

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



ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

23 January 2016

Saturday

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

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

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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JANUARY 23, 2016 | SATURDAY

NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING EXTREME
NORTHERN LUZON
(JANUARY 23, 5:00 PM)

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT
AFFECTING THE EASTERN
SECTION OF NORTHERN LUZON
(JANUARY 23, 5:00 PM)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:25 AM	5:50 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
5:12 PM	5:23 AM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
JAN 17 7:26 AM	JAN 22 9:45 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
5:08 AM -0.24 Meter	9:23 PM +1.13 Meter

LAGOAG CITY
20-30 °C

SBMA/CLARK
23-31 °C

METRO MANILA
23-31 °C

ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY
25-31 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA
24-31 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY
23-33 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY
22-30 °C

BAGUO CITY
14-23 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY
18-29 °C

LEGASPI CITY
24-30 °C

TACLOBAN CITY
25-31 °C




METRO CEBU
25-31 °C

SAGAYAN DE ORG
21-30 °C

METRO DAVAO
24-35 °C

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with intermittent drizzle or light rain showers and/or thunderstorms. Clouds broken with rain showers and/or thunderstorms. Light rain.

	JAN 23 SATURDAY	JAN 24 SUNDAY	JAN 25 MONDAY	JAN 26 TUESDAY
METRO MANILA	23-31 °C	23-31 °C	24-30 °C	24-30 °C
METRO CEBU	24-30 °C	24-31 °C	24-32 °C	23-31 °C
METRO DAVAO	24-33 °C	24-34 °C	24-34 °C	24-34 °C
BAGUO	14-23 °C	15-23 °C	15-23 °C	15-23 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	23-31 °C	23-31 °C	23-31 °C	24-30 °C
BOACAY	24-34 °C	25-34 °C	25-34 °C	25-34 °C

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'I was working for ISAFP'

Ex-ISAFP
chief: Mission
order lapsed
in 2014

By EDU PUNAY

It was called "Oplan Moses," and Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino insisted yesterday he was on a covert mission with the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) when he was arrested Thursday in a raid on a suspected shabu laboratory in Manila.

But his former ISAFP boss and now Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano said a mission order that he had issued to Marcelino lapsed in 2014. Ano, however, vouched for Marcelino's integrity.

Appearing in handcuffs and orange detainee's shirt yesterday at the Department of Justice (DOJ) for his inquest, a teary-eyed Marcelino said his arrest was "the price I have to pay for my love of this country."

Marcelino faces charges of conspiracy in the manufacture and possession of illegal drugs under Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Also made to undergo inquest proceedings for the same offense was Yan Yi Shou, who was arrested with Marcelino at Celadon Residences on Felix Huertas street in Sta. Cruz, Manila at 1 a.m. Thursday.

Yan was supposedly a former asset of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), for which Marcelino

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had worked as chief of a special unit.

"I can honestly say, and look you in the eye, I was just doing my job. I was just there because we are verifying information that we got (about the shabu lab)," he told reporters in an ambush interview.

The eight-page complaint filed by the Philippine National Police-Anti-Illegal Drugs Group (PNP-AIDG) also named as respondents Lo Chi, Atong Lee and a certain Chu, who were the original targets of the raid conducted by virtue of a search warrant issued by Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Fernando Sagun.

Authorities said Marcelino and Yan were found inside a storage facility where 76 kilos of shabu worth P383 million were found. PDEA agents on the scene initially estimated the seized drugs to be 64 kilos with a street value of P256 million.

The former PDEA official was found sitting on a couch when the agents arrived.

Investigating prosecutor Senior Deputy Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva required Marcelino to prove his defense and present a mission order or document showing his presence in the facility was part of a legitimate operation.

His lawyer Dennis Manalo revealed that they have submitted a certification from the Intelligence and Security Group of the Philippine Army showing Marcelino is sharing intelligence information on alleged involvement of Army personnel in the illegal drug trade from September to December last year.

"As far as Col. Marcelino is concerned, this is clearly a

mis-encounter on the part of the agents of PDEA and on the part of his efforts to help in curbing illegal drugs in the country," Manalo explained to reporters.

But Villanueva was not satisfied and wanted a more specific certification.

The prosecutor then set the charges for preliminary investigation after Marcelino waived his right to speedy resolution under inquest proceedings. A hearing was set on Jan. 27 at 2 p.m.

Marcelino, meanwhile, is under custody of the PNP-AIDG pending resolution of the charges before the Department of Justice.

PNP-AIDG head Senior Supt. Antonio Gardiola said they were giving Marcelino the benefit of the doubt in his claim that he was performing a legitimate drug sting operation.

"He was saying he was on a mission," Gardiola said. "So far no agent handler has surfaced."

He said if there had indeed been a mistake, the case officer should immediately have called the arresting officers to vouch for Marcelino.

Gardiola also said Marcelino's intelligence gathering activity should have also been supported by documents. "It's hard to operate without documents. He might just get shot at Luneta without him realizing it," he said.

The PNP-AIDG chief revealed that following Marcelino's arrest, his men immediately started a hunt for other personalities linked to the operation of the busted shabu laboratory.

Disbelief

Marcelino's colleagues in the military have expressed

disbelief at his reversal of fortunes.

Ano said Marcelino is an upright officer as he vouched for beleaguered officer's character.

Ano said that after their stint at ISAFP, Marcelino returned to the Navy, his mother unit, while Ano moved to Mindanao following his designation as Army division head.

Ano said he also knew of some agents still reporting to Marcelino after his assignment at ISAFP and that he was sharing information with other intelligence units, including the National Bureau of Investigation.

"I can speak for him when we were working together at (ISAFP) and I knew about the personal crusade he took up against illegal drugs. I can vouch for his integrity. There's an ongoing investigation and I think he can defend himself," Ano said.

He surmised that Marcelino must have named him as his handler.

"Perhaps he mentioned me because of my being his former commander at ISAFP where we have developed good working relations. But for now, we are no longer working at the same unit organization," Ano said.

Several civilian and military colleagues of Marcelino also challenged the PDEA and the Philippine National Police to conduct a lifestyle check on Marcelino.

"Yes, he was caught red-handed with the target and the items but the arresting officer could have afforded him to explain his presence at the said place, being formerly one of the best PDEA officers," one military officer said.

"He is a fighter. He spares

no one. That is why he earned the ire of people believed to be engaged in narco-politics. A single statement from Malacañang will put all these things to rest," another military officer said.

Narco-politics

Despite some words of support for Marcelino, senators called for tougher action against drug syndicates, with some renewing calls for the revival of the death penalty.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano said the arrest of Marcelino and the discovery of the Manila shabu laboratory have shown that narco-politics is now in the country.

"How can you have so much shabu in one place?" he said as he demanded a deeper probe into Marcelino's link to the busted shabu laboratory. "If it's really part of intelligence work, they could have easily verified," he said.

Senate President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto and Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. separately pushed for the death penalty.

Recto said the death penalty must be imposed for those involved in large-scale drug trafficking, including military and police officials who coddle and conspire with them.

"Although I am fundamentally against capital punishment, the impunity by which men in uniform coddle and align themselves with dangerous criminals they are supposed to stop has led me to be open to the restoration of the death penalty if attended by aggravating circumstances like the one I cited above," Recto said.

Sen. Vicente Sotto III said he could not believe that Marcelino got linked to drug operations.

"I'm shocked. I hope it's not

true. I have no reason to doubt his record before this incident," said Sotto, former chairman of the Dangerous Drugs Board.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a graduate of Philippine Military Academy 1995, lamented how a good soldier may have been lured to the dark side.

"I'm getting mixed reports about him. But for now it's best that the investigation be allowed to proceed and if he can present the proper documentation or authority to justify his presence in the area, then his name should be cleared. If not, then we have another case of a good officer lured to the dark side," Trillanes said.

Trillanes said he does not want to prejudge Marcelino, who is his upperclassman at the PMA.

"Wholesale drug operation does wholesale damage. A sack of shabu victimizes not just one person but many," he said.

"There are millions of granules in a sack, and each can potentially fuel another crime, by a user who steals money or snatches a phone to feed his habit, to cases of domestic violence," he said, referring to shabu, which is normally in powdered or granulated form.

"If it is a weapon of mass destruction, then those responsible for its manufacturing and sale must deserve a punishment greater than a cushy taxpayer-paid stay in a Bilibid cell with spa and air-conditioning," Recto said.

He also lamented reports that drug use and the illicit trade remain unabated despite police operations.

"If the retail trade of shabu is booming, it is because the source is left untouched. The best way to stop water from

flowing is not to close each and every faucet, but to shut down the main," he said.

Grave concern

Sen. Grace Poe, chairperson of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, commended the PNP and the PDEA for the huge accomplishment as she expressed concern over the arrest of a top military officer during the drug sting.

"While I commend the PDEA for another successful raid, the possible involvement of a ranking military officer in the illegal drug trade is a cause for concern," she said.

Poe urged the police and government prosecutors to investigate the matter thoroughly and with full transparency to get to the bottom of the incident. "This should send a strong message that no one is above the law," she said.

At the same time, Poe also urged the AFP leadership to look into the matter seriously to ensure that no one from its ranks is involved in the illegal trade.

"On the side of legislation, we have amended the Dangerous Drugs Act to give it more teeth and make it easier to put the drug pushers, drug lords and their conspirators behind jail," she said.

"Hopefully, we are now feeling its positive effects in the fight against this illegal drug menace," she added.

Malacañang meanwhile has denied reports that Marcelino is an agent of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission headed by Executive Secretary Faquito Ochoa Jr. - With Christina Mendez, Delon Porcalla, Mike Frialde, Jaime Laude

The
Standard

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PALACE DISOWNS BUSTED MARINE

By Sandy Araneta
and Francisco Tuyay

THE Palace denied Friday that Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino, who was arrested in a drug raid Thursday, was ever detailed to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission.

"Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino is not and has never been an operative detailed to the PAOCC," the commission's executive director, Gen. Reginald Villasanta, said in a statement.

"Our records likewise show that no ongoing PAOCC operations involve Lt. Col. Marcelino," he added.

The statement was sent through the Office of Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr.

Marcelino and a Chinese national were arrested Thursday after government agents raided a clandestine drug laboratory in a townhouse in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Marcelino, a former officer of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, was arrested along with Yan Yi Shou, 33, when PDEA agents and police barged into the drug laboratory at Felix Huertas and Batangas streets at 12:30 a.m.

At least 64 kilos of shabu or methamphetamine placed in four rectangular plastic bags with an estimated street value of P383 million, assorted chemicals, a beige Toyota Camry and other equipment were seized during the raid on the strength of a search warrant issued by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Shou was said to have served as an interpreter

for the PDEA in 2005.

After his arrest, Marcelino said he was doing surveillance work for the PAOCC when he was arrested.

PDEA chief Arturo Cadac said they were surprised to find Marcelino in the drug laboratory because he was not on their radar.

Chief Insp. Roque Merdegia, a spokesman of the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group of the Philippine National Police said Marcelino would be charged with the illegal manufacture of drugs, but Marcelino denied he was part of the operation.

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Palace...

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"I'm not hiding anything. I've done no wrong," he said in Filipino.

Some military officers including Marcelino's classmates could not believe he was into drug trafficking, saying it was ironic that he stands accused of a crime he fought.

Former PDEA director general Dionisio Santiago said he too was surprised by what happened to Marcelino.

Santiago also said in a phone interview that Marcelino was still working with the government, and that he had been the one to brief President Benigno Aquino III about an anti-drug operation in his hometown of Tarlac.

In that operation, the National Bureau of Investigation raided a shabu laboratory in Camiling, Tarlac, arrested six Chinese nationals and seized P3 billion worth of shabu.

"Marcelino was the one who developed the intel for that particular operation," Santiago said.

Marcelino said Friday his arrest was apparently linked to his busting of big-time drug syndicate and said he was confident "the truth will come out."

"I will not betray my country," Marcelino yelled to reporters while being whisked away to the headquarters of the Philippine National Police-Anti-Illegal Drugs Group upon his arrival in Camp Crame Friday.

Asked if his arrest was the result of stepping on the toes of some influential people, Marcelino said "some generals" had been hurt by his activities, but he refused to elaborate.

The former chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Maj. Gen. Eduardo Ano, said Marcelino's credibility and professionalism in military service remained untainted.

"I was his boss when I was chief of Isafp from late 2012 up to about mid-2014," Ano said, adding that he was "straightforward" and "sincere" in doing his job.

After Marcelino's stint with the Isafp, he went back to his mother unit at the Navy and later took up the General Staff Course inside Camp Aguinaldo.

While studying, Marcelino continued to gather information relating to the illegal drugs operations through proper coordination with various intelligence units.

But Ano said he has no knowledge of Marcelino's PDEA's operations.

Interior Secretary Senen Sarmiento said they are giving Marcelino the benefit of the doubt, but said nobody has come forward to confirm that he was on a surveillance operation.

The Justice Department ordered Marcelino to substantiate his claim that he was in a covert operation when he was arrested in a drug bust.

During inquest proceedings, Senior Deputy Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva required Marcelino to show proof that he was on a covert mission at the time of the drug bust.

With Rio N. Araya

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BIFF belittles 'Red God,' tags Army

COTABATO CITY—A group of renegade Moro guerrillas pointed to the military as the creator of a newly emerged Christian militia that has vowed to put up an armed resistance to guerrilla attacks.

The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), through spokesperson Abu Misri Mama, said the BIFF believed that the so-called Red God Soldiers, composed of Christian settlers in Central Mindanao, was a tool of the armed forces.

Mama said based on photos of Red God members, the militiamen are carrying weapons supplied by the military.

A military spokesperson, however, shrugged off the allegation, saying soldiers are to take action against the militia once its hideout is known.

Mama said despite having apparently "sophisticated weapons," Red God is not intimidating.

"There are only a few of them," said Mama.

If BIFF is not intimidated by the military, which has far bigger firepower, what more Red God, said Mama.

"The military has tanks and yet we managed to sustain our campaign against soldiers," he said.

A Red God leader, who identified himself only as Brother Asiong, said authorities are aware of the group's existence.

Asiong, however, said Red God is not a military creation. He admitted, though, that the group had provided intelligence information to the Army.

Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, spokesperson for the military's 6th Division based in Maguindanao, said the military regards Asiong's as another lawless group similar to the BIFF.

"If we learn of their location, they will be subjected to the law and will be arrested," she said.

Petinglay denied Red God is getting military support.

"If there is anyone from our ranks behind them, we will investigate," she said.

"We will not tolerate this," she added.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmel Mangudadatu said nobody is allowed to carry guns in the province unless authorized to do so.

"They could face arrest. Remember that a state of emergency is still in effect and we have the current gun ban," said Mangudadatu, referring to Proclamation Order No. 1946, which then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had issued following the Maguindanao massacre, and of the gun ban in relation to the May elections. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Former soldier-turned ASG leader

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A former Army soldier-turned leader of a small team of the Abu Sayyaf (ASG) in Basilan province surrendered Monday to the military in the province, together with his three sons and nephews. ASG Commander Sulaiman Kasaran alias Abu Bujaid was a former Army soldier and went on Absent Without Leave (AWOL) five years ago due to sickness. When he recovered from his ailment, his unit informed him that he was already dismissed from service for being AWOL. This, according to him, prompted him to join the ASG and formed a small team composed of his 18-year-old twin sons Marwin Asan Kasaran alias Abu Hadjie and Derwin Asan Kasaran alias Abu Dikki, and another son Halid Asan Kasaran Alias Abu Nasirin Awalini, and three teenage nephews. He said that life became miserable to his family and relatives as they become fugitives after engaging in the series of criminal activities. Kasaran said his children all want to go to school and complete their studies but they cannot do so due to poverty and their situation. Last October, Kasaran said an emissary of Army Lt. Col. Enerito D Lebeco, commander of the 18 Infantry Battalion station in Al-Barka town in Basilan province, convinced him to surrender and avail of the government peace program which they accepted on Monday, January 18, with their eventual surrender to the government. (Nonoy E. Lacson)

Ranking civilian, military leaders welcome 16th IB upon arrival in Surigao del Sur

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 22): Ranking civilian, military leaders welcome 16th IB upon arrival in Surigao del Sur

Ranking civilian and military leaders gave the 16th Infantry Battalion, a field unit of the Tanay-based 2nd Infantry Division, a rousing welcome upon its arrival in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur last Jan. 20.

Surigao del Sur Gov. Johnny T. Pimentel headed the welcoming committee at the Tandag City Airport where officers and enlisted personnel of the unit arrived a 4 p.m. via C-130 cargo plane.

The former called the deployment of the 16th Infantry Battalion to his province as "answered prayer."

Pimentel said that since three years ago, the provincial government has been requesting for additional troops to make Surigao del Sur a peaceful province.

"As they say, we cannot attain development without achieving peace. I hope that the deployment of the 16th Infantry Battalion will greatly contribute to the stabilization of the peace and order in this province," he said.

Capt. Patrick Martinez, 4th Infantry Division public affairs office chief, in a statement on Friday said the 16th Infantry Battalion will now be in the operational control of their 402nd Infantry Brigade.

Prior to its deployment in Surigao del Sur, the unit was stationed in Oriental Mindoro.

Meanwhile, 402nd Infantry Brigade commander Col. Isidro Purisima reminded officers and enlisted personnel of the 16th Infantry Battalion that it is imperative to respect the Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and the Rule of Law in the performance of their duties.

He also reiterated that their presence in the province is to protect and serve the people and the communities.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=849297>

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Task Force Zamboanga gets new commanding officer

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 22): Task Force Zamboanga gets new commanding officer

Col. Juvymax R. Uy was appointed the new commanding officer of Task Force Zamboanga during short ceremonies Friday afternoon.

The said unit is affiliated with the Zamboanga City-based 1st Infantry Division.

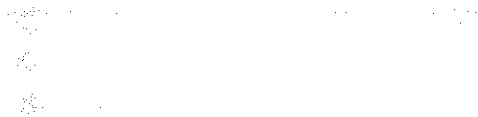
He replaced Col. Nixon M. Fortes who is the concurrent deputy commander of the 1002nd Infantry Brigade which has operational jurisdiction in the provinces of Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga Del Sur.

1st Infantry Division commander Major Gen. Gerardo F. Barrientos, Jr. presided over the 2 p.m. ceremony.

Uy held various positions at Headquarters Philippine Army, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City prior to his assumption as the 16th commander of Task Force Zamboanga.

He is a member of Philippine Military Academy "Makatao" Class of 1989.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=849406>



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Marcelino presents Army certification during inquest

By Tarra Quismundo

"I WILL never betray my country," former drug buster Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino declared yesterday, a day after he was arrested during a drug raid in Manila that yielded

P320 million worth of high-grade "shabu" (methamphetamine hydrochloride).

Although handcuffed, Marcelino, a former head of the Special Enforcement Service of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), raised his

fists defiantly, insisting he was on a mission when police and his former colleagues pounced on him and his Chinese companion in an apartment in Sta. Cruz district that turned out to be a clandestine drug laboratory.

"This is the price I have to pay for doing my job for this country. Rest assured that I will never betray this nation," Marcelino, an officer in the Marines, told reporters as he left the Department of Justice, where he was taken yesterday

morning for investigation.

"This is also the price I have to pay for being passionate and for my love to rid this country of illegal drugs. I'm just doing my job. The truth will prevail," said the former top antinarcotics

MARCELINO/A11

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agent, surrounded by police and PDEA officers.

Inquest proceedings

Dressed in an orange detainee's shirt and wearing slippers, Marcelino underwent six-hour inquest proceedings before Senior State Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva.

He sat beside Yan Yi Shou, a Chinese citizen who was arrested with him during the raid on Celadon Residence apartment block at Felix Huertas and Batangas early on Thursday. Yan is a former interpreter for the PDEA.

The two are facing no-bail charges for manufacturing, conspiring to manufacture and possession of illegal drugs.

Police and PDEA agents seized 64 kilos of shabu (also known as crystal meth), chemicals and equipment for making the illegal drug in the Sta. Cruz apartment.

During the proceedings, Villanueva told Marcelino that he could be readily released if he could show an order authorizing his presence at the drug laboratory. Such an order would prove that he was there on an official mission.

It took hours for Marcelino to obtain a certification from the Philippine Army's Intelligence Security Group that he was indeed working as an intelligence agent for the military.

The certification, signed by Col. Marlo Guloy, the group commander, and sent to the inquest prosecutor just before 5 p.m., said Marcelino "has shared intelligence information to this unit from November to December 2015 with regard to suspected Philippine Army personnel engaged in the use of drugs and other illegal drug activities."

Marcelino was given the task as part of the military's efforts to stamp out drug use among soldiers through mandatory random drug testing.

'Immaterial'

But Chief Insp. Roque Merdegia, spokesperson for the Philippine National Police Anti-Illegal Drugs Group (PNP-AIDG), said the Army certification was "immaterial."

"It did not categorically [say] that he was authorized to operate [in Manila]," Merdegia said.

Villanueva said the document was too broad, and he wanted a more explicit certification. Marcelino agreed to remain de-

tained while undergoing preliminary investigation.

Villanueva set the first hearing for Jan. 27 at 2 p.m.

Later, in an interview, Marcelino expressed confidence that he could obtain a certification from the military.

"It's not that it (the certification filed) was not honored. The [prosecutor] just requested [a more detailed one] until Wednesday. But that's OK," he said.

Pressed if an order indeed exists, Marcelino said: "I have nothing to hide. Although there are some confidential papers, you know how it is."

Earlier in the day, Marcelino's lawyer, Dennis Manalo, said the document would "come from the military officer who will be authorized for this purpose."

"Right now he's in the process of providing documentation as to his status as a military intelligence [agent]," Manalo told reporters.

'Misencounter'

"This is clearly a misencounter on the part of the agents of the PDEA and on the part of his efforts to help in curbing illegal drugs in the country," he said.

Reached by phone, Marcelino's former PDEA boss, retired Gen.



DEFIANT Former Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) official Ferdinand Marcelino raises his cuffed hands to protest his innocence as PDEA agents escort him after inquest proceedings at the Department of Justice on Friday. LYN RILLON

Dionisio Santiago, vouched for his former top agent's honesty.

"I can vouch for him. [On] my watch, I knew that he was upright. There were situations when he [needed] money to help his family, but he

never asked help from us," said Santiago, recalling family emergencies when Marcelino refused to seek financial aid from the PDEA.

"I remember him once saying 'I am handling a lot of funds (for PDEA operations) but that's not my money. That's [public] money,'" Santiago said.

He said he did not believe Marcelino could be corrupted. "If during the time he needed money he did not do anything illegal, how much more now that he is in no condition to require so much money," he said.

No mission for the Army

Senior Supt. Antonio Gardiola Jr., PNP-AIDG head, said Marcelino cited a "statement of support" from Maj. Gen. Eduardo Año, chief of the Philippine Army, during the inquest.

Gardiola said the statement did not amount to a mission order.

Sent to reporters by text message, the statement said Año "vouched for [Marcelino's] integrity."

Año said, however, that his "official relationship" with Marcelino ended when he left the military intelligence ser-

vice in 2013.

He said the Army would cooperate in the investigation of Marcelino.

He's with the Navy

Col. Benjamin Hao, spokesperson for the Army, said it was unlikely Año signed a mission order for Marcelino, as Marcelino was now assigned to the Philippine Navy, not the Army.

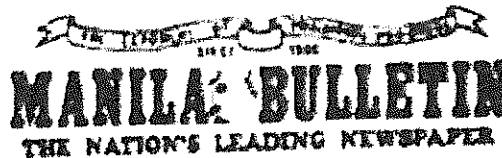
Marcelino is superintendent at the Navy Officer Candidate School. He took the job only on Monday.

The Philippine Navy said on Thursday that Marcelino's job did not involve drug operations.

Marcelino cannot turn to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) for a mission order. The PAOCC said yesterday that Marcelino had never been one of its agents.

"Our records likewise show that no ongoing PAOCC operations involve Lieutenant Colonel Marcelino," Gen. Reginald Villasanta, PAOCC executive director, said in a statement released by Malacañang. *With reports from Jaymee T. Gamil and Nikko Dizon*

23 January 2016



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I was on a secret mission, arrested ex-PDEA officer claims

By LEONARD D. POSTRADO and ELENA L. ABEN

Former Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) officer Col. Ferdinand Marcelino yesterday insisted that he was only doing covert operation when he was arrested together with a Chinese during an anti-narcotics raid

inside a house-turned-“shabu” laboratory in Manila on Thursday.

Marcelino and Yi Shou Yan were subjected to inquest proceedings yesterday before the Department of Justice (DOJ) for violation of Sections ►7

I was on a secret mission, arrested ex-PDEA officer... <1

8, 11, and 26 of Republic Act 9165, also known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Police also included a certain Atong Lee and a man only known as "Chu," who were both at-large, as other respondents in the case.

During inquest proceedings before Senior Deputy Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva, Marcelino denied knowing Yan and claimed he was only in the shabu laboratory because he was on a secret mission sanctioned by the military.

"I can honestly say, and look you in the eye, I was just doing my job," an emotional Marcelino told reporters in an ambush interview.

"This is the price I have to pay for my love of this country," Marcelino added.

He said that he received the mission order from the Intelligence Service, Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

Marcelino also named-dropped Philippine Army chief Lt. General Eduardo Año as his handler. Año was former head of ISAFP.

"I was just there kasi we are verifying information that we got, we still don't know ano naron sa bahay na yun. We were there to check on the info," he said.

But Año said, "There is no official line existing between us."

"I was his boss when I was chief, ISAFP Lt. Col. Marcelino was my field commander based in Laguna. He was very effective then and he was accomplishing significant tasks. He even facilitated the capture of a key target during that time," Año said in a statement.

"I can vouch for his integrity," Año further stated, citing Marcelino's performance during their stint with the ISAFP.

"Nakita ko naman na very straight siya at yung kanyang performance talagang nakita ko na talagang very sincere sa trabaho and marami rin siyang accomplishment," said Año.

"I also observed his personal crusade and conviction to fight drug syndicates," he further stated.

Marcelino insisted that he never betrayed the country.

"Kahit sinong tao kapag dummaan sa matinding pagsubok, security of your loved ones at stake, your future, career, life, your reputation is being put in bad light na alam mo naman na wala ka naman ginagawang masama, magiging emosyonal ka naman talaga," he said.

"I can honestly tell you I can never betray our country and our future dahil sa drugs. Never," he added.

For his part, Villanueva ordered Marcelino to show proof that he was doing covert opera-

tion when he was arrested in a drug bust but the Army colonel could immediately produce a mission order coming from either Gen. Año or from the ISAFP.

Instead, Marcelino made a phone call and let Villanueva talk to the person behind the other line.

Marcelino was also heard telling someone in the other line that he needed the mission order "in black and white."

"I'm already detained here. You can just fax the certification (of the mission order) to me," the detained Marines officer told someone over the phone.

In an eight-page transmittal report, Lorenzo Bacia, case officer at the Philippine National Police-Anti-Illegal Drugs Group, said the raid inside No. 15, Block 7, Lot 6, Mahogany St., Celadon Residence, Felix Huertas Road, Brgy. 350 Zone 35, Manila stemmed from an intelligence report they received last December 16 on the illegal drug activities of a certain Lo Chi, Atong Lee, and a certain Chu.

After confirming the tip they received through the conduct of a series of surveillance operations, the PNP decided that it was time to raid the area.

Armed with a search warrant issued by Judge Fernando Sagun of the Manila Regional Trial Court, the PNP swooped down the storage facility where they found two people, one was seated in a couch.

The man seated in the couch was no other than Marcelino of the Philippine Marines. The other man with him was Yan.

Marcelino insisted then that he was part of an intelligence and surveillance operation against a drug syndicate.

The Marine officer also claimed that he had a case operation plan (coplan) to support the claim but he failed to show one.

They also found out that the townhouse is not only a storage facility but actually a clandestine shabu laboratory.

Based on the prevailing street value of shabu, the seized illegal drugs was worth about ₱300 million.

Meanwhile, Malacañang denied reports that Marcelino was part of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC).

"Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino is not and has never been an operative detailed to the PAOCC," Gen. Reginald Villasanta, PAOCC executive director, said in a statement.

"Our records likewise show that no ongoing PAOCC operations involve Lt. Col. Marcelino," the statement added. (With a report from Madel S. Namit)

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Secure power towers, Chiz asks MILF

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) should take the initiative to secure transmission towers in their areas to ensure a stable power supply during the elections, Sen. Francis Escudero said yesterday.

Escudero, who is running for vice president, said the bombings of transmission towers of the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines should be stopped. The NGCP has recorded at least 18 attacks on its transmission facilities mostly in Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao since November.

"These are the areas where the MILF has a presence and wields some form of authority. They will be in a position to secure the NGCP towers," Escudero said.

"There can be no better time for the MILF to show good faith and sincerity than now when the BBL (Bangsamoro Basic Law) is under consideration in the legislature," he added.

Escudero said the alleged involvement of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters could be addressed by the MILF since many of its officials and members have relatives and friends in the BIFF.

"The MILF could also be instrumental in mediating land claims and zonal problems; which have kept the NGCP from throwing a more reliable blanket security around its towers," he said.

Tap PNP, AFP

The camp of Vice President Jejomar Binay said the government should tap the police and military to secure transmission facilities.

"Let them secure, around the clock if needed, the transmission lines and power facilities to prevent bombings," said Rico Quicho, Binay's spokesman for political concerns.

Quicho said the government should also take a proactive legal action against those preventing the repair of the toppled lines.

"If there are valid claims, pay them. Otherwise take legal action to ensure the government is able to exercise its eminent domain powers," he said.

– Marvin Sy, Janvic Mateo

27 January 2016



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Binay camp wants PNP, AFP tapped to secure NGCP towers

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police should be tapped to secure power transmission lines in Mindanao, lawyer Rico Quicho, vice presidential spokesman for political affairs, said yesterday as he laid out the steps that Vice President Jejomar C. Binay believed would prevent more bombings of towers of the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP).

"Vice President Binay believes the military and police should first be mobilized. Let them secure – round the clock if needed – the NGCP transmission lines and power facilities to avoid bombing on these infrastructures," Quicho said.

"Second, take a more proactive legal action against the people preventing the repair of these lines and equipment," he added.

Moreover, Quicho said right-of-way issues must also be properly addressed.

"If there are valid claims to be paid, then pay them. Otherwise, institute legal action to ensure that government is able to exercise its eminent domain powers and obtain right-of-way," he said.

"We cannot just appeal for cooperation. Government must take the bull by its horns and act on the problem," he added.

NGCP previously warned that the Mindanao grid may collapse due to the continued refusal of landowners to allow entry to linemen who will repair toppled transmission towers.

Binay unveiled earlier his energy platform for Mindanao that aims to guarantee long-term energy supply and security.

He laid the groundwork for reforms in the energy sector based on five pillars: (1) Real assessment of demand and supply; (2) Achieve energy self-sufficiency through utilization of indigenous energy resources; (3) Create opportunities that will allow entry of more foreign and local investments in the energy industry; (4) Revisit statutory and policy framework on power and energy; and (5) Wider energy access through completion of electrification programs.

Binay vowed to appoint only competent people in the energy department to avoid any power crisis.

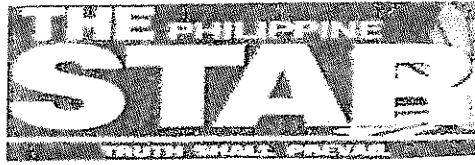
He said government can no longer afford to have a passive approach in resolving the power problems in Mindanao as he scored the Aquino administration for its "seeming inaction."

"This is not the time to watch from the sidelines, fence-sit, and wait for people to cooperate. Government must take charge and address the problem of Mindanao power head-on," Binay said.

"Since 2010, this government has not taken any firm action in helping the people of Mindanao who have languished in darkness every summer because of the multiple conflicts and issues relating to the Mindanao power situation," he added.

The Vice President rued that while Aquino and Energy Secretary Jericho Petilla asked Congress for emergency powers last year when it seemed Luzon would experience power supply shortage during the summer months, the administration never sought similar legislative intervention for Mindanao.

27 January 2016



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Menorca freed on bail, sees 99 more libel cases

By NON ALQUITRAN

Former Iglesia ni Cristo (INC) minister Lowell Menorca yesterday posted P20,000 bail at the Manila Regional Trial Court for two libel suits he faces at a court in Marawi City and Lanao del Norte, both in Mindanao.

But Menorca said he might face 99 more libel cases as members of the Society of Communicators and Networkers (Scan) have reportedly sworn to file complaints against him in their own localities for earlier claiming on TV that the INC uses Scan as its death or hit squad.

"All they want is to continuously harass me, suppress me," Menorca said over GMA 7.

Chief Inspector Arsenio Riparip also recommended yesterday either an award or a commendation for the three policemen who arrested Menorca on Wednesday.

Riparip, Manila Police District general assignment and investigation section chief, denied writing the recommendation but later admitted to "hiding it" after The STAR secured a copy of the document he signed.

In his letter to MPD director Chief Supt. Rolando Nana, Riparip said the act of Police Officers Arnel Santos, Dennis Ramos and Samson Sison in arresting Menorca was justified and lawful since it was backed by a warrant issued by a Lanao del Norte Regional Trial Court.

"The fact that the arresting officers were in civilian clothes was justified... and there were no indicative proofs during the apprehension that they were carrying their issued firearms," Riparip argued.

He denied the INC is pressuring the MPD and his recommendations were tinted with politics.

When asked why he tried to hide his recommendation, he only smiled.

Nana said he would study the recommendation and send it up for the board to consider.

Meanwhile, the INC called on the military leadership to look into what it called "highly irregular" security given to Lottie Manalo-Hemedez, the expelled sister of executive minister Eduardo Manalo.

Edwil Zabala, INC spokesman, fears that Hemedez's continued use of military personnel might endanger the lives of the security guards the church hired to safeguard its Tandang Sora property.

"The reports that Hemedez is being secured by soldiers need to be looked into by the proper authorities, especially since former military personnel have already been seen providing security for Mr. Angel Manalo, Ms. Hemedez and their group," said Zabala.

Records show that in October last year, Hemedez's lawyer Trixie Angeles was accompanied by former military men in an attempt to enter the INC compound in Tandang Sora.

Prior to this, Oakwood mutineer and dismissed Army captain Nicanor Faeldon also tried to enter the same property. Faeldon was a former client of Angeles, who represented the Army officer when he was charged for his participation in the Oakwood mutiny in 2003.

Zabala claimed the assistance provided by Faeldon and other dismissed military personnel "lend credence to reports in the media that there are documents that prove that Marines are being used as escorts by these expelled INC members."

"Our security guards don't stand a chance against Marines. What we want to avoid is people getting hurt in the course of doing their jobs. We hope it does not come to that," said Zabala.

According to the minister, if proven that the armed guards of Hemedez are active military personnel, then "the AFP should impose administrative sanctions as our armed forces should not be used as anyone's private army." - With Rey Galupo, Ed Amoroso, Ghio Ong

23 January 2016



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'BRP Tarlac' joins PH naval force in May

By ROY C. MABASA

The "BRP Tarlac (LD601)," the Philippine Navy's first Strategic Sealift Vessel (SSV), is expected to arrive in the Philippines in May, after completing its sea trials.

Last Monday, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said the ship, which was laid down by the PT PAL shipyard in Indonesia on June 5, 2015, was christened and launched in Surabaya, Indonesia.

baya, Indonesia.

During the launching ceremony, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin said that aside from the ability to respond to traditional and non-traditional threats, the vessel will enhance the country's capability in delivering humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

For his part, Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Resources Rizal Ramli expressed

appreciation for the trust given by the Philippines to Indonesia in strengthening its naval fleet.

Aside from Gazmin and Ramli, also present during the ceremony were Philippine Ambassador to Indonesia Maria Lumen Isleta, the Philippine Navy's Flag Officer-in-Command VADM Caesar Taccad, Indonesian Minister for Defense Ryamizard Ryacudu, and Chief of the Indonesian Navy Vice Admiral Ade Supandi.

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At Ground Level

By SATUR C. OCAMPO



Positioning the Philippines for eventual war?

Two months ago, as the Supreme Court deliberated on the two petitions urging it to declare the Phl-US Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement unconstitutional, I wrote about former US Senator Mike Gravel's warning, via his petition-in-intervention filed through Filipino lawyers, that the EDCA could lead to war.

The arrangement, according to the American senator, was meant to provide the US a "strategic launching pad in its supposed campaign to contain rising China." It could aggravate tensions in Asia-Pacific, he argued, and bring into reality the growing fears of war over the South China Sea. He invoked the "Thucydides trap" - referring to the attendant danger of war when a rising power (China) rivals a ruling power (US) - as evidenced by 12 wars recorded in world history.

America, Gravel said, is "skirting ever so close to the Thucydides trap," its political leadership unable to reverse the trajectory. However, the SC rejected his petition, saying he had no legal standing to intervene in the case. Voting 10-4-1, the tribunal declared the EDCA constitutional.

Now, two recent reports emanating from Washington appear to buttress Gravel's warning.

One report, by the British *Guardian*, is about a study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, commissioned by the Pentagon. It urges America to flex its military muscle in Asia-Pacific - in light of its finding that military power in Asia is "shifting against the United States." The study will be the subject of a public hearing by the Senate armed services committee, headed by Republican Sen. John McCain.

Titled "Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capability, Presence, and Partnerships," the study outlines four elements for US military buildup. These are the following:

1. Continuing to align Asian strategy within the US government and with allies and partners;

2. Accelerating efforts to strengthen capability, capacity, resilience, and interoperability between them;

3. Sustaining and expanding the US military presence in Asia-Pacific;

4. Innovating in order to plug "critical capability gaps" in two areas. 1) defending against emerging risks to US forces, such as growing ballistic missile risks to American ships and forward bases (the planned "agreed locations" in the Philippines for US military facilities under EDCA would constitute forward bases); and 2) gaining an "asymmetric, cost-imposing counter" to potential regional competition.

Among the CSIS study's specific recommendations for muscle-flexing in Asia-Pacific are to increase surface fleet presence, deploy more nuclear-attack submarines in Guam, continue to diversify air operating locations, bolster regional missile defenses, stockpile critical precision munitions, and enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance cooperation with regional allies.

In all these, one can discern how the Philippines, through the EDCA, is supposed to fit into the scheme of things being plotted by the US "military-industrial complex."

"Chinese and North Korean actions are routinely challenging the credibility of US security commitments," the study notes, "and at the current rate of US capability development the balance of military power in the region is shifting" against the dominant superpower. "Robust funding is needed to implement the rebalance," meaning, more money for

war preparations (instead of, say, social programs).

The study recommends "institutionalizing a culture of experimentation." This entails, among others, "energizing rapid platform evolution," developing advanced long-range missiles, funding innovative missile defense concepts, fielding additional air combat systems, exploiting America's "undersea advantage," and augmenting space, cyber, and electronic warfare capabilities.

If China's economic, military, and geopolitical influence continue to rise at even a modest pace in the next 10 to 15 years, the study projects, "the world will witness the largest shift in the global distribution of power since the rise of the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries." And if within that period China surpasses the US as the world's largest economy, "it will mark the first time in centuries that the world's economic leader will be non-English speaking, non-Western, and non-democratic."

"Of course these are some major ifs," the study hastens to add, intimating the scenario may change if its recommendations were to be carried out.

The other report, by the *International New York Times*, pertains to a proposal by the Pentagon and the US Energy Department to modernize America's current stockpile of nuclear weapons by turning these into smaller arms with lesser nuclear-power yield but more reliable targeting capabilities. The plan has sparked a debate among key military and civilian defense officials and criticisms from scientist groups.

The proponents claim that improving the existing weapons fulfils President Obama's pledge not to produce new nuclear armaments and still makes their use "less likely because of the threat they can pose." But the plan's critics counter that the smaller yields and better targeting "can make the arms more tempting to use – even to use first [in attack], rather than in retaliation."

Most controversial is the B61 Model 12, the first of five cruise missile nuclear warheads flight-tested last year, as part of a revitalization program estimated to cost \$1 trillion over 30 years. It's described as "small, stealthy, and precise." Russia has denounced the program as "irresponsible" and "openly provocative" and China is reportedly worried over the nuclear-tipped cruise missile. (China's strategic deterrence force allegedly includes nuclear and conventional ballistic and cruise missiles.)

Within the US defense establishment, concerns have been raised over the nuke modernization plan. The former director of the Nuclear Weapons Council, Andrew Weber, called it "unaffordable and unneeded." The Union of Concerned Scientists cites a finding by federal advisory scientists that "simply refurbishing weapons in their existing configurations could keep them in service for decades." And the Federation of American Scientists warns that the claimed high accuracy and low destructive settings of the new weapons can induce military commanders to use them in an attack, simply because of assurances that the radioactive fallout and collateral damage would be limited.

It's truly disturbing to contemplate how these developments in strategy and arms modernization could drag us into another US war, once the EDCA is implemented.

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Email: satur.ocampo@gmail.com



23 January 2016

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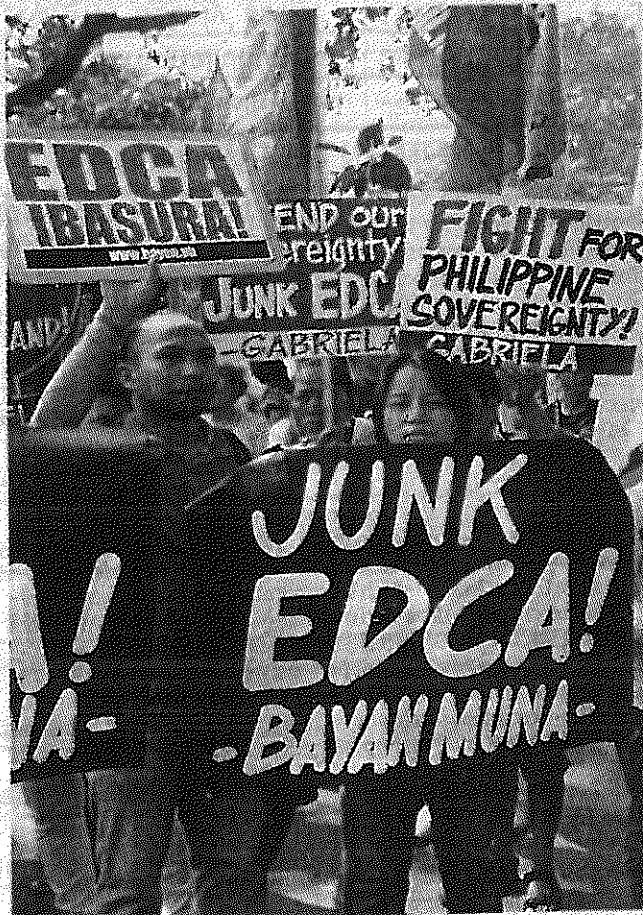
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What does PH-US agreement really mean?

MY MAIN emotion upon reading the Supreme Court's decision on the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement was profound sadness (aside from anger)—sadness, because I have to face the truth and the fact that the US government does not (and perhaps will never) regard us and relate with us as a sovereign nation. An even deeper sadness set in with the realization that we ourselves, at least our leadership (in all three branches) or even most of us, do not regard ourselves sovereign in our relation with the United States.

I am afraid all the "mutual" agreement clauses in the Edca will in practice really mean that the United States will dictate on us, and we will always agree. What is so "mutual" in that?

With all the rationalizations about the benefits Edca brings to us, deep in our hearts we know that this is not so. Will it really stop China from doing what it is doing now? Do we really believe that China will invade us? And if it does, will the United States really defend us? I think US President Barack Obama in his last visit has already disabused us of that illusion (delusion?). I really find it ironic that we assert our sovereignty relative to Chi-



ACTIVISTS denounce the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement that was recently upheld by the Supreme Court.

GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

na by highlighting our dependence on the United States.

I think it would be closer to the truth to read Edca as Enhanced Dependence and

Cooptation Agreement.

—SR. MARY JOHN
MANANZAN, OSB,
St. Scholastica's College,
Malate, Manila

Edca provides more advantages than drawbacks

OPPONENTS OF the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement or Edca should bear in mind that, on the whole, this new agreement with the United States has more advantages than drawbacks. On our own, we would have a hard time securing our coastal waters as this would be so costly and demand more resources from our government and the Philippine military. With Edca, our naval ships can more easily deter any incursions near our shores and shield Filipino fishermen from harm and harassment by hostile countries.

The Edca is legitimate and is in consonance with existing international laws and agreements on mutual defense. We should be thankful that the United States has come to our aid, sincerely. Besides, although the agreement has been signed, it is still being reviewed—to satisfy criticisms and to see if it has violated any law, which is most unlikely.

Edca is good for the Philippines considering our ongoing dispute with China. Let's all look at the benefits Edca brings us.

—SAMUEL TENORIO,
samueltenorio508@yahoo.com

Local 0295 5295

23 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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₱11 billion more for Philippine defense

SEN. Juan Ponce Enrile was able to achieve at a recent meeting of the bicameral conference committee on the National Budget an increase of ₱10 billion for the Philippine Air Force for the purchase of sorely needed jet aircraft for the country.

The senator, was attending the conference committee meeting along with fellow Senators Ralph Recto and Paolo Benigno "Bam" Aquino and the members of the House contingent, when he deplored the low budget provided for national defense and security, especially in the face of growing challenges in the South China Sea.

He proceeded to cull ₱4 billion from the budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), ₱5 billion from the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and ₱1 billion from the President's Contingency Fund – for a total of ₱10 billion. Together with ₱1 billion which Sen. Loren Legarda had been able to transfer from the Reproductive Health program, a total of ₱11 billion was added to the PAF budget. The original Department of National Defense budget of ₱116 billion was thus increased to ₱127 billion.

For years, critics have lamented that Philippine security is among the weakest in this part of the world. In a desperate attempt to maintain a presence in one disputed part of the South China Sea, we had to use a partly sunken Philippine vessel as a base for a contingent of Philippine Marines. It was only recently that the PAF was able to acquire jet fighters from South Korea to add to its jet trainer planes and its old propeller-driven aircraft.

Perhaps more than the other members of Congress because he once served as defense minister of President Marcos, Senator Enrile saw the need for a stronger defense posture for the country, not just to meet external threats but also to better manage the danger posed by armed separatist groups in Mindanao.

The ₱11 billion that Senators Enrile and Legarda were able to add to the PAF budget is a welcome boost to the overall defense of the country. We may also be getting some aid from the United States under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which was recently upheld by the Supreme Court, but these should merely supplement our own resources and capabilities which are the pillars of Philippine defense.

28 January 2016



Pahina. 3

Drug buster noon, suspek na ngayon?!!

MISTULANG nagkagulatan ang mga kasalukuyan at dating opisyal ng Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) sa nakaraang drug raid sa Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Ang dating anti-drugs personnel ang pinakabagong 'suspek' sa nakaraang operation ng PDEA.

Laking-gulat nila nang makita ang ex-official sa apartment na ginawang 'shabu' lab.

Pakiwari ng awtoridad, maaaring sangkot si Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino at ang Chinese national na kasama.

Agad hinuli at sinampahan ng paglabag sa Section 8 o Manufacturing of Dangerous Drugs sa ilalim ng Republic Act 9165 o ang Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002.

Sa pagpapaliwanag ng ex-PDEA official, siya ay kasalukuyang parte ng isang intelligence operation ngunit, nang tanungin kung para saang organisasyon o agency, hindi pa alam.

Ayon pa sa kanya, 'di niya magagawang traydurin ang bansa.

Sa ganitong lagay, maraming tanong ang nabubuo sa ating mga isipan sa kamakailan lamang na isinagawang drug raid.

Tila palaisipan ang pangyayaring ito dahil aminado ang PDEA at mga opisyal na mismong kasama sa operation na maganda ang record ni Marcelino lalo na sa kapanahunan ni dating PDEA Director General Dionisio Santiago.

Si Marcelino pa umano ang nag-tip sa kamakailang kinahulihan ng P3 bilyong halaga ng shabu sa Camiling, Tarlac noong 2014.

Ngunit, nagulat sila nang buksan ni Marcelino ang apartment na kanilang target.

Ayon sa NBI Narcotics head agent, kabaligtaran ito ng kanilang inaasahan dahil makikitaan ng isang pagiging mabuting lider si Marcelino at naniniwala sila na malaki ang naiambag niya pagdating sa anti-drug campaign.

Gayunman, 'ika nga nila, hindi nagsisinungaling ang ebidensiya.

At kung tunay ngang isa itong frame-up, mas nakagugulat na mayroong mas malaking pinagtatakpan ang pamahalaan!

ONLINE NEWS

23 JANUARY 2016

Mindanao military forces reshuffled to defeat BIFF, Abu Sayyaf

By Roel Pareño (philstar.com) | Updated January 22, 2016 - 4:16pm

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines - Military special operating units have been reshuffled to defeat militant groups such as the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and the Abu Sayyaf group, according to ranking military commander.

Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo dela Cruz, commander of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said they have set May 2016 as a time frame for eliminating threats groups based in Central Mindanao, including Basilan and Sulu areas.

He said some special operating units have been dissolved and integrated to others to maximize its strength in the operations.

Dela Cruz said among the special units that was dissolved include Task Force Zampelan (Zamboanga peninsula and Lanao) that was created to track down and neutralize Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) militants.

He said they have retained and intensified the strength of the Joint Task Force Central to run after the BIFF while the Joint Task Force Zambasulta was assigned to pursue the Abu Sayyaf group.

"The two special units were retained to accomplish the mandate given by our Commander-in-chief President Benigno Aquino III to defeat the BIFF and Abu Sayyaf groups," Dela Cruz said.

He said that if they fail to meet the May 2016 target, they would review their operational plans to determine where they fall short and maximize best practices for next year's operations.

Dela Cruz said they have no exact figures yet of the BIFF while strength of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Sulu had been reduced.

Based on reports, factions of the Abu Sayyaf group are recruiting new members following the series of operations which neutralized a big number of its followers.

Dela Cruz said they would be able to rescue the remaining kidnap victims once they have defeated the Abu Sayyaf group.

"That's one thing we are doing we can safely rescue the kidnap victims who are still in the hands of this group. Of course, if we defeat them perhaps it follows we rescue the kidnap victims," he added.

Army Chief vouches for integrity of Marine officer nabbed in Manila drug-bust

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 22): Army Chief vouches for integrity of Marine officer nabbed in Manila drug-bust

Philippine Army (PA) commander Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano has vouched for the integrity of Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino who was arrested in a drug-bust in Manila which yielded Php320-million worth of shabu or methamphetamine hydrochloride on Thursday.

In a statement forwarded by PA spokesperson Col. Benjamin Hao, the Army commander said he "can vouch for the integrity" of the apprehended Marine officer.

"I was his boss when I was Chief ISAFP (Intelligence Service Armed Forces of the Philippines). (Lt. Col.) Marcelino was my field commander based in Laguna. He was very effective then and he was accomplishing significant tasks. He even facilitated the capture of a key target during that time," the PA Chief said.

"Our official relationship ended when I left ISAFP on July 25, 2014 to command the Compostela Valley-based 10th Infantry Division," Ano added.

"After I left ISAFP, I learned that (Lt. Col.) Marcelino went on CGSC (Command and General Staff College) and continued giving information to ISAFP and the Army under the principle of information sharing which includes information about drug syndicates and other criminal groups," the PA commander said.

Ano added that he is aware of Marcelino's personal crusade and conviction to fight drug syndicates.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=849504>

Ex- ISAFP chief on Marcelino: No official line between US

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Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año said there was "no official line existing" between him and Lt. Col Ferdinand Marcelino, who was arrested on Thursday in a drug bust operation supposedly while doing intelligence work.

On Friday, Marcelino mentioned at an inquest proceeding at the Department of Justice that Año was his "handler."

Marcelino was arrested by combined operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and the Philippine National Police in Manila, a surprise to the security forces community as he was a known drug buster of PDEA in recent years.

He claimed he was doing "legitimate" work.

But the Army chief refused to comment on Thursday's incident as he did not know the details.

"We can't judge him either," he said.

Año was chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP) in 2014, where he worked with Marcelino.

"I was his boss when I was Chief ISAFP. Ltc Marcelino was my field commander based in Laguna. He was very effective then and he was accomplishing significant tasks. He even facilitated the capture of a key target during that time," Año said.

The former intelligence chief also vouched for Marcelino's integrity and that he had been a witness to the latter's "personal crusade and conviction" against drug syndicates.

Año later headed the Army's 10th Infantry Division before he became Army chief last July.

"Our official relationship ended when I left ISAFP," he said.

He assured the public the Philippine Army will cooperate with concerned government agencies when needed.