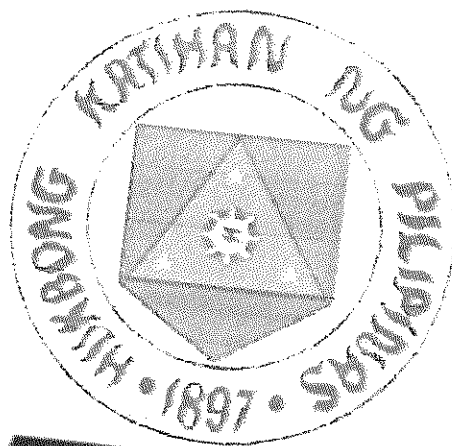


Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



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19 July 2016

Tuesday

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He says deal will set back PH dev't

Beijing backs sea for war
CYBERBUS

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Duterte's
Pia meet

Justice
Duterte's
Pia meet

PH ready for talks with China over illegal drugs



Duterte to pardon cops in drug killings

Damaged runway paralyzes NAIA

China won't stop sea construction

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BIR told: Probe Mar campaign financier

Pride of Mindanao: Rody, Pia meet

Rody won't honor Paris climate deal

Phl issues travel advisory on France

No relocation, no demolition



China sets war games

PH ready for talks with China over illegal drugs



Arroyo acquittal looms



China escalates tension in South China Sea

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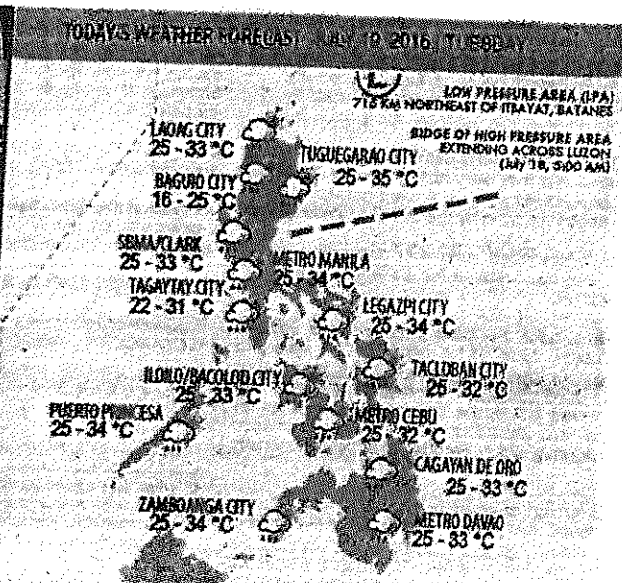
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AIR 21
SUNDAY AIR PHILIPPINE NEWS

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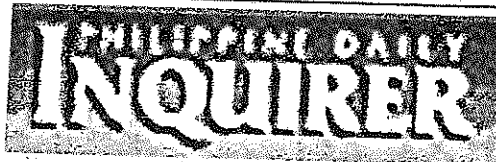
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HIGH TIDE 1:25 AM JULY 23



| EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST | JUL 20 WED | JUL 21 THU | JUL 22 FRI | EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST | JUL 20 WED | JUL 21 THU | JUL 22 FRI |
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Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms

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Rody won't honor Paris climate pact

He says deal will set back PH dev't

By Marlon Ramos

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday said his administration would not honor the historic Paris Agreement on climate change that the Philippines adopted along with about 200 countries in December 2015, saying the covenant was "stupid" and "absurd."

The tough-talking President said the international treaty, signed by countries that participated in the 21st Conference of Parties in France, would only limit the country's industrial growth.

Speaking at sendoff ceremonies in Malacañang for Filipino athletes bound for the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the President said a foreign ambassador recently reminded him of the

RODY/A6

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country's commitment to limit its carbon emissions.

He said he was angry with the ambassador and "wanted to kick him" when the diplomat, whom he did not identify, asked him if the Philippines could maintain the level of its carbon footprints.

"I said, 'No. I cannot tell ... You don't do it that way, Mr. Ambassador [Your country] has reached the apex [of industrialization] and along the way put a lot of contaminants and emissions, and went ahead in destroying the climate,'" the President recalled as telling the ambassador.

"We have not reached the age of industrialization. We're now

going into it. But you are trying to stymie [our growth] with an agreement that says you can only go up to here," he added. "That's stupid. I will not honor that."

Signature not his

When the ambassador told him that the Philippines was a signatory to the agreement, Mr. Duterte replied: "That was not my signature. It's not mine ... I will not follow."

The President also said the climate change agreement was forged just when the Philippines was on its way to develop its own industries.

"Now that we're developing, you will impose a limit?" he said. "That's absurd."

"That's how very competitive

and constricted our lives now. It's being controlled by the world, it's being imposed upon us by the industrialized countries. They think that they can dictate the destiny of the rest of the [world]," he added.

In December last year, representatives of 195 nations that gathered in Paris for the United Nations Climate Change Conference agreed to keep the increase in global temperature at below 2 degrees Celsius—considered the threshold that separates humanity from the most destructive and dangerous effects of global warming.

The Paris Agreement pegged global efforts toward limiting the increase in temperature to 1.5 C above preindustrial levels.

In April, four months after the hard-won deal was clinched in Paris, the Philippines along with more than 170 countries signed the climate pact.

After signing, countries must formally approve the Paris Agreement through their domestic procedures.

The agreement will enter into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 percent of global emissions have formally joined it.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years.

The Philippines has pledged to reduce carbon emissions by

70 percent in 2030 through greater use of cleaner and renewable energy, improved mass transport services, more efficient waste management, reforestation and forest protection, and cofiring biomass, said former Environment Secretary Ramon Paje, who represented then President Aquino during a signing ceremony in New York.

El Niño, Yolanda

In 2015, the strong El Niño weather phenomenon as well as human-caused global warming pushed the global average surface temperature to 0.76 C above the average observed in 1961-1990.

In the Philippines, the Department of Agriculture put

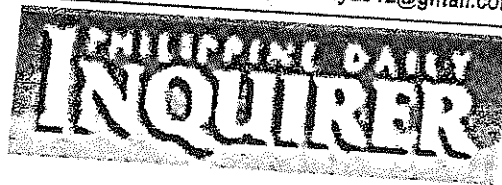
the loss in food crops attributed to El Niño at P3.4 billion in 2015—excluding farm damage caused by strong typhoons that also reached billions of pesos.

In November 2013, Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan), the strongest typhoon in recorded history to make landfall, struck central Philippines.

Its 300-kilometer-per-hour winds and the storm surges these spawned killed some 6,300 people, injured 28,000 others and displaced 4.1 million.

Yolanda was one of the extreme weather events caused by climate change, according to scientists. *With a report from Inquirer Research*

19 July 2016



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Beijing blocks sea for war exercises

BEIJING—China on Monday said it was closing off a part of the South China Sea for military exercises this week, days after an international tribunal ruled against Beijing's claim to ownership of virtually the entire strategic waterway.

Hainan's maritime administration said an area southeast of the island province would be closed from Monday to Thursday, but he gave no details about the nature of the exercises. The Navy and Defense Ministry had no immediate comment.

The announcement came in the middle of a three-day visit to China by the US Navy's top admiral to discuss the South China Sea dispute and ways to increase interactions between the two militaries.

The US chief of naval operations, Adm. John Richardson, is meeting with China's Navy commander, Adm. Wu Shengli, during his trip to Beijing and the port city of Qingdao that began on Sunday.

He is also scheduled to visit the Navy's submarine academy, tour China's first aircraft carrier and discuss ongoing Pacific

BEIJING/A4

From page A1

military drills.

China rejected Tuesday's ruling by The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration in a case initiated by the Philippines, and refused to take part in the arbitration.

It has responded by asserting

that islands in the South China Sea are "China's inherent territory," and says it could declare an air defense identification zone over the waters if it felt threatened.

In a further show of defiance, Beijing followed the ruling by landing two civilian aircraft on new airstrips on the disputed

Mischief and Subi reefs and dispatched its Coast Guard to block a Philippine fishing boat from reaching a contested shoal.

Limit to coercion

Dennis Blair, a former commander of US forces in the Pacific, told a congressional hearing on Wednesday that the United States should be willing to use military force to oppose Chinese aggression at a disputed reef off the coast of the Philippines.

Blair said the objective of such an action was not to pick a fight with China at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, but to set a limit on its military coercion.

President Duterte, who said before the ruling that he wanted to start talks with China on the issue, has not commented on the tribunal's decision, but he described the territorial disputes as a complicated issue that may affect the country's economy as well as ties with a treaty ally, the United States.

Mr. Duterte has been more reconciliatory with China compared to his predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, who filed the arbitration complaint against Beijing.

The tribunal ruled that China violated international maritime law by building up artificial islands in the South China Sea that destroyed coral reefs, and by disrupting fishing and oil exploration.

Live fire exercises

Six states claim territory in the South China Sea, although the area where the Chinese naval exercises are being held is not considered a particular hotspot. China's Navy and Coast Guard operate extensively throughout the South China Sea and regularly stage live firing exercises in the area.

China's island development has inflamed regional tensions, with many fearing that Beijing will use the construction of new islands complete with airfields

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China won't stop sea construction

BEIJING – Despite a UN-backed court ruling that its construction of artificial islands in the South China Sea has no legal basis, Beijing will not halt the work, the head of the Chinese navy reportedly said Saturday night.

China will not leave outcroppings under construction half-finished, state-run *Xinhua* news agency yesterday reported the admiral as saying.

Sun Jianguo, an admiral and deputy chief of the Joint Staff Department of the powerful Central Military Commission, has also said freedom of navigation patrols carried out by foreign navies in the South China Sea could end "in disaster" – a warning to the US after last week's ruling against Beijing's claims in the area.

China has refused to recognize the ruling by an arbitration court in The Hague that invalidated its vast territorial claims in the South China Sea, and did not take part in the proceedings brought by the Philippines.

It has reacted angrily to

calls by Western countries and Japan for the decision to be adhered to.

China has repeatedly blamed the United States for stirring up trouble in the South China Sea, a strategic waterway through which more than \$5 trillion of trade moves annually.

China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam all have rival claims, of which China's are the largest.

The US has conducted freedom of navigation patrols close to Chinese-held islands, to Beijing's anger, while China has been bolstering its military presence there.

Speaking behind closed doors at a forum in Beijing on Saturday evening, Sun said the freedom of navigation issue was a bogus one that certain countries

Turn to Page 12

repeatedly hyped up.

"When has freedom of navigation in the South China Sea ever been affected? It has not, whether in the past or now, and in the future there won't be a problem as long as nobody plays tricks," he said, according to a transcript of his comments seen by *Reuters*.

China is the biggest beneficiary of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and won't let anybody damage it, Sun said.

"But China consistently opposes so-called military freedom of navigation which brings with it a military threat, and which challenges and disrespects the international law

of the sea," Sun said.

"This kind of military freedom of navigation is damaging to freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, and it could even play out in a disastrous way," he added, without elaborating.

He said the court case at The Hague must be used by China's armed forces to improve its capabilities "so that when push comes to shove, the military can play

a decisive role in the last moment to defend our national sovereignty and interests."

Separately, China's Maritime Safety Administration said yesterday that an area just offshore from the east of the island province of Hainan would be a no-sail zone from July 19 to 21 while military drills take place.

China generally describes its exercises in the South China Sea as routine. - *Reuters*

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Army troops seize 2 BIFF strongholds

By Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—Government forces have fought and driven away Moro armed men who had used at least two villages as camps in Shariff Aguak and Datu Unsay towns in Maguindanao province.

At least 33 members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were killed and 10 others were wounded in skirmishes in Barangay Kuloy in Shariff Aguak and Barangay Meta in Datu Unsay from Wednesday to Saturday, according to Col. Lito Sobejana, commander of the Army's 601st Infantry Brigade.

"The figure was verified with various sources and confirmed by village officials and residents," he said.

The BIFF, which split from the mainstream Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) over political differences in pursuing peace negotiations with the government, laughed off the military claim.

"The Army was imagining casualty figures," Abu Misri Mama, spokesperson of the BIFF, said in the vernacular. He also denied the communities were BIFF strongholds.

Mama admitted that only three rebels were killed and four were injured.

Asked how many soldiers were killed, Mama said, "Ah marami (plenty)."

Air and ground assaults

On Wednesday, the Army launched air and ground assaults against some 60 BIFF rebels who harassed Army recruits undergoing immersion activities in conflict-affected communities in Meta. Sporadic fighting ensued until Saturday.

Two homemade bombs left by the fleeing rebels exploded while soldiers were clearing the area. Seven soldiers were wounded.

Maj. Gen. Edmundo Pangilinan, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, and Maj. Gen. Demosthenes Santillan, Army deputy commander, also visited the recaptured communities while bomb experts checked on several houses from where the BIFF men launched their attacks.

With the two high-ranking officials were members of the government and MILF ceasefire monitoring committees and the international monitoring team.

Sobejana said the Army was putting a ceasefire mechanism in place to avoid clashes between military and the MILF.

Displaced families

About 700 families have been displaced by the fighting, according to the humanitarian unit of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

After clearing operations were completed on Sunday, the Army announced that local residents could return to their villages. But the displaced families refused to do so, fearing the return of the BIFF and the resumption of armed hostilities.

"We might be caught in the cross fire, we will not risk our lives," one of the residents, Kamid Sandig, said. He recounted previous experiences in areas where soldiers were stationed near BIFF camps and skirmishes flared up repeatedly.

Sandig said the Army should leave before they could return home. He cited the case of a 15-year-old girl who was wounded by stray bullets on Wednesday morning when Army soldiers and BIFF rebels started shooting at each other.

Sobejana said the soldiers would stay in an area far from the communities, under the ceasefire setup with the MILF.

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Heeding Duterte, 44 Reds yield in Pampanga

By **Tonette Orejas**
Inquirer Central Luzon

Luzon police director

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO— Ahead of the resumption of peace talks between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), 44 rebels surrendered to local officials here on Monday to express support for the efforts of President Duterte to end one of the world's longest insurgencies.

Called the "Sta. Ana 44," after the name of the Pampanga town where they were born, the rebels were presented to Gov. Lilia Pineda, Vice Gov. Dennis Pineda, Lt. Col. Ramil Anoyo, commander of the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion, and Chief Supt. Aaron Aquino, Central

They were accompanied by Sta. Ana Mayor Norberto Gamboa, a former leader of the New People's Army, the CPP's armed wing, who surrendered in 2004 to now Gen. Ricardo Visaya, Armed Forces chief of staff.

"These are partisans of the NPA, members of propaganda units and members of CPP branches in the villages. Some are with the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan (RHB) and [others are with the] Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB). They have been operating in the fringes of Pampanga," said Gamboa, who used the alias "Commander Ros" when he was in the NPA.

Their ages ranged from 35 to

70 years old.

The RHB is the armed wing of the Marxist-Leninist Party of the Philippines, which broke away from the CPP in 1997 over ideological differences. The HMB is the armed wing of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas.

Gamboa was joined by Arayat Mayor Emmanuel Bonifacio Alejandrino, a former military chief of the HMB.

Anoyo said no one in the batch of rebel returnees had criminal cases. He assured one of the rebels, Jeanette Macasaquit, also known as "Ka Joy," that she was not in the military's order of battle or on any list of targets.

Former rebels Conrado

Galang, Roberto Maniago and Nicolas Nicdao also surrendered six firearms, mostly old ones.

In the program, Gamboa described the former rebels as "victims," saying "people in high places did not lift a finger to ease poverty while the rebels risked lives defending the poor."

Both Anoyo and Aquino, however, said that "communism is almost dead in Central Luzon." The military declared Pampanga, together with Aurora and Tarlac, to be "insurgency-free" as early as 2012.

Pineda said the provincial and local governments will provide funds for livelihood projects for former rebels.

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Abu Sayyaf bomber shot dead

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY - An Abu Sayyaf bomber who was arrested on Sunday was shot dead at the Lamitan City police station yesterday.

Chief Inspector Gean Gallardo, Lamitan police chief, said they were conducting an investigation when Manan Abubakar, alias Pido, bit his finger in an attempt to grab his firearm.

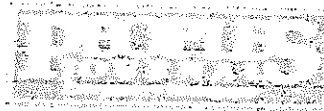
Responding police personnel shot Abubakar, who died at the scene. Gallardo was brought to a hospital for treatment.

Abubakar was said to be a henchman of Abu Sayyaf leader Furuji Indama and was tagged in the assassination of Army Col. Cristobal Julian Paolo Perez on June 19.

Prior to the incident, police said Abubakar was saying that Abu Sayyaf bandits were plotting to ambush Gallardo.

(D)

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REBEL NO MORE. Former Rebolusyonaryong Hukbo ng Bayan (RHB) member Joy Macasaquit turns over a rifle to Police Regional Office 3 director Chief Supt. Aaron Aquino while Pampanga Gov. Lilia Pineda and Vice Gov. Dennis Pineda look on. Macasaquit was among the 44 rebels who returned to the fold of the law.

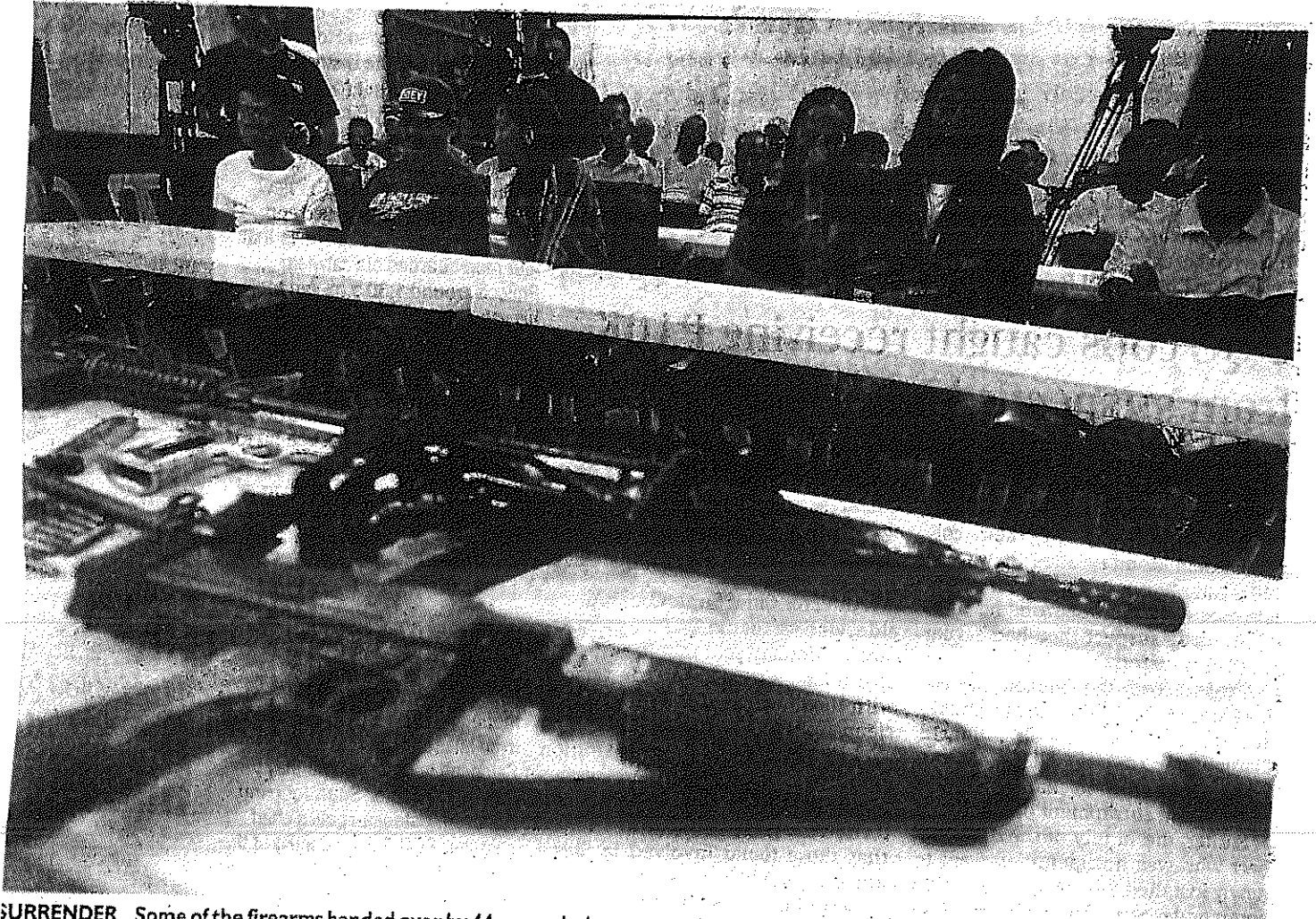
Photo by Bernard Galang

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SURRENDER Some of the firearms handed over by 44 surrendering communist rebels are displayed on a table at Pampanga's provincial capitol in the City of San Fernando.

NIÑO IESUS ORBETA

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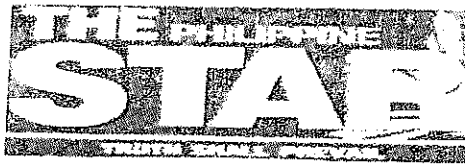


AMBULANCE FOR FORT MAGSAYSAY STATION HOSPITAL - Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office General Manager Atty. Jose Ferdinand Rojas II (center) hands over the symbolic key of a brand-new ambulance from the PCSO Ambulance Donation Program to Col. Nelson Dancel (right), commanding officer of Fort Magsaysay Station Hospital, Army 7th Infantry Division, in Palayan City, Nueva Ecija, during a simple ceremony held recently at the PCSO head office in Mandaluyong City. With them is PCSO Assistant General Manager for Administrative Sector Lauro Patiag.

Photo by JOSEPH MUEGO

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MNLF convoy intercepted in Zamboanga

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Soldiers intercepted yesterday a 20-vehicle convoy of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) members in this city.

Police said around 200 MNLF members were in the vehicles bearing the MNLF flags of Lanao, Agusan, Bukidnon and Central Mindanao. The MNLF members were unarmed.

The convoy triggered panic among residents amid fears of a repeat of the 2013 siege that left hundreds of people dead and thousands homeless.

Senior Inspector Helen Galvez, spokesperson for the Zamboanga City police, said soldiers belonging to the 21st Infantry Battalion escorted the convoy to the pier.

Henry Lacaran, MNLF regional committee coordinator, said they would go to Sulu to show their support for MNLF chairman Nur Misuari, who is set to meet with President Duterte this week.

The President said he would seek Misuari's support for the proposed shift to a federal form of government.

Mayor Ma. Isabelle Climaco-Salazar said the arrival of MNLF members was not coordinated with the city government. - Roel Pareño

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Military operations vs BIFF set to resume

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Moro Islamic Liberation Front has given government soldiers the green light to pursue some 80 members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, who are seeking refuge in an MILF community in Maguindanao.

The military had been running after the BIFF group since Wednesday last week, but sol-

diers were forced to halt the operation last Saturday when the group went inside the MILF community at the boundary of Datu Unsay and Shariff Aguak towns, in consideration of the March 2014 peace agreement between the government and the MILF.

"The issues were already resolved. The grey areas were already resolved," said Col. Ci-

See MILITARY > Page B6

MILITARY

ilito Sobejana, commander of the Army's 601st Brigade, who is supervising the operations against BIFF group.

The operation has left 33 BIFF men dead and 10 others hurt. Seven soldiers have also been wounded.

Sobejana said the clearance was given during a meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, the International Monitoring Team, and the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group in Cotabato City yesterday morning.

"We can already resume our operational plan... There was already an agreement for them (MILF rebels) to stay put in their community and let us clear (the area of BIFF men)... They provided us safe passage," said Sobejana.

He said the MILF promised that their fighters will not get in the way of soldiers pursuing the BIFF in their community. Sobejana implied he believes the MILF will comply with the arrangement, citing the peace pact.

"They said that (during the meeting)," said Sobejana when

asked if there was a promise from the MILF not to engage the operating troops.

Sobejana said the operations had not resumed as of yesterday afternoon because "we are doing refurbishment."

It was not the first time the BIFF ran inside an MILF community to delay military operations against them. Under the cease-fire agreement, the military has to coordinate with the MILF before conducting operations in MILF areas.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said BIFF men have put up lairs near MILF communities. He said there are times when an MILF community and a BIFF lair are separated only by rivers.

"That is one of the challenges confronting our soldiers but we have a (peace) mechanism to follow. We have to follow that mechanism so that the conflict will not become bigger, will not escalate," Padilla said.

"We all know that if we do not follow the agreed mechanism, the problem may become bigger, instead of resolving it," he added.

Sobejana earlier said some MILF rebels coddle BIFF members because of their blood relation.

Nevertheless, Sobejana said the act of these few MILF fighters is not sanctioned by MILF leaders who, he said, are in favor of getting rid of the BIFF which is composed of former MILF leaders and members.

Meanwhile, the Office of Civil Defense in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said the conflict has already displaced 1,320 families or about 6,600 persons.

Myrna Angot, officer in charge of OCD-ARRM, said the evacuees are from Barangays Meta, Iganagampong, and Malangog, all in Datu Unsay town, and Barangay Bagong in Shariff Aguak town.

Angot said there were 886 families or 4,430 persons displaced in Datu Unsay while there were 434 families or 2,170 persons displaced persons in Shariff Aguak.

She said the evacuees are staying in seven evacuation centers where they are being attended to by local government officials.

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MANILA BULLETIN
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ASG leader Indama reported wounded; seeking treatment

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader Furuji Indama, who was reported wounded during an air

strike conducted by the 15th Strike Wing of the Philippine Air Force last Friday, has been brought to Sulu province by members of the ASG based there.

This is according to former ►6

Ungkaya Pukan Mayor Joel Maturan who also said that Indama and six of his followers were wounded during the air strike.

Reports said that Indama, who is considered a high-value target and the No. 2 man of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, was being treated for shrapnel wounds. Also brought along were six of Indama's men who were wounded in the same air strike.

Maturan had also received information that the wounded ASG men belong to the Yakan ethnic tribe, and they were brought to Tuburan, Basilan and Lami-tan City for treatment.

The air strike hit the group of ASG sub-leader Ubaib and 37 armed followers who were holding camp then at Sitio Bohe Buug in the village of Baguindian, Tipo-Tipo, Basilan. The air strike killed 10 of the men, including the gunner of a 50-caliber machine gun, a military report said.

Maturan identified the six wounded ASG members who were also brought to Sulu with Indama as: Abu Haysam, Abu Maid, Abu Haftam, Abu Gaber, Abu Muadz and Abu Abugan.

The ASG from Sulu arrived at the coastal village of Macalang in Al-Barka

town in Basilan province about 9.20 p.m., Saturday, aboard a black four-engine jung-kung type boat owned by the Sulu-based ASG. Indama was escorted to Sulu by two trusted men on board the black boat, it was reported.

Indama was seen fighting with government troops in the village of Baguindan in Tipo-Tipo town, one of the sites where there is a "focused military operations" since July 3.

Maturan's group is an ally of government forces in Basilan. They have fought against the ASG in the towns of Ungkaya Pukan, Tipo-Tipo and Al-Barka.

The report also indicated that the Furuji group had already merged with the group of Hapilon, who is reported to be affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and other armed sympathizers of the bandits in the village of Guinanta in Al-Barka town, Basilan province.

The village of Guinanta was a known stronghold of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and other armed groups. The village is where 23 marines were killed, 11 of them beheaded, in July, 2007 by joint forces of the MILF, ASG and armed civilians.

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44 NPA rebels surrender

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga - At least 44 New People's Army (NPA) rebels, including a woman, who have surrendered to the Philippine Army were received by the provincial government of Pampanga yesterday.

Pampanga Gov. Lilia Pineda welcomed the rebel-returnees after the flag-raising ceremony and gave assurance that they would be provided livelihood opportunities.

Chief Superintendent Aaron Aquino, Central Luzon police acting director, said the rebels, who are residents of Sta. Ana town, also surrendered their firearms.

The surrender is another accomplishment for the Northern Luzon Command after another group of 69 rebels pledged allegiance to the government in Lubuagan, Kalinga, on July 6.

- Ric Sapnu, Cecille Suerte Felipe

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44 communist rebels surrender in Pampanga

By Bernard Galang and Rudy Abular

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga - Some 44 members of the New People's Army (NPA) and its rival faction, the Rebolusyonaryong Hukbo ng Bayan (RHB), surrendered to the government through the intercession of the mayor of Santa Ana town in this province.

The returnees consisted of 25 from the NPA and 19 from the RHB. They surrendered their firearms, took their oath of allegiance to the Philippine government and swore to uphold the Constitution.

Among those who returned to the fold of the law were four NPA commanders Joey Mallari alias "Ka Ron," Vangie Cunanan alias "Ka Regie," Kenneth Guiao alias "Ka Joy" and Nicandro Nidao alias "Ka Nick." The returnees also turned over their firearms to the local officials in the province led by Pampanga Gov. Lilia "Nanay" Pineda.

Pampanga police director Sr. Supt. Rodolfo Recomono said Mayor Norberto Gamboa of Sta. Ana, Pampanga facilitated the surrender of the rebels through the help of his Army buddy, Maj. Ericson Bulosan.

Bulosan was under AFP chief-of-staff Ricardo Visaya when Gamboa, a former district commander of the NPA in Pampanga, surrendered to the military in 2004.

Visaya was a lieutenant colonel and commander of the 69th Infantry Battalion here when Gamboa alias "Ka Ross" surrendered to him.

The rebel returnees were presented by the Philippine Army to Eneida and Police Regional Office 3 Director Aaron Aquino at the provincial capitol yesterday.

Gamboa said he decided to help his former comrades after seeing them suffering from life's difficulties.

"Nakikita ko sila nagtitinda at naglalakong prutas, gulay at iba pa para buhayin ang mga pamilya nila. Nakikita ko rin na lagi silang nagtatakip ng mukha at katawan kahit mainit dahil ayaw nilang makilala sila. Kaya ginusto kong tulungan sila para makapaghanap-buhay ng maayos."

One of the returnees, Joy Macasaquit, said they saw Gamboa's sincerity to help them.

"Gusto po ni Mayor Gamboa na mabuhay rin kami ng maayos at mapayapa kaya niya kami tinulungan," she said.

The PR03 director thanked the 44 rebels for returning to the mainstream.

Lt. Col. Ramil Anoyo, commander of the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion, also lauded the 44 rebels in their decision to live a normal life.

"Kami sa military ay natutuwa sa mga pangyayari dahil sa wakas ay makakamtan na rin natin ang matagal na nating minimithi na katahimikan sa Pampanga at Central Luzon. Kami ay sawa na rin sa giyera at barilan kaya panahon na para itaguyod natin ang katahimikan," Anoyo said.

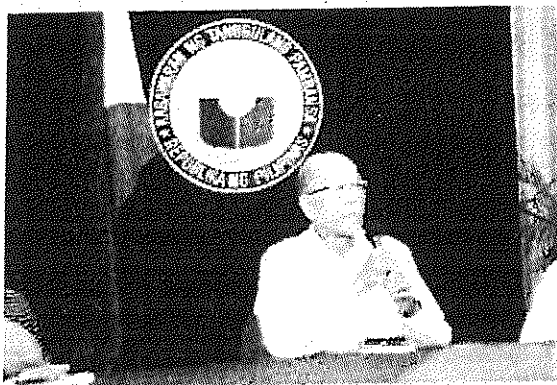
Pineda vowed to provide the returnees livelihood assistance to have a peaceful and better life.

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DND leadership to continue AFP modernization



Sec. Delfin Lorenzana

MANILA — The AFP Modernization Program remains a priority of the new defense leadership.

This was stressed by Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana as the program jives with the Duterte administration's plan of having a credible deterrence to secure Philippine territory especially the maritime ones.

"In the long run, we will still follow our modernization because you know it jibes with what our long-term plans (of) having credible deterrence to secure our territory (especially the) maritime plan," he added.

While some projects may be fast-tracked to address criminality, terrorism, and insurgency threats in the southern Philippines, Lorenzana said they will follow the plans laid for the AFP Modernization Program.

"The 15-year modernization program of the AFP will continue as scheduled," he earlier stated.

Some of the equipment acquired in this period include the two Hamilton-class cutters, six multi-purpose assault craft, 114 armored personnel carriers, three brand-new C-295 medium lift aircraft, two C-130 heavy transports, two FA-50PH light-interim fighter aircraft, five utility versions of the AgustaWestland AW-109 helicopters, eight of its attack versions, five landing craft heavies, three multi-purpose attack craft, and two strategic sealift vessels to name a few.

Lorenzana said the DND will continue to honor contracts, especially those in the pipeline.

"We study it for while and if there are no problems, then we will approve it," he added.

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Pahina. 2

'Pag nakapatay ng pusher PULIS AT SUNDALO, ABSUWELTO — DUTERTE

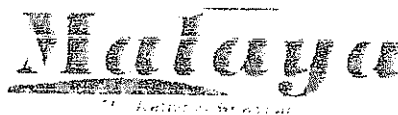
PINAWIni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang agam-agam ng mga pulis o sundalong nakapatay ng mga sangkot sa ilegal na droga.

Ayon kay Pangulong Duterte, basta sang-ayon sa kanyang direktiba at hindi imbento ang ebidensiya laban sa napapatay na drug pusher, nakahanda raw siyang idepensa hanggang korte ang sangkot na pulis.

Ayon kay Duterte, mayroon siyang kapangyarihan sa ilalim ng Konstitusyon para magbigay ng pardon sa kahit pa 10 pulis o sundalo araw-araw na sumusunod sa kanyang utos.

(Aileen Taliping)

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China warns of 'disaster' in South China Sea

BEIJING. — Freedom of navigation patrols carried out by foreign navies in the South China Sea could end "in disaster", a senior Chinese admiral has said, a warning to the United States after last week's ruling against Beijing's claims in the area.

China has refused to recognize the ruling by an arbitration court in The Hague that invalidated its vast territorial claims in the South China Sea.

It has reacted angrily to calls by Western countries and Japan for the decision to be adhered to.

China has repeatedly blamed the United States for stirring up trouble in the South China Sea, a strategic waterway through which more than \$5 trillion of trade moves annually.

The United States has conducted freedom of navigation patrols close to Chinese-held islands, to Beijing's anger, while China has been bolstering its military presence there.

Speaking behind closed doors at a forum in Beijing on Saturday evening, Sun Jianguo, an admiral and Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff Department of

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CHINA

the powerful Central Military Commission, said the freedom of navigation issue was a bogus one that certain countries repeatedly hyped up.

"When has freedom of navigation in the South China Sea ever been affected? It has not, whether in the past or now, and in the future there won't be a problem as long as nobody plays tricks," he said, according to a transcript of his comments seen by Reuters on Monday.

China is the biggest beneficiary of freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and won't let anybody damage it, Sun said.

"But China consistently opposes so-called military freedom of navigation which brings with it a military threat, and which challenges and disrespects the international law of the sea," Sun said.

"This kind of military freedom of navigation is damaging to freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, and it could even play out in a disastrous way," he added, without elaborating.

He said the court case at The Hague must be used by China's armed forces to improve its capabilities "so that when push comes to shove, the military can play a decisive role in the last moment to defend our national sovereignty and interests."

China's Maritime Safety Administration said on Monday that an area just off the east of the island province of Hainan would be a no-sail zone from July 19-21 while military drills take place.

China generally describes its exercises in the South China Sea as routine.

China's air force also said on its microblog it had recently carried out "normal battle patrols" over the South China Sea involving bombers, spy planes and flying tankers, including over Scarborough Shoal which is disputed with the Philippines.

CONFIRMATION

In Manila, Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose said the Department of Foreign Affairs will get official reports first before taking any steps on reports that China flew a nuclear-capable bomber aircraft over the Scarborough Shoal three days after the Permanent Court of Arbitration dealt a blow to China's claim over the South China Sea.

Jose said the concerned department would be contacted.

A photo of the H-6K long-range bomber aircraft was posted on the official Twitter account of China's State Council Information Office on July 15, in the official account of the People's Liberation Army Air Force and in the Chinese social media site Weibo.

The photos were captioned: Bomber H-6k flyover Huangyan Island.

Huangyan is the Chinese name for Scarborough, which is also called as Panatag shoal or Bajo de Masinloc in Filipino.

The H-6k is a licensed built version of the Soviet Tupolev Tu-16 twin-engine bomber with the latest version being designed to carry and fire air-launched cruise missile and other stand-off precision guided munitions.

The aircraft is considered a strategic bomber and is capable of attacking priority targets in Asia and even US carrier battle groups, aside

from having nuclear strike capability.

China has 15 such aircraft in active service as of 2015.

Former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario said former president Fidel Ramos would make a good envoy and hoped Ramos would accept President Duterte's request for him to start bilateral talks with China.

"We have seen the former president at work, he is an exemplary negotiator. He is a heavyweight and I pray that he accepts it," Del Rosario said on ANC's Headstart Monday.

He said Ramos also knows the realities on the ground as well as the complexities of dealing with Beijing since it was during his watch in 1995 when the Chinese occupied Mischief Reef.

Despite the Mischief Reef incident, communication with China during the Ramos administration was never severed.

Del Rosario said the country's position in any negotiations with Beijing is now stronger after the favorable ruling of the arbitral tribunal which he described as "one of the biggest international rulings since World War II."

He also defended Foreign Affairs chief Perfecto Yasay Jr.'s somber stance after the ruling was announced.

"I think the posture that Secretary Yasay took was all right. I think we should be magnanimous and magnanimity is good. Out of sympathy for Secretary Yasay, he is undergoing a baptism of fire, so he has to bone up and make sure he knows everything before he says anything but I think he will surmount and grow with the job," he said.

- Reuters and Ashzel Hachero

19 July 2016

Business Mirror

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China announces South China Sea military exercises

CHINA said on Monday that it is closing off a part of the South China Sea for military exercises this week, days after an international tribunal ruled against Beijing's claim to ownership of virtually the entire strategic waterway.

Hainan's maritime administration said an area in the southeast of the island-province would be closed from Monday to Thursday, but gave no details about the nature of the exercises. The navy and Defense Ministry had no immediate comment. Six governments claim territory in the South China Sea, although the area where the Chinese naval exercises are being held is not considered a particular hot spot. China's navy and coast guard operate extensively throughout the South China Sea and regularly stage live firing exercises in the area.

The announcement of the military exercises came in the middle of a three-day visit to China by the US Navy's top admiral to discuss the South China Sea dispute and ways to increase interactions between the two militaries.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson is meeting with China's navy commander, Adm. Wu Shengli, during his trip to Beijing and the port city of Qingdao

that began on Sunday. He is also scheduled to visit the navy's submarine academy, tour China's first aircraft carrier and discuss ongoing Rim of the Pacific military drills.

China rejected last Tuesday's ruling by The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration in a case initiated by the Philippines, and refused to take part in the arbitration. It has responded by asserting that islands in the South China Sea are "China's inherent territory," and says it could declare an air-defense identification zone over the waters if it felt threatened.

In a further show of defiance, Beijing followed the ruling by landing two civilian aircraft on new airstrips on disputed Mischief and Subi reefs and dispatched its coast guard to block a Philippine fishing boat from reaching a contested shoal.

Dennis Blair, a former commander of US forces in the Pacific, told a congressional hearing on Wednesday that the United States should be willing to use military force to oppose Chinese aggression at a disputed reef off the coast of the Philippines. Blair said the objective of such an action was not to pick a fight with China at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, but to set a limit on its military coercion.

Philippine President Rodrigo R. Duterte,

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who said before the ruling that he wanted to start talks with China on the issue, has not commented on the tribunal's decision, but described the territorial disputes as a complicated issue that may affect the country's economy, as well as ties with treaty ally the United States.

Duterte has been more conciliatory with China than his predecessor, Benigno D. Aquino III, who filed the arbitration complaint against Beijing.

The tribunal ruled that China violated international maritime law by building up artificial islands in the South China Sea that destroyed coral reefs, and by disrupting fishing and oil exploration.

China's island development has inflamed regional tensions, with many fearing that Beijing will use the construction of new islands complete with airfields and military facilities to extend its military reach and perhaps try to restrict navigation.

Several times in the past year, US warships have deliberately sailed close to one of those islands to exercise freedom of navigation and challenge the claims. In response, China has deployed fighter jets and ships to track and warn off the American ships, and accused the US of threatening its national security. AP

19 July 2016



Pahina. 2

Pangakong salary increase ng mga pulis at militar, tutuparin ni Digong

Nilinaw ng Malacañang na uuunahin munang bayaran ng Duterte administration ang pension ng mga retiradong pulis at militar bago isunod ang salary increase ng mga ito na ipinangako ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, ayon kay Atty. Paola Alvarez. Sinabi ni Atty. Alvarez sa media briefing, kung wala man ito sa isusumiteng 2017 national budget ng Malacañang sa Kongreso ay nasisigurong sa susunod na budget ay nakapaloob na ang salary increase ng mga pulis at sundalo.

Magugunitang ipinangako ni Pangulong Duterte noong kampanya na itataas niya sa P50,000 ang minimum salary ng mga pulis at sundalo kapag siya ang nanalang panguio ng bansa. Kamakalawa ng gabi ay binanggit din ni Duterte sa kanyang mensahe sa dinner na handog nito sa batch 71-72 ng San Beda Law College na ginanap sa Malacañang ang ukol sa pangako niyang salary increase sa mga pulis at sundalo. "Kaya the other day, naglabas si Diokno, Secretary Diokno.

Sabi niya na hindi matuloy 'yung increases ng sweldo ng mga police pati military. But I just kept quiet. But during the campaign, I really promised the police to double your salary, pati military. Why? I cannot run a country that is corrupt sa police. How will I do it? Eh corrupt nga. So, sabihin mo hulihin mo 'yun. Walang manghuhuli. Kasali sila sa... Look at— Sabi ko nga malalim 'to. And then, sabi ko, at that time I was not at liberty. Eh ngayon, may immunity ako," wika pa ni Duterte. (Rudy Andal)

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300 pamilya lumikas sa laban vs BIFF

**Nina LEO DIAZ
at FRANCIS WAKEFIELD**

ISULAN, Sultan Kudarat - Umaabot sa 300 pamilya ang lumikas mula sa mga bayan ng Datu Unsay at Shariff Aguak sa Maguindanao upang makaiwas na maipit sa patuloy na opensiba ng militar laban sa Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

Ayon sa report sa Office of Civil Defense (OCD), nasa 296 na pamilya o 1,480 indibiduwal ang lumikas dahil sa pagpapatuloy ng labanan.

Kasabay nito, tiniyak ni Datu Unsay Mayor Bai Reshall Ampatuan na nagpaabot na ng kaukulang tulong ang lokal na pamahalaan para sa nagsilikas na residente.

Inaasahan ng alkalde na madadagdagan pa ang evacuees habang nagpapatuloy ang sagupaan.

Ayon sa Philippine Army, umabot na sa 33 miyembro ng grupo ang nasawi sa sagupaan.

Sinabi ni Col. Cirilito Sobejana, commander ng 601st Brigade, na 10 tauhan pa ng BIFF ang nasugatan sa labanan.

Pitong sundalo naman ang nasugatan sa mga pag-atake, na ang huli ay nang pasabugan ng improvised explosive device (IED) ang grupo ng

militar sa Barangay Kuloy sa Shariff Aguak nitong Hulyo 16, ayon kay Capt. Joan Pelingay, tagapagsalita ng 6th Infantry Division.

Ayon kay Sobejana, tumakas ang BIFF patungo sa komunidad ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), at idinagdag na ilang mandirigma mula sa MILF ang nagkupkop sa mga

tauhan ng BIFF na kamag-anak ng mga ito.

"As far as the leadership of the MILF is concerned they don't want to accommodate the BIFF but blood is thicker than water. Some of the MILF members are related to the BIFF... father, brother, etc.," ayon kay Sobejana.



NGITING PANG-BATO Ngiting-ngiting si Philippine National Police Chief Director Gen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa nang dumalo sa una niyang command visit sa Police Regional Office-7 sa Camp Sergio Osmeña sa Cebu City kahapon.

JUAN CARLO DE VELA

14 July 2016



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Postscript

By FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Panatang holds key to Phl-China row

WAR is not an option, President Rodrigo Duterte says correctly, ignoring pressure for him to take more forceful action against China's having illegally seized strategic features in the West Philippine Sea.

Just 19 days into the presidency and one week after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague upheld most of the 15 submissions of the Philippines against China's land-grabbing, Mr. Duterte prefers to err on the side of caution than confrontation.



Studying the firepower "tale of the tape" between lightweight Philippines and heavyweight China (No. 3 among world powers), one can sense why the pragmatic President took the option of directly talking with Beijing on outstanding issues. (See Globalfirepower.com)

Neighboring negotiations bear fruit faster. With just six years in his hands, Mr. Duterte cannot just watch time ticking away while waiting for supposed allies to use their good offices or muster economic pressure on China to mend its expansionist ways.

The Philippines has a Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States. The Cold War-vintage contract, however, has no ironclad guarantee that the US will retaliate instantaneously except if China launches an armed attack on either of the two allies' territory or armed forces.

The treaty cannot be stretched to cover what the arbitral tribunal struck down in its July 12 ruling as illegal Chinese occupation or building (by reclamation) of artificial islands on reefs and rocks in the West Philippine Sea.

One of the disputed maritime features is Panatang (Scarborough) shoal, 12 nautical miles off Zambales that the Chinese grabbed in 2012. Reports are rife, and Beijing has not denied them, that China would reclaim Panatang and turn it into a military outpost - next door to Manila, Clark Field and Subic Bay.

China's reclaiming Panatang or driving away Filipinos, declared by the PCA as a violation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is not an "armed attack" so the MDT does not come into play - except if the Chinese fire live bullets in the process.

• Panatang could help save face for China

THE BEST option for President Duterte is to talk to his Chinese counterparts or emissaries. A new ambassador plenipotentiary must be assigned to Beijing posthaste, followed by an exchange of top-level official visits.

One breakthrough that should be aimed for QUITLY is to persuade China to stop driving away Filipinos from Panatang, which for generations has been their traditional fishing ground.

This could be the dramatic face-saving scenario that China has been looking for. Whatever *modus vivendi* that may arise from it could serve as model for similar situations elsewhere. Some points

- Although Panatang is well within the Philippine 200-nm Exclusive Economic Zone, The Hague ruled that nobody owns it exclusively and should be shared by those historically fishing there. Allowing back Filipinos would be seen as compliance with the PCA ruling and a neighborly gesture that the watching world could appreciate.

- The fishery resources of Panatang are more than enough for everybody, so the Chinese need not worry. The lagoon inside the chain of reefs and rocks has an area of 150 square kilometers (58 sq. miles). In bad weather fishermen can seek shelter inside through an entrance at its eastern corner.

- Without discussing sovereignty issue, Philippines can invite Vietnam to join Panatang talks and proceed together to lay down guidelines for fishing and sharing, as well as conservation, mutual assistance and protocol.

• Zhao explains how talks firm up ties

THE CHINESE embassy in Manila has been doing its part. Ambassador Zhao Jianhua noted during the 41st commemoration last June 9 of the establishment of relations that the "friendship between China and the Philippines goes back to ancient times."

During the celebration also marking the 15th China-Philippines Friendship Day, Ambassador Zhao shared the story of Zheng He, an explorer and fleet admiral who led seven expeditionary voyages to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, and East Africa from 1405 to 1433.

During a stopover in Mindanao, Zheng He established good relationship with the Sultan of Sulu. The Sultan later on led a delegation of 300 people who visited China in 1417. They were well-received by the Ming Emperor Yongle.

The ambassador said such stories as that of Zheng He are "proof of the traditional friendship that exists between the two countries and their people."

Many Filipinos are skeptical about forging Philippines-China cooperation, especially when the dispute over the West Philippine Sea is discussed. Their nationalistic fervor is stirred up when they sense they are being fooled.

"People cannot always cling to the past," the ambassador said: "If we take history as a mirror, we cannot only see the past, but also the future... Change isn't always a bad thing."

The Philippine-China Agreement signed on June 9, 1975, resulted in major agreements in trade, science and technology, investment promotion, postal services, air services, culture, agriculture cooperation, tax, extradition, joint marine seismic undertakings, and the framework of bilateral relations in the 21st Century.

China's technology, financing and manufacturing capabilities can help in infrastructure development, high quality railway systems, creation of industrial parks, and improvements in tourism, agriculture, and irrigation systems. These will help boost local manufacturing capacity, trade and economic development, employment and government revenues.

Countries like Vietnam and Singapore have bilateral engagement with China, including high level visits and military consultations. In April 2016, Vietnam completed a joint inspection with China on waters outside the mouth of Beibu Gulf, a move to resolve maritime disputes through cooperation.

Despite having similar territorial disputes with China, these countries show that nothing is impossible, given enough openness to proper negotiations.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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FINDING ANSWERS

Bracing for rough seas amid our legal triumph



By **ATTY. JOEY D. LINA**
Former Senator

WHEN Chinese coast guard ships blocked a Philippine fishing boat from going to Scarborough Shoal last Thursday, two days after the July 12 historic ruling against China's aggression in the South China Sea, the reality set in that tough sailing indeed lies ahead despite the international tribunal's verdict favoring our country.

As the ruling of the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague dealt a stinging rebuke against China's expansionism and put the Philippines in a position of legal and moral strength to assert sovereignty, it has become all the more imperative for our country to come up with peaceful ways to effectively deal with the defiant stance of China.

The various challenges the Philippines is faced with — softening China's defiance and consolidating, strengthening, and nurturing international alliances in support of the landmark ruling — will certainly be a severe test of the Duterte administration's ability to capitalize on our country's legal victory and succeed in the field of diplomacy and foreign relations.

It will require a lot of creativity, astuteness, perseverance, among many other factors, for the Philippines to skillfully navigate the complicated diplomatic maneuverings necessary to arrive at a win-win situation within the bounds of our Constitution and which reflects the intent and spirit of the arbitral court's ruling.

At the same time, government has to consider past experience

where strategies have been proven either effective or defective, and must constantly innovate as needed, instead of repeating previous mistakes, because it would be insane, to paraphrase Einstein, to do the same thing over and over and expect different results. A case in point is what transpired during the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff that resulted in our losing access to the area as the Chinese navy seized control.

While it is essential to be magnanimous in victory and avoid provocation so as not to further agitate China, I believe it is necessary to be persistent in asserting our rights to our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the West Philippine Sea, if we are to fully galvanize and maintain world opinion in our favor in relation to the historic ruling that rejected China's so-called "nine-dash line" that spanned almost the entire South China Sea.

There is need to strike a balance in dealing with the delicate and complicated aftermath of the verdict. Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay may have a good point in calling for "restraint and sobriety" following announcement of the ruling, but many found his somber demeanor quite strange for such a delightful occasion, especially if compared to another country's joyous event happening at about the same time: Portugal's win at the Euro 2016.

If victory at Europe's football tournament had people in Portugal jumping in joy, shouldn't the Philippines' victory in the South China Sea ruling — which shapes our country's future and affects the lives of more than a hundred million Filipinos and coming generations — be all the more deserving of ex-

pressions of unbridled happiness? But it's good many Filipino groups, especially overseas, continued with their victory rallies.

In the coming months, the international community will be watching the response of our government and how the arbitral ruling can naturally and logically be used as a leverage to extract concessions during talks between China and Philippines that are still expected to push through despite Beijing's rhetoric lambasting of the tribunal, its verdict, and our country.

Though it is essential to fix strained ties with our neighboring country, government must be extra careful with issuing statements tending to appease China but could only undermine our position and also lead to the weakening of other countries' support for the Philippines. A case in point is the idea that there could be joint development or exploration in our EEZ which, as Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio has stressed, is prohibited by the Constitution.

In traversing upcoming delicate situations, it will take creative imagination, mutual trust, and goodwill to view old issues from a new perspective and explore new possibilities to come up with peaceful and acceptable settlement while upholding the Constitution and international law.

The Philippines could be facing much turbulence ahead but, as the old saying goes, when the going gets rough, the tough gets going. And there's no doubt that our President Rody Duterte can be as tough as any great leader can ever be.

E-mail: finding.lina@yahoo.com

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Standard

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IN SEA DISPUTE, CHINA CAN CHOOSE ITS HISTORY

By Michael Schuman

AN OLD saying tells us that those who can't learn from history are doomed to repeat it. In China these days, a more relevant adage might be: Those who choose to learn only certain lessons from history are doomed.

That's the upshot of China's reaction to a ruling from a tribunal at The Hague rejecting its claims to much of the South China Sea. Government officials and state news media unleashed a blistering torrent of vitriol in response, deriding the whole proceeding as a "farce" and a "brutal violation" of international law.

That attitude is an outgrowth of a historical narrative propagated by the Communist Party's leadership—one that may be politically convenient at the moment, but that ultimately threatens to undermine China's rise.

The Middle Kingdom, in this telling, had long been victimized and humiliated by predatory foreign imperialists, which today still scheme to prevent the nation from assuming its rightful place in world affairs. The storyline stretches back to the crushing defeats dealt to the Qing dynasty by aggressive Western powers in the 19th century, and continues to Japan's even more embarrassing invasion during World War II.

President Xi Jinping likes to remind people of these outrages. Last year's celebration marking the 70th anniversary of the end of the war was accompanied by a tidal wave of anti-Japan propaganda. In a speech, Xi said that victory "put an end to China's national humiliation of suffering successive defeats at the hands of foreign aggressors in modern times."

The same narrative is now being adapted for the South China Sea dispute. In early July, an editorial in the state-run *China Daily*, entitled "China Will Not Swallow Bitter Pill of Humiliation," linked today's maritime squabbles to past indignities at the hands of the West. "The days have long passed when the country was seen as the 'sick man of East Asia,' whose fate was at the mercy of a few Western powers," it said. The Hague tribunal, according to the *People's Daily*, "degenerated into a political tool of external powers."

There's no denying the mistreatments inflicted on China during its past times of weakness. However, this narrative of woe is only one version of China's modern history. There's another, no less valid narrative that Beijing chooses not to talk about very much. It may not whip up nationalist fervor,

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COMMUNIST CHINA'S ROGUE-STATE MENTALITY

IT WAS an illegal undertaking at the outset. When China seized Philippine-claimed shoals in the West Philippine Sea years ago, it engaged in plain and simple bullying.

After seizing the shoals and constructing artificial structures on them, the communist government in Beijing enforced its claim through military might and intimidation. Chinese warships began driving away anyone who went near their artificial structures, and Chinese fighter jets confronted any aircraft that entered the air space above the structures.

The biggest surprise was for Filipino fishermen who earned their living around the shoals. Chinese ships drove them away from what, since time immemorial, have always been considered traditional fishing grounds for Filipinos. Those fishing grounds are clearly within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea to which, ironically, Beijing is a signatory.

China alleged that it has a historic right over those shoals claimed by the Philippines; ancient Chinese maps suggest that Chinese presence had been in the area for the longest time. Manila, however, debunked that claim by producing an ancient Philippine map which includes those shoals. Since this Philippine map is older than the oldest Chinese map, it clearly rebuts China's cartographic claim.

In addition, those disputed shoals are more proximate to Luzon than they are to mainland China. This fact alone dilutes China's position.

Beijing's story is also belied by recent history. When the United States still maintained military bases in the Philippines, Clark Air Base in Pampanga and Subic Bay



HAIL TO
THE CHAIR
VICTOR
AVECILLA

Naval Base in Zambales in particular. American military aircraft and warships frequented the shoals in the West Philippine Sea now claimed by China. On many occasions, the US Marines conducted regular training exercises in the area. During that period, Beijing never protested and just kept silent.

Now that the US bases in the Philippines are gone, and now that the puny navy and air force of the Philippines are left defending the region, China flexes its military muscle and seizes those shoals on the hollow claim that the area belongs to China by historic right. Good grief!

China even redrew the map of the South China Sea and marked its new territories with the now-infamous nine-dash line boundaries. The new map ignores the EEZs of the Philippines and neighboring countries. It also unilaterally converts the South China Sea into Beijing's private lake.

With no military might to enforce its rights, and having had enough of China's bullying, the Philippines brought its case to the United Nations-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration based in The Hague, in the Netherlands. Nations which resented Beijing's bullying lauded the move.

China, however, refused to participate in the arbitration proceedings on the ground that it has sovereignty over the disputed shoals. Anticipating a ruling against it, China announced that it does not recognize the arbitration court, and that it would not abide by its ruling.

In legal theory, China is bound

to participate in the arbitration case because it is a signatory to the Unclos. Beijing has not offered any plausible explanation for its refusal to participate, other than its self-serving political propaganda carried by the international media.

Through whole-page advertisements published in Philippine newspapers since 2014, China repeatedly promotes itself as a peace-loving and cultured country. The stupefying advertisements use euphemisms like "peace," "dialogue," "cooperation," and "understanding" to give the impression that China is a peaceful and law-abiding nation. What hogwash!

Last week, the arbitration court ruled in favor of the Philippines and declared that China's territorial claims are in violation of international law. According to the arbitration court, China has no historic right to the contested shoals, and Beijing's flaunted nine-dash line demarcation is unjustified. As expected, China was furious, denounced the decision, and refused to abide by it. China likewise called the arbitration court all sorts of names, and questioned the court's competence and integrity.

Beijing's offensive language is a typical example of the propaganda a communist government resorts to whenever it runs out of valid arguments. Anyway, Beijing's communist propaganda may work with its regimented and brainwashed citizens, including those in Hong Kong, but it fails to convince Filipinos and the citizens of nations which observe the rule of law.

The world's eyes are now focused on China. Will it abide by international law, or will it go back to its wicked ways as a rogue, outlaw state when it was not yet a member

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Communist.. From A10

of the United Nations?

Meanwhile, how will the Philippines enforce the ruling of the arbitration court?

A military option is out of the question because the Armed Forces of the Philippines is not in a position to wage war against the communist giant. This leaves diplomacy as the only practical option available to Manila. Since international public opinion is currently against China, Manila should pursue quiet talks with Beijing for the purpose of giving Beijing a graceful exit. Manila's diplomats for this purpose should not include the likes of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, who is considered by political analysts as pro-Beijing.

If the diplomatic option fails, Manila can still take solace in the knowledge that Beijing will suffer

from a serious credibility problem in the eyes of the world community if it does not comply with international law. The communist country that it is, China is very concerned about its international image. Being vulnerable in that aspect, China may be compelled to ease up on its position. Of course, only time will tell.

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay should stop giving press conferences about the case. Even before the arbitration court arrived at its decision, Yasay has been making public statements which suggest that he is afraid of displeasing Beijing. Restraint and sobriety in the aftermath of our court victory may be prudent, but a public display of pessimism by the nation's top diplomat during a joyous occasion for the Filipino people is uncalled for.

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Pahina. 5



Wala sa 2017 budget

LUMABAS na ang halaga ng budget para sa 2017. Binanggit ni Budget secretary Benjamin Diokno na wala sa budget ang pagdoble ng sahod ng mga pulis at sundalo. Ang pagdoble ng sahod para sa mga pulis at sundalo ay ipinangako ni President Duterte noong nangampanya. Pero ganun nga, hindi ito matutupad basta-basta. Ang mangyayari ay makakatanggap ng dagdag-sahod ang mga pulis at sundalo sa darating na taon, batay sa Salary Standardization Law na isinabatas ni dating President Aquino. Dagdag pa ni Diokno, ang pag-doble ng mga sahod ng pulis at sundalo ay baka abutin ng limang taon, hindi "kaagad" na tila ipinangako ni Duterte. Pag-aaralan pa rin daw ang karagdagang "hazard pay" at "allowances" para sa kanila. Hindi rin naman talaga ganun kadali magdagdag ng

sahod sa mga empleyado ng gobyerno. Kailangan may panggagalingan ang dagdag-sahod na iyan. At bakit mga pulis at sundalo lang ang dadagdagang sahod? Maraming empleyado ng gobyerno ang nararapat bigyan din ng dagdag-sahod, tulad ng mga guro ng pampublikong paaralan, Mga nurse ng mga ospital ng gobyerno, Mga empleyado ng iba't ibang ahensiya. Ang kanilang mga trabaho ay kasing halaga rin ng mga trabaho ng pulis at sundalo.

Ayon pa kay Diokno, baka kailangang isantabi na muna ang pagbili ng mga kagamitan para sa AFP. Ang problema raw ngayon ay mas malaki ang pensiyon ng mga retiradong sundalo kaysa sa mga nasa serbisyo. Kontra naman ito sa ipinangako ni Duterte sa Philippine Air Force noong anibersaryo nila na "matatanggap nila ang lahat ng kanilang kailangan". Eroplanong pandigma ang kailangan ng PAF, lalo na't nanalo na tayo sa kaso at kailangang bantayan ang ating EEZ.

Malaki na raw ang utang ng gobyerno sa mga pensiyonadong pulis at sundalo. At dahil tila mas mahaba ang buhay ng mga retirado, patuloy ang pagtanggap ng pensyon. Ginawang halimbawa ni Diokno si dating Fidel Ramos na buhay pa raw hanggang ngayon. Kailangang pag-usapan

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

K KA LANG?... Mula pahina 4

ang sitwasyong ito, dahil baka dumating ang panahon na malaking por-siyento ng nakatakdang budget para sa militar ay

mapupunta lamang sa pagbayad ng mga pensiyon. Pampabigat pala sa gobyerno ang mahabang buhay.

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F2 Logistics, RC Cola in vital games

Standings

| | W | L |
|---------------|---|---|
| RC Cola | 5 | 0 |
| F2 Logistics | 5 | 0 |
| Petron | 4 | 1 |
| Foton | 3 | 3 |
| Standard-Navy | 2 | 3 |
| Generika | 2 | 4 |
| Signal | 1 | 5 |
| Army's | 0 | 6 |



Games today:

(Batangas City Sports Center)

2 pm -- F2 Logistics vs Petron

4 pm -- RC Cola vs Generika

6 pm -- Standard Insurance vs Foton

PRIMING up for their much-anticipated clash this weekend, F2 Logistics and RC Cola-Army seek to inch closer to a first round sweep when they play separate foes in the Philippine Super Liga All-Filipino Conference today at the Batangas City Sports Center.

The Cargo Movers battle Petron at 2 p.m. while the Lady Troopers take on Generika at 4 p.m.

Foton tries to tighten its hold in the upper half of the standing when it clashes with Standard Insurance-Navy at 6 p.m. to cap the first out-of-town playdate of the season.

The blockbuster triple-header is part of the city's week-long Sublian Festival.

Two heavyweights tipped to dominate due to their loaded roster and impressive chemistry, the Cargo Movers and the Lady Troopers remain on top of the standings with a 5-0 slate while the Tri-Actix Spikers are running third with 4-1 card.

The Tornadoes and the Life Savers, who have 3-3 and 2-4 marks respectively, are in the middle of the pack as they try to improve their standing heading into second round.

A victory by F2 Logistics and RC Cola will not only keep them spotless, but will also supply them with much-needed confidence entering their marquee match-up duel at the end of the first round on Saturday.

The Cargo Movers, who are coming off a 26-24, 25-16, 25-14 win over the Corvettes last Sunday, will focus first on the defending champions before slugging it out with the Lady Troopers.

"Petron is a dangerous team. We know that it wants to get back on top. So we have to work hard and be ready for all the challenges they will throw at us," said F2 Logistics mentor Ramil de Jesus.

Echoing de Jesus' mindset, RC Cola-Army coach Kungfu Reyes is very much aware that other teams are now very eager to take them down.

"Other teams are now preparing for us," said Reyes moments after his troops downed Foton, 25-20, 27-25, 23-25, 25-20, last Saturday. "We can't afford to be complacent. We have to do our part and prepare because other teams are getting more serious to beat us."

Also, the league will announce the fourth local member of the PSL All-Stars competing in the FIVB Women's Club World Championship from Oct. 18 to 23 at the Mall of Asia Arena.

Jovelyn Gonzaga and Rachel Anne Daquis of the Lady Troopers and Kim Fajardo of the Cargo Movers were earlier chosen for the team that will campaign in the prestigious league against the best club teams in the world, including reigning champion Rexona Ades of Brazil, European titlist Pomi Casalmaggiore of Italy and Asian supreme Bangkok Glass of Thailand.

"We're still in the process of getting the coaches' input," said PSL president Ramon 'Tats' Suzara.

Theodore Jurado

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ONLINE NEWS

19 JUNE 2016

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Army beefs up Central Negros forces

From the Visayan Daily Star (Ju 18): Army beefs up Central Negros forces

The 11th Infantry Battalion in central Negros, where a series of killings perpetrated by the New People's Army had occurred in the past months, received augmentation from the Army's 3rd Infantry Division.

Col. Francisco Delfin, 303rd Infantry Brigade commander, confirmed on Saturday that the 11IB was reinforced by a DRC (Division Reconnaissance Company) unit of 3ID.

The NA Leonardo Panaligan Command recently claimed responsibility for the killing of Councilor Crispin Posadas in Isabela, the assassination of Magdaleno Grande, a political campaign leader, and former Army Msgt. Armando Secuya in Moises Padilla, and the raid of the hacienda owned by Mayor Enrique Montilla, also in Isabela, all in central Negros.

In northern Negros, five Army soldiers and two agrarian reform beneficiaries died in separate encounters and raids in Sagay and Escalante cities, while two policemen were killed in an ambush in Candoni town, early this year, police records show.

Delfin, who hosted the Media Funshoot Games Saturday at the 303rd Infantry Brigade firing range in Murcia, said they have been conducting an island-wide operation, using personnel from detachments that have been deactivated.

"Some detachments had been deactivated because we want our soldiers to be highly mobile, as they can immediately react if there is a report on the presence of an armed group," he said.

"They should not stay in one area for long", Delfin added.

Isabela Mayor Enrique Montilla had requested for an additional Army detachment to be put up in Isabela, following the assassination of Posadas and the occurrence of other NPA-related activities in his town.

Posadas is slated to be buried today at the Isabela public cemetery, with full military honors, being a former member of the Philippine Army.

Chief Inspector Anthony Grande, Isabela police chief, said they are now on red alert, as security will be tight in the burial of Posadas.

<http://www.visayandailystar.com/2016/July-18/topstory5.htm>

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www.dwdd.com.ph

ACCOMPLISHMENTS | 44 rebel surrenderees, an addition to AFP's feat of success



Camp Aquino, Tarlac City– Forty-four (44) New People's Army (NPA) rebels from Pampanga area voluntarily surrendered to the Philippine Army and finally handed over to the government authority of Pampanga Provincial Capitol today July 16, 2016.

This is another feat of success for Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) AFP in addition to the sixty-nine NPA rebel surrenderees at Lubuagan, Kalinga on July 6, 2016. This new achievement was made possible through the persistent anti-insurgency campaign and collaborative efforts of Governor Lilia Pineda, Mayor Norberto Gamboa of Sta. Ana town, and Major Ericson Bulosan of the Civil Relations Service, AFP.

The said former rebels pledged allegiance to the government and expressed their willingness to submit to the government authorities.

Earlier today, Major Bulosan of CRSAFP said, "It can be recalled that Mayor Gamboa was known to be a rebel during the time when AFP Chief General Ricardo R Visaya was still the Commander of 69th Infantry Battalion, Philippine Army based in Pampanga. He surrendered to then Lieutenant Colonel Visaya last 2004 upon realizing the hardship and futility of the armed struggle."

NOLCOM, AFP looks forward to more rebels who will surrender their armed struggle as Mayor Gamboa urges other rebels in the communist movement to surrender and abandon armed struggle and become productive members of the society. He, as well as the rest of the surrenderees, is living proof that there is a chance for a better and peaceful life for those who return to the fold of law.

This is the second batch of NPAs in NOLCOM area of responsibility who surrendered to the military forces for this month of July 2016. The last was the 69 members of NPA who surrendered last 08 July at Headquarters 51D.

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Indonesian sailors abducted in Malaysian waters join hostages in Panamao: Minister

From: the Jakarta Post (Jul 18): Indonesian sailors abducted in Malaysian waters join hostages in Panamao: Minister

Three Indonesian sailors recently abducted in Malaysian waters have been relocated to Panamao, Jolo Island, Southern Philippines, where they are reported to have joined four other hostages kidnapped by a Filipino militant group in late June, Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said.

"They have been separated into two groups. There are now seven hostages being held in Panamao [...] three others remain at Lapac Island, about 64 kilometers away," Ryamizard said on Monday.

The hostages that remain at Lapac Island were kidnapped along with the other four in Philippine waters on June 20. They were transferred to Lapac Island one week before another group of Indonesian sailors were abducted in Malaysian waters on July 9, Ryamizard said.

Based on information obtained from both the Philippines Defense Ministry and the Malaysian Defense Ministry on Saturday, the condition of the three sailors remains healthy. Some of the seven sailors abducted in late June are reported to be unwell, Ryamizard said.

He is scheduled to depart for a bilateral meeting in Kuala Lumpur with the Malaysian Defense Minister on Tuesday. The Philippines Defence Minister will join them on Thursday for a trilateral meeting on maritime security in regional waters.

The three ministers also plan to discuss a joint Navy exercise scheduled ahead of joint sea patrol implementation and the mechanism of naval vessels to guard tugboats exporting goods between the neighboring countries.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2016/07/18/indonesian-sailors-abducted-in-malaysian-waters-join-hostages-in-panamao-minister.html>

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Duterte's displacement strategy

From the Asia & Pacific Policy Society Policy Forum (Jul 18): Duterte's displacement strategy (By Joseph Franco)

Will the President's tactics tackle the Abu Sayyaf Group?

Will Duterte's promised 'shock and awe' campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group yield results? Joseph Franco explains.

Newly-elected Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's ascent to Malacañang heightened expectations that the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) will be defeated. The nascent administration has yet to unveil a strategy for doing this, aside from promises of a day of reckoning and shock and awe campaign. Nonetheless, the President's decades-long stint as mayor provides glimpses of what could be called the 'Duterte displacement strategy' that was used to keep Davao City relatively safe from militants.

A recent spate of beheadings and kidnappings by the ASG has raised concerns over the Philippines' ability to keep western Mindanao safe. Attacks targeting shipments of coal from Indonesia to Filipino coal-fired power plants had upped the stakes. Jakarta subsequently placed a moratorium on exports to the Philippines unless there is a 'guarantee of security' from Manila.

For the various ASG factions, kidnap-for-ransom activities provide invaluable financial resources. Using the discourse of militant jihad, the ASG had been able to wrangle millions of dollars in ransom payments over the years. Ideology is exploited as the justification for violence rather than acting as the inherent driver of conflict. Even with the explicit policy of not paying ransom money for the release of hostages, Manila has not deterred a kidnapping industry becoming entrenched in the southern Philippines. With low levels of human development and grinding poverty in the area, many fighting-age males see membership with the ASG as the most expedient way to earn a living.

In light of Duterte's hard-line stance against crime, including allegations of involvement in vigilante killings by what has been called the "Davao Death Squad", his way of dealing with organised insurgent groups is somewhat curious. In the late 1980s, Davao City was considered the communist New People's Army's (NPA) proving ground for its urban operations. Military and police personnel lived under the threat of assassination by armed partisans, colloquially known as 'sparrows'. To deal with the rising death toll, Duterte entered into alliances with local NPA commanders. For instance, notorious NPA commander Leoncio Pitao was considered a friend by Duterte. Notwithstanding Pitao's numerous indictments for murder and extortion, following his death Duterte even gave Pitao a hero's burial and promised to extend assistance to the latter's next of kin.

More broadly, NPA cadres and fighters were allowed to seek respite from Philippine military offensives within Davao as long as they did not commit violence within the city centre. Duterte further entrenched this uneasy peace by paying what the NPA calls 'revolutionary tax' and in 2013 encouraged local businesses to do likewise. Davao's role as refuge and resource base for the NPA coincided with the diminished activity of NPA sparrows. Instead, assassinations of military and police officers in the city occurred in the adjacent provinces of Eastern Mindanao.

It is therefore no surprise that even with the violence waged by the ASG, members of the Duterte cabinet were keen to extend an olive branch. Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza claimed that he was approached by an ASG member, Muammar Askali based in Sulu Province, known to be keeping a Norwegian hostage captive.

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Abu Sayyaf abductions: Expert says insider info likely

From Free Malaysia Today (Jul 19): Abu Sayyaf abductions: Expert says insider info likely

Terrorologist Paneir Selvam questions how militants know exactly when and where to carry out abductions despite police patrolling the area.

PETALING JAYA: An expert in the field of terrorism and counter-terrorism has pointed to the likelihood of insiders being responsible for the Abu Sayyaf's streak of success in abducting locals and foreigners in Sabah waters recently.

Terrorologist R Paneir Selvam told FMT insider information was a possibility, given that all the kidnapping-for-ransom incidents carried out by the southern Philippines militant group appear to have taken place without a hiccup.

"Without an insider, how is it possible that the militants know exactly the right time and spot to carry out their abductions?

"They managed this even with police patrolling the areas involved. The information must have come from the inside," he told FMT.

Paneir, who is the chairman of the Association of Legal and Policy Researchers, said among the best ways to counter the threat of the Abu Sayyaf, that had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, was to engage the public.

"Sabah waters are porous and difficult to protect, so the people need to be the eyes and ears of the authorities.

"The problem now is that they (the people) feel disassociated from the authorities.

"But the authorities have to realise that their current strategies are unsuccessful, so why not fully utilise the high number of locals who have better access to whatever is happening on the ground?"

Paneir, who is also a lecturer in terrorism at HELP University, was commenting on the abduction of three Indonesian sailors earlier this month.

The incident is the latest in a kidnapping spree, having occurred less than a month after seven Indonesian crewmen of a ship were taken hostage by two different Philippine militant groups and held on different islands in southern Philippines.

<http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2016/07/18/abu-sayyaf-abductions-expert-says-insider-info-likely/>

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Abu Sayyaf prisoner shoots police chief in Basilan province

From the Mindanao Examiner (Jul 18): Abu Sayyaf prisoner shoots police chief in Basilan province

A police chief was shot and wounded on Monday by an Abu Sayyaf prisoner who grabbed his gun while under custody in the restive province of Basilan, officials said.

The attacker, Mannan Abubakar, was eventually killed, but not after he shot Senior Inspector Gean Gallardo, the police chief of Lamitan City. Gallardo was rushed to hospital from a gunshot wound.

It was unknown how Abubakar managed to snatch the officer's gun and the regional police office has not issued any statement on the incident. Abubakar was facing a string of criminal charges – from murder to terrorism.

It was the second time that an Abu Sayyaf attacked his escort. Just recently, a member of the militant Abu Sayyaf group grabbed the weapon of his army escort Sergeant Carlito Macotocruz, of the 18th Infantry Battalion, and shot him dead in Tipo-Tipo town also in Basilan.

The shooter was also killed by other soldiers before he can fire again

The infantryman died instantly from the attack that happened while soldiers were transporting the militant whom they captured in Tipo-Tipo town. The military declined to provide details of the incident, but had confirmed it. The Philippine Army also did not release any statement on the incident.

<http://mindanaoexaminer.com/abu-sayyaf-prisoner-shoots-police-chief-in-basilan-province/>

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www.pna.gov.ph

Mindanao stakeholders hopeful for peace under Duterte gov't

From the Philippine News Agency (Jul 18): Mindanao stakeholders hopeful for peace under Duterte gov't

Members of civil society, including those from the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), gathered in a multi-stakeholders' consultation last July 15 to discuss the prospects of the peace process under the administration of President Rodrigo R. Duterte, expressing strong hopes for the attainment of security, justice, and development across Mindanao.

Titled "Prospects on Journey to Peace under the Duterte Administration," the forum was organized and convened by Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute (MC-WAGI) in cooperation with the United States Embassy in the Philippines, the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID), and the Center for Legislative Development (CLD).

"President Duterte has reopened and restarted the peace negotiations with the Left. He also offered vital Cabinet positions to the Left and appointed persons for negotiations," said MC-WAGI Executive Director Atty. Aurora De Dios during her opening remarks, referring to the renewed peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA).

"President Duterte is pushing for federalism and continuously talking with the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front)," she added.

In many occasions, Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Secretary Jesus Dureza has put to rest reservations on whether the Duterte administration would honor the gains achieved in the peace process. "We build on every brick on the ground. There is so much that has been done already. The message is continuity, and this is for the Filipino people. Enabling peace is a work for a lifetime. It is a continuous work."

Civil society organizations represented in the forum include Nooru Salam; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute (GZOPI); Balay Rehabilitation; Women Engaged in Action on 1325 (WE Act 1325); Council for the Welfare of Children; GenPeace Youth Network; Kasibulan; and the Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID). Partners of the Women's Peace Collective (WPC) from Basilan, Cotabato, Lanao del Norte, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and Zamboanga were also represented.

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Previous peace adviser Teresita Quintos Deles, together with former Bangsamoro Transition Commissioner Atty. Raissa Jajurie, provided attendees with a situational analysis on what has been achieved in the peace process with the MILF, with Jajurie focusing on possible means of moving forward.

"Whether the current administration would pursue the legislative track of the peace process or subsume it under the call for federalism, what is important to note is that the MILF and MNLF have shown their commitment to arrive at a peace resolution to the conflict in Mindanao," Jajurie explained. "Whatever road map is adopted, it should be able to lead to the resolution of the Bangsamoro Question."

The MILF and the MNLF recently released a joint statement vowing to "come together with a unified action to work at common goals and objectives to engage with the new Philippine administration."

The two Moro fronts were also tapped recently by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to assist the government's campaign against illegal drugs in their respective communities and strongholds.

Change from within

PCID President Aminza Rasul, who served as the forum's resource person on emerging issues on women and peace in the ARMM, said that people in the ARMM should also be willing to change and improve themselves in order for President Duterte's peace and development initiatives to bear fruits.

"Not just because President Digong said 'Change is coming' means that it will happen without doing anything ourselves. It says in the Quran that God will only change the condition of man if man makes changes for himself. This means we also need to have attitudinal change within ourselves," said Rasul, highlighting socioeconomic realities in the ARMM such as how majority of the people live below the poverty threshold and that incidences of illiteracy and joblessness remain high.

Recognizing the need for socioeconomic interventions, Dureza had earlier commented on the need for peace dividends to accompany the peace process. "It is not enough that we have signed peace agreements, it will not be sustainable. We must couple it with development. In other words, when you sign agreements, you must always make the people feel that there are dividends for peace because it is development that will sustain all these gains."

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