the salinity, temperature and clarity of the water about 50 nautical miles northwest of Subic Bay, off the Philippines. It was seized just as the USNS Bowditch was about to retrieve it, US officials said.

China’s Defense Ministry said a Chinese naval vessel discovered a piece of “unidentified equipment” and checked it to prevent any navigational safety issues before discovering it was a US drone.

“China decided to return it to the US side in an appropriate manner, and China and the US have all along been in communication about it,” the ministry said on its website.

“During this process, the US side’s unilateral and open hyp-

ing up is inappropriate, and is not beneficial to the smooth resolution of this issue. We express regret at this,” it added.

‘KEEP IT!’

Trump, a Republican who takes office on January 20, waded into the dispute on Twitter early on Saturday from his seaside resort club Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, where he plans to spend the holidays.

“China steals United States Navy research drone in international waters – rips it out of water and takes it to China in unprecedented act,” he said.

After China said it would return the drone, Jason Miller, a spokesman for Trump, tweeted a link to a news story, saying: “@realDonaldTrump gets it done.”

There was, however, no evidence that Trump had played any role. US officials said the negotiations took place in Beijing during the overnight hours in the United States. Miller did not respond to requests for comment.

Hours later, while riding in a motorcade back to his resort, Trump tweeted his second jab. “We should tell China that we don’t want the drone they stole

back – let them keep it!” he said.

Trump has previously threatened to declare China a currency manipulator and force changes in US-China trade policy, which he says has led to the greatest theft of American jobs in history.

Trump has also raised questions about the most sensitive part of the US-China relationship: whether Washington would stick to its nearly four-decades-old policy of recognizing that Taiwan is part of “one China.”

After his November 8 election victory, Trump accepted a congratulatory phone call from President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, prompting China to lodge a diplomatic protest.

President Barack Obama said on Friday it was fine for Trump to review Washington’s policy toward Taiwan, but he cautioned that a shift could lead to significant consequences in the US relationship with Beijing.

“There’s probably no bilateral relationship that carries more significance and where there’s also the potential, if that relationship breaks down or goes into a full-conflict mode, that everybody is worse off,” Obama told reporters. – Reuters

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Reds vow to 'walk extra mile' to forge peace

BY THOM F. PICANA

BAGUIO CITY: Communist guerillas are willing to "walk an extra mile" if only to forge a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the Philippine government (GRP), the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said in a press statement.

While criticizing President Rodrigo Duterte's "unfulfilled peace vows," the CPP denounced the continued detention of over 400 political prisoners and the President's continued deployment of combat troops in rural communities "despite having ordered a ceasefire, resulting in rampant military abuses against the peasant masses." However, the statement said the CPP is still supporting the National Democratic Front (NDF) negotiating panel's effort to forge a bilateral ceasefire agreement "with clear provisions protecting civilian communities from so-called civil-military operations which shall

take effect upon the promised release of all political prisoners."

Utmost patience

Communist guerillas, CPP and NDF members claimed it repeatedly displayed patience in engaging the Duterte regime in peace negotiations, amid alleged delays and unfulfilled promises and false statements.

But in the spirit of building amity with the Duterte regime, the CPP said, the revolutionary forces have exercised flexibility amid the GRP's failure to satisfy the original expectation of releasing 430 plus political detainees before October

26 through a presidential amnesty proclamation.

It even bent backwards in the interest of preserving the reciprocal ceasefire declarations, the New People's Army said, while "carrying out evasion maneuvers in the face of treacherous AFP offensive and hostile operations and military abuses by Duterte's armed troops within the sphere of NPA guerrilla zones and bases."

Already 110 days old, the declared NPA ceasefire, is yet the longest, "showing the extent of the revolutionary forces' willingness to boost efforts to forge co-operative relations with Duterte who once declared himself a Leftist and socialist."

Meanwhile, on December 26, the CPP's 46th founding anniversary, the CPP will hold a national assembly in a guerrilla zone somewhere in Davao City, the President's hometown. Simultaneous mass demonstrations will also be held across the country inside and around guerrilla zones

and revolutionary areas. The CPP urged those desiring for a just and lasting peace to join and support these demonstrations.

The CPP also called on its members and member organizations under its umbrella to "organize peace marches and caravans to press the Duterte regime to fulfill its peace vows and comply with agreements, particularly, the demand to free all political prisoners and to terminate or suspend Oplan Bayanihan operations." This while inviting representatives of the Duterte regime to attend these demonstrations "in order to hear for themselves the people's outcries for peace."

While citing the release of NDFP consultants and the very positive outcome of the first round of talks, the revolutionary forces, the CPP added, "were encouraged by his patriotic proclamations, particularly, the policy statements declaring an independent foreign policy and threats to end US mili-

tary presence and joint military exercises and to abrogate the bases agreement (EDCA)."

While acknowledging also that there are "anti-people and undemocratic policies (of Duterte), citing the starkest -- the alleged growing number of extrajudicial killings "instigated by Duterte and perpetrated by police forces and by an apparent network of death squads."

Also, besides ordering the AFP to continue with its Oplan Bayanihan the CPP condemned President Duterte's order to the military to give former strongman Ferdinand Marcos Sr. a hero's burial "in a display of utter contempt for the Filipino people who suffered gravely under martial law."

No change?

The desire for change boosted by Duterte's promises remain largely unsatisfied, the CPP said, in yet the strongest statement yet of the leftist group. "He has also perpetuated the neo-liberal economic policies (low

wages and flexible employment, social cutbacks, privatization of public services and others) of the past regimes which has caused widespread misery to the Filipino people."

It also cited Duterte has stepped back and reaffirmed "friendship and alliance" with the US and has agreed to let the US military conduct more than 257 military exercises in the Philippines by next year. "Clearly, Duterte has chosen to tone down and backtrack his earlier anti-US rhetoric to secure the support of the US-beholden AFP."

In the face of Duterte's unfulfilled peace vows, the CPP further cited, "his closing ranks with the US and the AFP, and continuing military operations and war of suppression in the countryside, the unilateral ceasefire declaration issued by the CPP has become increasingly untenable to maintain."

But its forces, the CPP vowed, "can further go the extra mile and await the realization of (Duterte's promises) until the third round of peace talks on January.

ONLINE NEWS

19 DECEMBER 2016

www.rappler.com

No report of notorious ISIS fighter entering PH – AFP chief

From Rappler (Dec 18): No report of notorious ISIS fighter entering PH – AFP chief

There are doubts about the claims of the Indonesian Police that Bahrn Naim has left Syria for the Philippines. If true, it will be the first confirmation of direct links between ISIS fighters and local terrorist groups.



ISIS FIGHTER IN PH? Indonesian Police Inspector General Boy Rafli Amar, Head of the Indonesian Police Public Relations Division in Jakarta, is claiming an Indonesian-born ISIS fighter has left Syria for the Philippines. Photo from Antara

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief General Eduardo Año said they did not monitor the supposed entry of Indonesian-born Islamic State (ISIS) fighter Bahrn Naim in the Philippines to link up with local terrorist groups.

Bahrn Naim is reportedly a founding member of Katibah Nusantara, the grouping of Southeast Asian fighters in Syria. He was tagged by the Indonesian Police to be behind the terrorist attacks in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, in January.

"We don't have any report of his presence here. But I'll have it checked," Año told Rappler in a text message on Sunday, December 18.

Inspector General Boy Rafli Amar, Head of the Indonesian Police Public Relations Division in Jakarta claimed on Thursday, December 15, that Bahrn Naim and a number of ISIS fighters have left Syria for the Philippines. (READ: Indonesian Police: ISIS operative Bahrn Naim detected in southern Philippines)

But there are doubts about the claims of the Indonesian Police. Sydney Jones, the director of a

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Jakarta-based think tank tracking terrorists in Southeast Asia, also said the claims of the Indonesian Police are "not true".

Indonesian police: ISIS operative Bahrin Naim detected in southern Philippines s.rplr.co/AuJemWCpic.twitter.com/9VSahNDVAy



*[sidney jones@sidneyIPAC](#) 23h23 hours ago
@RapplerID
not true, mistake in police briefing.*

If the claims of the Indonesian Police are true, it will be the first confirmation of direct links between ISIS fighters and local terrorist groups in the Philippines.

The foreign terrorist group's propaganda arm has actively pushed videos of pro-ISIS groups in the Philippines, however. In June, men believed to be ISIS also called on followers to go to the Philippines. (READ: [ISIS to followers SE Asia: 'Go to the Philippines'](#))

The Philippine military has intensified its offensive against pro-ISIS terrorist groups in the Philippines, particularly against the Abu Sayyaf Group operating in Sulu and Basilan and the Maute Group operating in Lanao Del Sur. (READ: [4 PH terror groups link up with pro-ISIS fighters in region](#))

The Philippine military has reported the presence of foreign fighters in the Philippines, but none of them have fought in Syria.

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www.pna.gov.ph

Navy allocates PHP30-M for repairs of BRP Waray

From the Philippine News Agency (Dec 18): Navy allocates PHP30-M for repairs of BRP Waray

In line with efforts to ensure the seaworthiness of all its available vessels, the Philippine Navy (PN) has allocated the sum of PHP30,156,180.84 for the repairs and refurbishing of one of its five landing craft heavies (LCHs), the BRP Waray.

The sum is intended for the maintenance of the above-mentioned vessel.

BRP Waray is one of the five former Balikpapan-class LCHs acquired from the Royal Australian Navy.

Pre-bid conference is scheduled on Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. at the Office of the PN Bids and Awards Committee Naval Station, Jose Francisco, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

BRP Agata, and BRP Iwak is the sister ship of the BRP Waray who are all after indigenous people per PN naming conventions.

These three LCHs were sold to the PN for friendship prices of PHP270 million.

Their other sisters in PN service are the BRP Ivatan and BRP Batak which were commissioned into PN service in Aug. 10, 2015 after being donated by the RAN in November 2014.

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www.philstar.com

AFP to reshuffle major units

From the Philippine Star (Dec 18): AFP to reshuffle major units



New Armed Forces chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año, right, and outgoing chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya salute during change-of-command ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, Dec. 7, 2016. AP Photo/Bullit Marquez. File

There will be a reshuffle of commanders in major units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the coming weeks, said Armed Forces spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

Padilla said here the reshuffling of leadership was a result of the retirement of previous officials, including former AFP chief of staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya early this month, and the movement of key officials to the higher positions.

"With the pending retirement of our previous officials there will be a reshuffle of our people," Padilla told newsmen.

He said most of the reshuffle will be in the major units where officials are scheduled to retire.

However, Padilla said they cannot confirm yet the changes of leadership until they receive the advice from the AFP Board of Generals.

Meanwhile, the AFP spokesman said operations would not be affected with the recent assumption of Gen. Eduardo Año last week as the new AFP chief of staff.

"Walang maapektuhan sa ginagawa nating mga operations ngayon," Padilla said, adding that plans have been laid even since the change of leadership in AFP.

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www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Vendor wounded in Basilan IED explosion

From ABS-CBN (Dec 18): Vendor wounded in Basilan IED explosion

BASILAN - An 18-year-old vendor was wounded after an improvised explosive device (IED) went off in the village of Sabong, Lamitan City Sunday afternoon.

Chief Inspector Allan Benasing, Lamitan City Police deputy chief, identified the victim as Arsida Asdali, a resident of Sabong.

Asdali was working on their farm when she heard a loud explosion just a few meters away from her location. She sustained minor injuries on her feet and head.

The victim was immediately rushed to the hospital for treatment.

According to Benasing, the explosive was planted by members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), targeting vehicles and soldiers frequently patrolling the area.

Lamitan City Vice Mayor Roderick Furigay also said they received information that the explosion may be connected to rido, or a feud between families living in the area.

However, he also said they are not discounting the possibility that the bomb was planted by the ASG to sow fear among residents of Lamitan.

The Explosive Ordinance Division of the Philippine Army has recovered some debris of the bomb, including some shrapnel of an unidentified ordnance.

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Duterte adviser confronts MILF commander over alleged drug ties

From ABS-CBN (Dec 18): Duterte adviser confronts MILF commander over alleged drug ties



Presidential Adviser on OFWs and Muslim Concerns Sec. Dabs Mama-o meets Commander Bravo in the latter's hide-out in Lanao del Sur on December 10, 2016. OPA-OFW

An adviser of President Rodrigo Duterte met last week with Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) "Commander Bravo" over allegations that the latter has established his own government in Lanao del Sur with the backing of drug traffickers.

Presidential Adviser on OFWs and Muslim Concerns, Secretary Abdullah Mama-o on Sunday said he went last November 10 to the mountain lair of Commander Bravo, whose real name is Abdullah Macapaar.

Macapaar denied receiving payoffs from narcotics dealers in Metro Manila and other provinces in exchange for protection, Mama-O shared.

"We held the meeting inside a mosque in his mountain hide-out in Lanao del Sur in the presence of his men. Bravo clarifies that his operations in the MILF NWMF (Northwestern Mindanao Front) were, in fact, in support of the President's anti-drug war," said Duterte's adviser.

Macapaar also claimed that drug syndicates were responsible for spreading false information to trick the President into thinking that he has set up a rebel government.

"He [Bravo] said his command will continue complementing the President's drive against the scourge of drugs. He also said that he abides by the on-going peace process between the government and the MILF," said Mama-O.

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Duterte adviser: MILF's Bravo denied forming own gov't in Mindanao

From the Sun Star-Manila (Dec 18): Duterte adviser: MILF's Bravo denied forming own gov't in Mindanao

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has ordered his senior official to talk with a commander of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who allegedly established his own government in Mindanao and reportedly involved in illegal drugs.

In a statement, Presidential Adviser on Overseas Filipino Workers and Muslim Concerns Secretary Abdullah "Dabs" Mama-o said he met with MILF Commander Abdullah Macapaar, also known as Commander Bravo, in his mountain lair in Lanao del Sur on December 10.

"In line with President Duterte's directive, I immediately sought a meeting with Commander Bravo. We held the meeting inside a mosque in his mountain hide-out in Lanao del Sur in the presence of his men. [Commander] Bravo clarifies that his operations in the MILF NWMF [Northwestern Mindanao Front] were, in fact, in support of the President's anti-drug war," Mama-o said.

Bravo and his group allegedly established their own government in southern Philippines and have been receiving payoffs from drug dealers and distributors in Metro Manila, Cavite, Batangas, the Visayas, and other parts of the country who had come down to Lanao to hide from the authorities.

According to Mama-o, Bravo denied the allegations against him and asserted that the drug syndicates cooked up wrong information that reached the President to make it appear he was setting up a separate government.

"He [Bravo] said his command will continue complementing the President's drive against the scourge of drugs. He also said that he abides by the on-going peace process between the government and the MILF," he said.

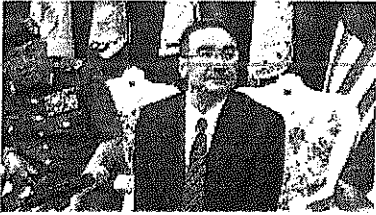
Mama-o submitted a report to Duterte regarding his meeting with Bravo.

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IS may set up terror base in Asean region, warns Hisham

From The Star Online (Dec 18): IS may set up terror base in Asean region, warns Hisham



[Video Report: Hisham: Cooperation amongst Asean nations crucial to prevent infiltration from IS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auetbNXoQM8>]

The Islamic State (IS) is now “desperate” and may be looking to the Asean region as its next terror base instead of the Middle East, says Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein. “The Abu Sayyaf and other terrorist groups have stated their support for the Islamic State.”

“If they (IS fighters) flee from Iraq and Syria as what is happening now in Aleppo, Mosul and Raqqa, I hope the cooperation between Asean countries can be increased as there is a possibility that they might create an Islamic Caliphate in our region,” he told reporters after attending the 2016 graduation ceremony of officers at the Royal Military College (RMC) here yesterday.

“That is why a strong regional cooperation among Asean countries is vital to prevent this from happening. We have to cooperate closely to make sure these worries do not become a reality.”
“They (IS) are quite desperate. If they have already gained a foothold in the region, by then it will be too late.”

Hishammuddin said one example of Asean cooperation on the issue was the trilateral agreement between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, where they would conduct coordinated patrols, joint patrolling and hot pursuits.

“These three SOPs (standard operating procedures) have been agreed upon and is now at a level that we have never seen before,” he added.

On news reports that China is placing military assets on islands in the South China Sea, Hishammuddin said his letters to his China counterpart, Minister of Defence and State Councillor Gen Chang Wanquan, and US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter would be referred to the Foreign Ministry.

He added that the South China Sea dispute on the overlapping claims on the islands fell under the purview of the Foreign Ministry.

“But our navy will work to ensure that there are no untoward incidents in the South China Sea,” he said.

It was reported that Malaysia would seek clarification from China on claims it was placing military assets on disputed islands in the South China Sea.

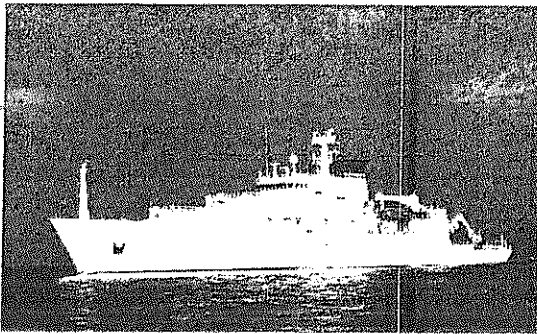
Reuters reported on Wednesday that China appeared to have installed weapons on the seven artificial islands in the South China Sea.

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China to return US naval probe seized near Subic Bay

Agence France-Presse / 09:30 AM December 18, 2016



A Chinese submarine seized an undersea drone launched from the USNS Bowditch (picture) while it was in international waters off Subic Bay in the Philippines. US NAVY PHOTO

BEIJING, China — China said Saturday it would return a US naval probe seized in international waters, as it slammed the "hyping" of the incident as "inappropriate and unhelpful".

The unmanned underwater vehicle was taken around 50 nautical miles northwest of Subic Bay in the Philippines late on Thursday, according to the Pentagon, which called the capture unlawful and demanded its immediate return.

The incident comes amid escalating tensions between China and the United States, with President-elect Donald Trump repeatedly infuriating Beijing by questioning longstanding US policy on Taiwan, calling Beijing a currency manipulator and threatening Chinese imports with punitive tariffs.

China's defense ministry said it would give back the device "in an appropriate manner", without providing details of the handover.

"The hyping up from the American side is inappropriate and unhelpful to the swift resolution of the problem," the ministry said.

China said it "strongly opposed" US reconnaissance activities and had asked Washington to stop them.

"The Chinese side will take the necessary steps in response," the statement added.

The Pentagon said it had registered its objection to the probe's seizure. "Through direct engagement with Chinese authorities, we have secured an understanding that the Chinese will return the UUV to the United States," spokesman Peter Cook said Saturday.

There are broader tensions in the South China Sea, where China has moved to fortify its claims to the region by building out tiny reefs and islets into much larger artificial islands.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam have competing claims in the South China Sea, which is laced with the world's most heavily travelled international trade routes.

While the US takes no position on sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, it has repeatedly stressed all maritime claims must comply with international law.

Its military has conducted several "freedom of navigation" operations in which ships and planes have passed close to the sites Beijing claims. CBB/rg

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