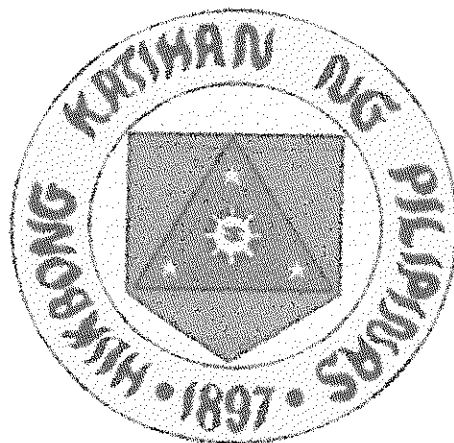


Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

20 March 2016

Sunday

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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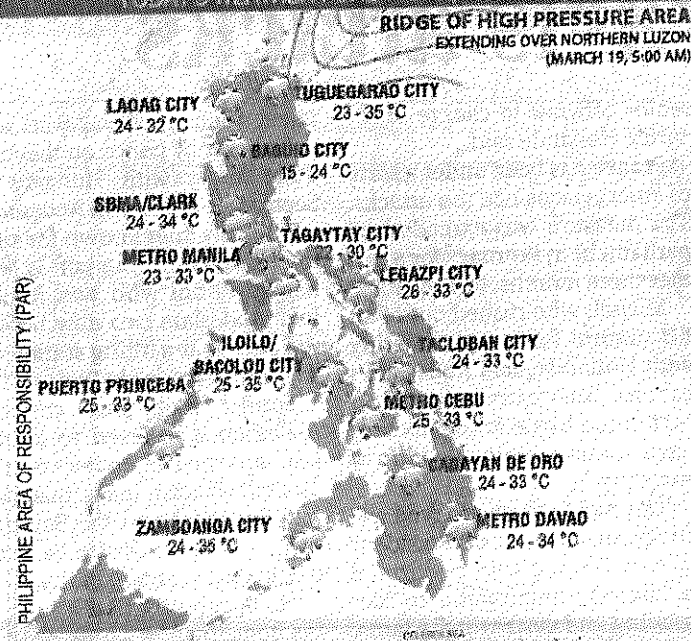
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 20, 2016 | SUNDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)



**RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA
EXTENDING OVER NORTHERN LUZON
(MARCH 19, 5:00 AM)**

City	Temperature
LADAG CITY	24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO CITY	23 - 35 °C
BAGUIO CITY	15 - 24 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 34 °C
METRO MANILA	23 - 33 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY	22 - 30 °C
LEGAZPI CITY	28 - 33 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY	25 - 35 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 33 °C
TACLOBAN CITY	24 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU	25 - 33 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY	24 - 35 °C
METRO DAVAO	24 - 34 °C



SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:00 AM	6:07 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
2:47 PM	2:54 AM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
MAR 19 1:02 AM	MAR 23 5:00 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
3:27 AM -3.06 Meter	8:13 PM 0.86 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

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

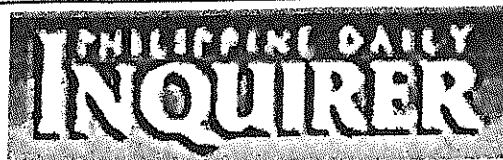
CITY	6:00 AM	9:00 AM	12:00 PM	3:00 PM	6:00 PM	9:00 PM
METRO MANILA	24 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C	22 - 31 °C	21 - 31 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 - 35 °C	24 - 36 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C
LADAG	23 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C
BAGUIO	14 - 25 °C	15 - 25 °C	25 - 35 °C	25 - 34 °C	24 - 34 °C	23 - 35 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 35 °C	24 - 34 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C		

Watch PANAHON.TV everyday at 5:00 AM on PTV (Channel 4).

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

26 March 2016



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PH, US agree on 5 'bases'

US supplies, troops coming as Edca starts

By Tarra Quismundo

THE PHILIPPINES and the United States yesterday announced five locations where American forces will have access under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Edca), including one facing disputed islands in the South China Sea.

The announcement came after strategic talks in Washington, where the allies reiterated their opposition to militarization of outposts in the South China Sea, where six Asian countries have competing claims.

China has built artificial islands with airstrips and mili-

tary facilities as it asserts its claim to virtually all of the South China Sea, including islands and reefs claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan.

The two sides also announced the prospect of "significant" US funding for maritime

PH, US AGREE/A12

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From page A1

security initiatives in the Philippines, support that comes as Manila pursues efforts to boost its external defense.

Ensuring strategic American presence in each of the Philippines' island groups, Manila and Washington announced that they had agreed to use four air bases and one military reservation for deployment of US forces under the Edca.

One of the bases where US forces will have access is in Mindanao, where the United States is concerned about the presence of Muslim extremist groups.

Five locations

The locations are at Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa, western Palawan, which faces the hotly contested Spratly islands in the South China Sea; Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro, southern Mindanao; Basa Air Base in Floridablanca, Pampanga province; Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija province, used in joint Philippine-US military exercises, and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu.

Notably out of the list are the two former US bases in the Philippines: Clark Air Base in Pampanga and Subic Naval Base in Olongapo City, Zambales province, where US military ships dock every year on routine visits.

Subic is closest to Panatag Shoal (international name: Scarborough Shoal), 230 kilometers west of Zambales, where the United States has seen Chinese activity that could be a precursor to more land reclamation in the South China Sea.

China seized the shoal in 2012 after a two-month standoff between Chinese and Philippine vessels.

It was the incident that forced the Philippines to bring its territorial dispute with China to the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in January 2013, asking the tribunal to invalidate China's claim to almost all of the 3.5-million-square-kilometer South China Sea.

Reporting the Chinese activity at Panatag Shoal on Thursday, Adm. John Richardson, head of US naval operations, expressed concern that a ruling on the case expected in coming weeks could trigger a Beijing decision to declare an exclusion zone in the South China Sea.

Richardson said the United States was weighing responses to such a move by China.

Call for restraint

In a joint statement issued after the annual US-Philippine Strategic Dialogue in Washington, Washington and Manila called for restraint among parties in the South China Sea dispute, saying claims should be pursued in compliance with international law.

"Both sides expressed their firm opposition to the ongoing militarization of outposts in the South China Sea and discussed their common view that the installation of new military assets on the outposts escalates tensions," the statement said, referring to China's deployment of fighter jets, surface-to-air missiles and installation of radars on disputed islands and reefs in the strategic waterway.

The two sides also "discussed options to address further militarization and unilateral actions in the South China Sea," it said.

They reiterated their stand that the ruling of the UN tribunal on the Philippine arbitration case against China "would be legally binding" on both claimants—an apparent call on Beijing to respect the legal process it has shunned, invoking instead "indisputable sovereignty" over the South China Sea.

During the dialogue held on March 17 and 18, the two sides discussed next steps for the implementation of the Edca.

The 10-year Edca was signed by US and Philippine officials in 2014, but it only got the green light in January after the Philippine Supreme Court ruled it was constitutional. It is a key part of the Obama administration effort

to reassert US presence in Asia.

The deal would give the US military greater access to Philippine military bases through rotation of troops, ships and aircraft for humanitarian and maritime security operations.

Foreign Undersecretary Evan Garcia and Defense Undersecretary Pio Lorenzo Batino cochaired the meeting with their US counterparts, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel and Assistant Secretary of Defense David Shear.

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Strengthening alliance

The United States and the Philippines also “reaffirmed [their] shared commitment to strengthening [their] alliance, in terms of ensuring both countries mutual defense and security, as well as jointly contributing to regional peace, stability and economic prosperity,” the statement said.

“They committed to continue developing, planning and executing defense cooperation activities to reinforce their respective national defense capabilities and interoperability, in the areas of maritime security and domain awareness, enhanced joint activities, humanitarian and disaster response, counterterrorism, cybersecurity and information sharing,” it said.

Discussions also touched on funneling greater US aid to boost the capacity of the Philippine military, including modernizing the Armed Forces of the Philippines with specific focus on maritime security and speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance in times of disaster.

In particular, the US Department of Defense is planning to seek congressional funding for maritime-related projects in the Philippines, the statement said.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Amy Searight said the Pentagon had told the US Congress of its intention to provide \$50 million to help build regional maritime security.

She said the Philippines would get “the lion’s share” of the funds, which are expected to go toward improving radar and other South China Sea monitoring capabilities.

Movements ‘very soon’

US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg told reporters yesterday that movements of supplies and personnel to the base locations would take place “very soon.”

Goldberg described the Edca as “a pretty big deal” that would allow for a greater US presence as part of the US rebalance to Asia and enhance the alliance with the Philippines.

He stressed, however, that the agreement did not allow for permanent US bases that existed for 94 years until 1991, when the Philippine Senate voted to evict them.

“This isn’t a return to that era. These are different reasons and for 21st century issues, including maritime security,” Goldberg said, adding that all US deployments would require Philippine approval.

In a separate opinion issued with the Supreme Court ruling in favor of the Edca, Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who is actively campaigning against China’s “creeping invasion” in the South China Sea, said the deal was essential in building “credible defense” for the Philippines and that it would give the country “a fighting chance” against the Chinese.

In a statement issued yesterday, the militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), one of the petitioners that lost the case against the deal in the Supreme Court, called the selection of the five locations “a mid-

night deal” by President Aquino’s administration, saying the bases were chosen within his last few months in office.

“Aquino will go down in history as the President who brought back US bases to our shores. There will be strong resistance from the areas where these bases will be set up,” Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate called the selection of the five locations an “utter surrender of our national sovereignty.”

“President Aquino should be called to account for this,” Zarate said.

Kabataan Rep. Antonio Tinio said the agreement would be the most extensive military bases deal since World War II.

“Under the postwar military bases agreements, US military presence was confined mainly to Clark and Subic. Under the Edca, US forces will be hosted continuously (in the guise of ‘rotational presence’) in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao,” he said.

Senatorial candidate Neri Colmenares said the deal was a

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cause for alarm, as it would make the Philippines a target for enemies of the United States.

"The most prudent way to deal with China is through the [UN] arbitral court and the help of the international community," he said.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla brushed aside the criticisms, citing the Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of the Edca.

"The ruling of the Supreme Court speaks for itself: There is no violation of the Constitution. There are no new US bases be-

ing built," Padilla said.

In Cagayan de Oro, Councilor Teodulfo Lao said he did not understand why the city was offered to American forces when it was not a strategic location in the defense of Philippine interests in the South China Sea.

He said allowing US forces to use Lumbia Air Base could have negative effects, such as the rise of prostitution in the city.

On the other hand, he said, the presence of US forces could boost the confidence of investors in the city.

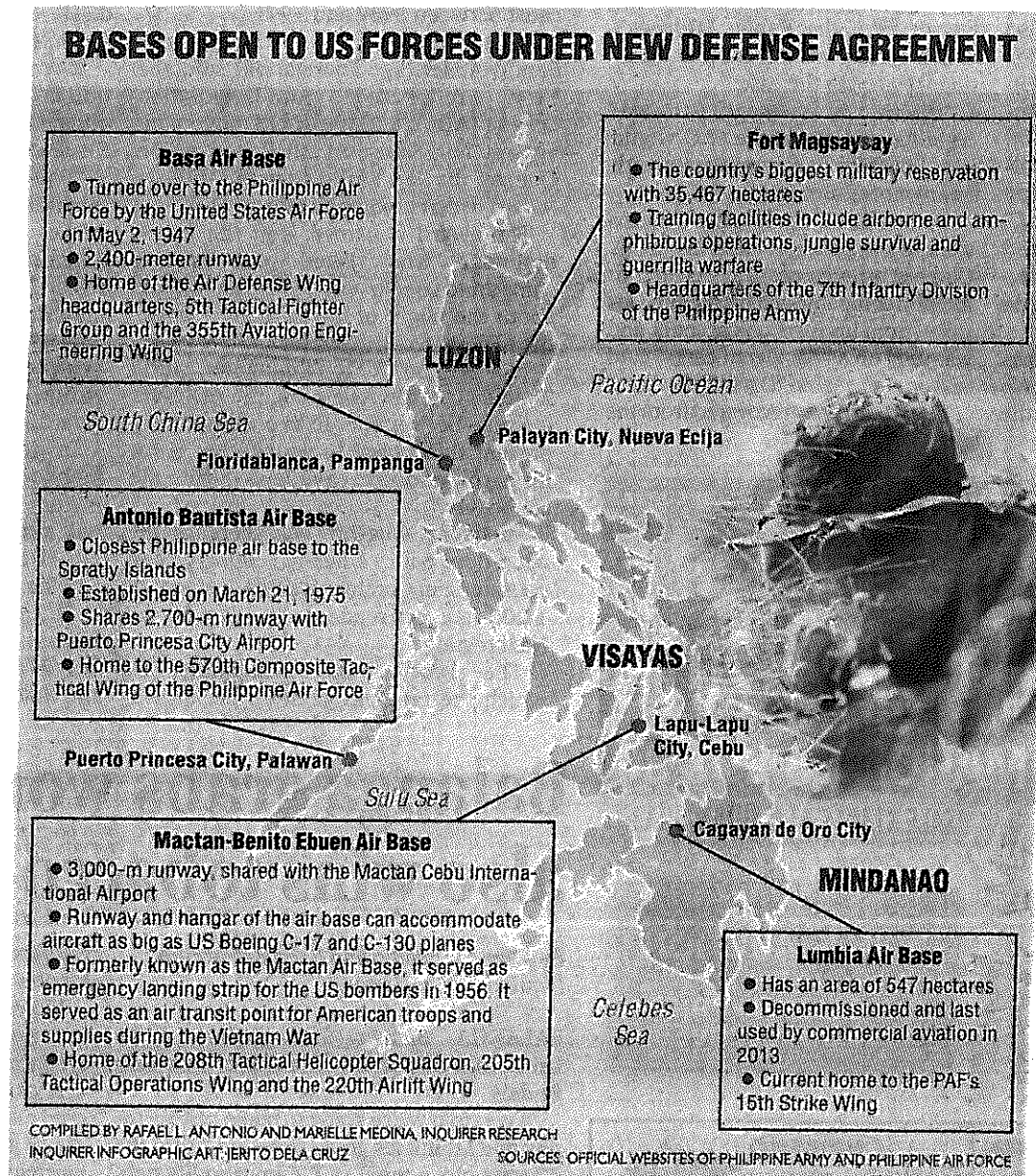
Councilor Lourdes Darimbang said she opposed the plan because it could increase the security threat to the city.

But Mayor Oscar Moreno said he saw no problem with US use of Lumbia Air Base, home to the Philippine Air Force 15th Strike Wing.

He said the long-term benefit of US use of the base should be considered. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan and Jaymee T. Gamil in Manila; Jigger Jerusalem, Inquirer Mindanao; AP and Reuters*

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25 March 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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2 mistaken for communist rebs freed after 17 months in jail

MEXICO, Pampanga—Crying and wailing, Lourdes Quioc, 65, and Reynaldo Ingal, 64, were reunited with their families on Friday after spending 17 months at the Bulacan provincial jail in the City of Malolos for a murder they did not commit.

The two were freed by Judge Corazon Domingo-Rañola, of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court Branch 10, who dismissed the murder and frustrated murder charges meant for suspected Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) leaders

Eugenia Magpantay and Agaton Topacio following an ambush on Army soldiers in 2004.

Quioc and Ingal were mistaken for Magpantay and Topacio when they were arrested in Barangay Tinajero in Mexico town on Oct. 1, 2015.

The grandchildren, children and neighbors of Quioc and Ingal welcomed them at the house of their relative, provincial board member Teddy Tumang.

Ingal, who said jail time had traumatized him, retired in

2009 as a driver of the National Power Corporation's Bataan Nuclear Power Plant in Morong town in Bataan province.

Quioc said she was eager to resume her tasks at the parish pastoral council in Mexico town.

Former martial law detainee Satur Ocampo had testified that Quioc and Ingal were not Magpantay and Topacio.

Ocampo said he was detained with Magpantay and Topacio between 1977 and 1979 at the Bicutan rehabilita-

tion center. Magpantay and Topacio were among the 72 people, including CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison, who were charged with 14 counts of murder.

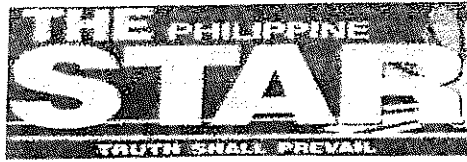
This was not the first time the government sent innocent people to jail, believing they were communist rebels. In 2013, the Court of Appeals directed the police to release security guard Rolly Mira Panesa, who was mistaken for Danilo Benjamin Mendoza, a suspected officer of the CPP and New

People's Army.

Ocampo said the police and military had made four other "mistaken identity arrests" since 2012.

Aside from Panesa, who had a reward of P5.6 million for his capture, the other victims of mistaken identity were Olegario Sevas (Dec. 25, 2012; Negros Occidental), Ofelio Inong (Sept. 10, 2013; Sagada, Mountain Province) and Eduardo Esteban (Aug. 5, 2014; Jaro, Iloilo). *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

10 March 2016



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Gov't troops searching for Sayyaf leader

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Government troops were combing yesterday the jungle of Patikul town, Sulu in search of the most senior Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron who was wounded in Friday's gun battle.

The fighting left seven militants killed and score others, including soldiers, wounded, said Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, commander of the military's Joint Task Group Sulu.

The number of the wounded from the government forces increased to 20 soldiers, it was reported yesterday.

One of those wounded were Lt. Col. Mario Jacinto, commander of the 10th Infantry Battalion (IB), the military said.

Jacinto led the offensive that also left two of Sahiron's henchmen wounded.

Arrojado said troops were deployed to block the area where the Abu Sayyaf group fled with their wounded leader.

"All military units in nearby area have been directed to intensify pursuit operations," Arrojado said.

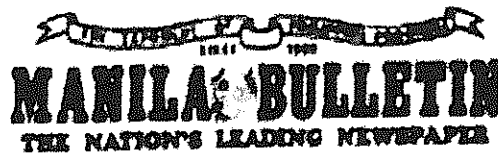
Security forces were also alerted in downtown Jolo to prevent the militants from taking any medical practitioner to treat their wounded leader and companions in the jungle.

Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman of Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said 19 of the wounded soldiers were airlifted to this city for treatment.

At least 18 were confined at Camp Navarro General Hospital while one was taken to a private hospital.

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20 March 2016



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BIFF attacks detachments in Maguindanao, Cotabato

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao (PNA) – The outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) stepped up attacks on military detachments in Maguindanao and Cotabato on Friday, both of which were repulsed by government forces, the police and military said yesterday.

About 50 BIFF bandits tried but failed to overrun a para-military detachment at about 8 p.m. in a remote village in Aleosan, North Cotabato, firing assault rifles and grenades at Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) forces before retreating to the Liguasan marshland after a two-hour gun battle.

The militia detachment was one of the many outposts established by the military to prevent BIFF, now under attack by government forces in Datu Salibo, from harassing civilian communities in North Cotabato.

The bandits were then believed to have proceeded to Datu Salibo, Maguindanao where they launched another failed attack at a military detachment where at least five of their comrades were believed to have been wounded.

According to the military, an undetermined number of BIFF gunmen also tried to overrun the Sopad Detachment

of the 24th Mechanized Company of the Second Mechanized Infantry Battalion in Barangay Sambolawan by likewise firing assault rifles, rifle grenades and grenades at 11 p.m. Friday.

The attack triggered a four-hour firefight, ending at about 3 a.m. Five areas near the military detachments bore blood stains, an indication the hostilities left BIFF fighters wounded.

Concrete walls riddled with bullet holes, coconut trees with marks of bullet hits, road blocks filled with holes and metal roofing of the detachment with traces of rifle grenade explosions were seen by residents and soldiers at sunrise.

Lt. Colonel Warlito Limet, 2nd Mechanize Battalion commander, said soldiers recovered hundreds of empty shells for cal. 45 pistol, M-16 Armalite rifle and Barret rifle.

An abandoned mosque near the detachment was not spared as it, too, bore bullet holes.

"It was a well planned attack but soldiers' alertness and firepower foiled the attempt," Limet told reporters. He said on Tuesday night, the BIFF also harassed the same detachment located along the Datu Saudi Ampatuan-Datu Piang highway, both in Maguindanao.

26 March 2016



Page. 2

PA official vows to end insurgency

By STEVE A. GOSUICO

FORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija -- The Philippine Army is bent on ending internal security threats, including those posed by the communist New People's Army (NPA), by yearend with a better-equipped and modern artillery unit.

Army Col. Erwin A. De Asis, newly-assumed commander of the Army Artillery Regiment (ARR) based in this military camp, said that the ARR will assist the Army in helping end internal security operation (ISO) by the end of the year and undertake its own modernization program.

"We intend to further strengthen our regiment's and its field units' artillery capabilities in anticipation of its planned transformation into a better equipped and modern artillery unit," De Asis said in a speech last Tuesday.

He said that as the ARR transforms, they would focus on strengthening the professionalization of military personnel, the maintenance of artillery system and support facilities and the development of the training area.

De Asis, a member of the Philippine Military Academy's 'Hinirang' Class 1987, took over as the ARR's sixth commander in ceremonies held at the ARR's parade grounds, replacing Col. Agane C. Adriatico.

Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año, Army commanding general, presided over the turnover rites along with 7th Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Angelito M. De Leon.

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20 March 2016



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Davao City no longer haven for CPP-NPA

By PAUL M. GUTIERREZ

MORE than two years after the government designated the Davao region as the “national priority area” in its counter-insurgency campaign under ‘Oplan Bayanihan,’ its principal urban center, Davao City, has been finally declared as generally “peaceful and ready for further development” by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The historic development was formally announced by Eastern Mindanao Command (EMC) area commander Lt. General Rey Jagger

Guerrero last March 16, coinciding with the city’s 79th ‘Araw ng Davao’ celebration.

Present during the occasion held at the Grand Menseng Hotel were MGen. Rafael Valencia, 10th Infantry ‘Agila’ Division commander Col. Ricardo Nepomuceno, 1003rd Raptor Brigade chief, police regional director CSupt. Federico Dulay, city police chief SSupt. Vicente Danao and Mayor Rodrigo ‘Digong’ Duterte, now a candidate for president.

With the declaration, Valencia said the main responsibility for securing the city from further attacks and other forms of destabilization from the Communist

Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) has now shifted to the local Peace and Order Council’ chaired by Duterte with the assistance from the military and the Philippine National Police.

“The AFP will still maintain a strong presence in the remote areas (of Davao City),” Valencia told this reporter in a text message.

Guerrero, in his remarks, also credited Duterte and other local officials for their “unwavering support” in the military’s campaign against the insurgents that also resulted to the death on June 14, 2015 of Leoncio ‘Kumander Parago’ Pitao, after

an encounter in Paquibato district, his known lair inside Davao City.

Duterte has never denied that he and Parago were “close friends.” Prior to his death, Parago has been the “most wanted” communist leader in Mindanao and a “local legend” in the region due to his strong persona and military skills.

People’s Tonight ran a 6-part series last December detailing the military’s campaign to clear Davao City and the entire Davao Oriental from communist infiltration and influence with the main effort being carried out by the Raptor Brigade then under Col. Harold Cabrerros.

After Pitao was killed, Cabrerros has since then been promoted as deputy EMC commander with his position being taken over by Nepomuceno.

Before Christmas last year, Cabrerros finally received his star-rank and subsequently promoted anew as 3rd Infantry Division commander based in Panay Island when Guerrero became the EMC chief with the retirement of erstwhile area commander Lt. General Aurelio Baladad.

Valencia recognized the contribution of Cabrerros in finally bringing peace to Davao City, especially in the clearing of Paquibato district.

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30 March 2016



Page. 5

Kawalang edukasyon, kabuhayan, sa lugar ng karahasan—Army official

ISULAN, Sultan Kudarat – Habang nagpapatuloy ang dredging project sa Salibo, Maguindanao ay manaka-naka ring nagkakapalitan ng putok ang militar at mga armado na tumututo sa nasabing proyekto sa lugar.

Pinaniniwalaang mga miyembro ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) ang nasabing mga armado.

Sa panayam kay Ltc Ricky Bunayog, pinuno ng 33rd Infantry Battalion ng Army, sinabi niyang sa pagsasagawa ng mga operasyon sa lugar ay nakita niya ang potensiyal nito, at hindi maiikakailang napakarami ng likas na yaman na maaaring i-develop para mapakinabangan ng mga residente.

Napansin din ni Bunayog ang aniya'y kakulangan sa edukasyon ng kabataan at kakapusan sa programang pangkabuhayan sa lugar, habang nanginibabaw naman ang kultura ng karahasan.

Aniya, mistula ring walang silbi ang anumang pamumuno sa lugar, dahil nasanay na ang mga taong mamuhay sa lihis na paraan at tanging ang kapangyarihan ng mga armas ang pinaniniwalaan.

"Nakapanghihinayang ang mga buhay na malaon nang nalalagas sa isang labanang hindi naman dapat na mangyari," sabi ni Bunayog.

Dagdag pa niya, wala rin siyang nakikitang barangay hall man lang sa lugar, at hindi rin mahaglap ng militar ang kahit isang opisyal ng barangay.

Leo P. Diaz

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www.manilatimes.net

NPA Guerrilla yields in Cordillera

From the Manila Times (Mar 19): **NPA Guerrilla yields in Cordillera**

CAMP DANGWA, La Trinidad, Benguet: **A member of the New Peoples Army (NPA) based in Ifugao province has reportedly returned to his family after almost three decades in the armed rebellion.**

The rebel, whose name was withheld upon his request, gave up Thursday afternoon with the help of a villagemate in Lamut town.

Cordillera police spokesperson Supt. Cherry Fajardo said the surrenderee, who is in his 40's, joined the NPA in 1987 and became a "foot soldier" with Squad Uno, Regional Youth Guerilla Command operating in Ifugao and nearby provinces.

Considered the longest serving communist guerrilla who surrendered in the Cordillera this year, the rebel will be assisted by the government through the social integration program to usher him back to mainstream society.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/npa-guerrilla-yields-in-cordillera/251456/>

20 March 2016



Page: 3

BIFF bandits attack Cagfu detachment in N. Cotabato

ALEOSAN, North Cotabato – Elements of the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) tried but failed to overrun a para-military detachment in a remote village here, police yesterday said.

Senior Insp. Junete Napat, Aleosan town police chief, said about 50 suspected BIFF from Datu Salibo, Maguindanao harassed the detachment of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cagfu) at around 8 p.m. by firing assault rifles and rifle grenades.

But the militiamen were prepared and engaged the attackers in a gun battle that lasted for about two hours until the guerrillas retreated back to Liguasan marshland.

The militia detachment was one of the many outposts established by the military to prevent BIFF, now under attack by government forces in Datu Salibo, from harassing civilian communities in North Cotabato.

The Rio Grande de Mindanao served as the borders of Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Napat said no casualty was reported on the side of the militiamen. Paramilitary troopers could not say if the attackers suffered casualties either.

The morning after, government forces recovered about 100 pieces of empty shells from M-16 Armalite rifle, Garand rifle, fragments of rifle grenade and empty shells for cal. 50 Barret rifle in an area where the BIFF positioned, about 100 meters away from the detachment.

Barret rifle is a signature firearm of the BIFF.

It was the second harassment against the Aleosan detachment this year. Last February 18, BIFF also attacked the CAFGU base.

Capt. Joann Petinglay, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said the harassment on Aleosan detachment was part of the diversionary tactics of the BIFF which suffered heavy losses during Army offensives in Maguindanao.

"This is part of the terrorists' tactics to ease the offensives in Datu Salibo," Petinglay said. The military launched attacks against the BIFF after the outlawed group harassed workers of a government flood control project in Maguindanao.

Petinglay said the BIFF has resorted to harassment or hit and run attacks, not only against the military, but other areas in Maguindanao as well. Aside from Aleosan detachment, on Friday afternoon, BIFF also harassed and fired at a dump truck owned by the Maguindanao provincial government in a remote village in Ampatuan, Maguindanao.

The dump truck was working on road project in Ampatuan.

Petinglay said military operations against the BIFF in Maguindanao and nearby areas continue despite the observance of Holy Week.

"Our operations continue, we cannot just leave the area because suspected IEDs still litter the communities earlier occupied by the BIFF," she said.

PNA

20 March 2016



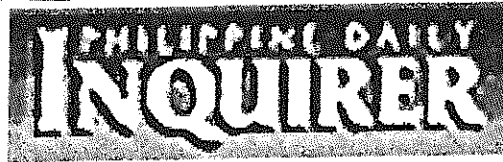
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MEDICAL/DENTAL MISSION -- Pinangunahan ni Manila 5th District Councilor Josie M. Siscar ang pamamahagi ng mga libreng gamot, reading glass at iba pang mga dental medication kasabay sa feeding sa mga bata at residente ng Bgy. 734, 736 at 740, katulong nito ang mga elemento ng Armed Forces of the Philippines Reserved Command at FEU Law Alumni Association (FEULAA) sa pamumuno naman ni Atty. Rogelio "Ogie" Mendoza. Nagpasalamat ang mga punong barangay na sina Dennis Racelis ng 737, Alfredo Tan ng 735 at Donato Isidro sa medical/dental at legal outreach program na ginawa ni Councilor Siscar at ng Philippine Army.

Photo by JON-JON REYES

20 March 2016



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'Lumad' protesters occupy major highway in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Protesters demanding a stop to lumad killings and the withdrawal of government soldiers in lumad communities in Mindanao blocked the flow of traffic for at least seven hours on a major portion of a highway that links this city with at least six provinces.

The flow of traffic has resumed since Friday night when the protesters agreed to allow vehicles to pass through.

Members of Pasaka, a lumad group, and small-scale miners put up a blockade on a portion of the Pan-Philippine Highway near the gates of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command in Barangay Panacan here.

The Pan-Philippine Highway is this city's major link with the provinces of Davao del Norte, Compostela Valley, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur and Surigao del Norte.

The protesters initially occupied all four lanes of the highway, preventing vehicles from passing through.

Kerlan Fanagel, Pasaka spokesperson, said the protesters decided to put up the blockade at 9 a.m. on Friday after the military failed to withdraw soldiers from lumad communities and schools in the hinterlands of Southern Mindanao.

Fanagel said there have been

several dialogues between the armed forces and other agencies of the government, on one side, and lumad representatives on the other "but they remain blind and deaf toward the demand of the people."

He said aside from the withdrawal of government soldiers in lumad communities and schools, the protesters also want the government to disband and disarm all militias being maintained by the military

and compensation for lumad communities that have been occupied by government soldiers.

The protesters are also demanding that the government facilitate the safe return of lumad evacuees to their homes.

The protesters are also demanding a stop to what they said was a vilification campaign that brands lumad communities resisting the entry of logging and mining as communist sympathizers.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

Fanagel said Mayor Rodrigo Duterte had also sent a message to the protest organizers that he would try to talk to heads of national agencies and Malacañang to air their demands, which included the removal of North Cotabato Rep. Nancy Catamco as chair of the House committee on indigenous peoples.

In a text message, Catamco said she could not understand why her efforts to help the lumad communities are being misunderstood.

"I am a lumad, too, and my primary concern is the cause of the lumad. I don't know why my efforts are being misunderstood or maybe being deliberately distorted by some quarters, possibly for their own gains," Catamco said.

On the demands of the protesters, Catamco and Leoncito refused to comment.

But Leoncito said as far as the military is concerned, it will continue the counterinsurgency operation until all communities are freed from communist rebels.

Leoncito also said that aside from engaging in combat, soldiers are also active in humanitarian work and in implementation of government programs in upland communities. *Allan Nawal, Inquirer Mindanao*

He said trumped-up charges against militants should also be dropped.

Capt. Roda Leoncito, acting Eastmincom information chief, said police negotiated with the protesters to open up half of the highway to allow vehicles to pass.

She said after hours of negotiations, the protesters eventually acceded to the request to reopen at least half of the four-lane highway.

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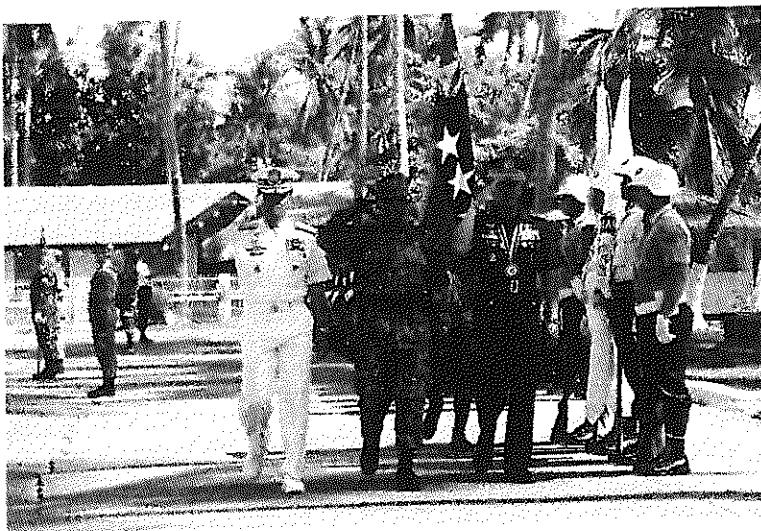
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WESCOM 40th Anniversary (Selected Photos)

From the 6th Civil Relations Group, Palawan Facebook page (Mar 19): **WESCOM 40th Anniversary (Selected Photos)**

The men and women of the most strategic Unified Command of the AFP celebrated its 40th birthday with simple, but memorable affair. With the theme, "WESCOM @ 40: Strengthening Unity and Partnerships in Securing a More Peaceful, Progressive and Stable Western Frontier". the commemoration was graced by the Chief of Staff AFP, General Hemando DCA Iriberrri, as Guest of Honor. The distinct contributions of outstanding military personnel and civilian employees of this Command, and of bayanihan partners were also recognized. To all the awardees, congratulations and carry on!



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



<https://www.facebook.com/6crqcrsafx/photos/pcb.564086260418790/564078997086183/?type=3&theater>

20 March 2016



Pahina. 6

BIFF nagbanta vs Maguindanao road projects

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Muling nagbanta ang Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) na lutasin ang pamahalaan ng Maguindanao kung hindi ititigil ang ginagawang road project sa naturang lalawigan.

Kamakalawa lamang ay inatake ng BIFF ang dump truck ng Maguindanao provincial government sa bayan ng Ampatuan na kung saan ay may ginagawang kalsada roon.

Kinumpirma rin ng BIFF ang naturang atake, ngunit wala namang inulat na sugatan o nasawi sa pamamagitan ng mga rebelde. Ayon pa sa BIFF, wala umangonang permiso sa kanila ang pamahalaan ng Maguindanao na maglagay ng kalsada sa lugar na kanilang nasasakupan.

Nag-aalala ang BIFF na kapag natapos ang mga kalsada ay magsisilbi lamang ito bilang daanan ng mga truck at sundalo ng militar.

Walang inilabas na anumang pahayag si Gov. Toto Mangudadatu ukol sa atake at banta ng BIFF sa kanyang lugar. (AI Jacinto)

26 March 2016

INQUIRER

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PSL: Army, Petron flaunt strength

By Cedelf P. Tupas

ALREADY assured of spots in the final round, RC Cola-Army and Petron proved unrelenting as they walloped their rivals yesterday at the close of the elimination round of the 2016 PLDT Home Ultra Philippine Superliga Invitational Conference women's volleyball at FilOil Flying V Center.

The Lady Troopers shut the final round door on the Cignal HD Spikers with an emphatic 25-16, 25-14, 25-19 victory, after the Tri-Activ Spikers bucked a sluggish start to crush Petron

Toplander, 14-25, 25-16, 25-22, 25-7.

RC and Petron ended up with identical 5-1 records.

With Cignal's defeat, F2 Logistics (4-2) earned the last spot to the final round where Thai powerhouse Est Cola will join the fray against three Superliga teams.

The Lady Troopers made light work of the HD Spikers with Rachel Anne Daquis and Jovelyn Gonzaga coming away with a combined 29 hits. It was a terrific response from the Lady Troopers after dropping a five-setter to the Tri-Activ Spikers last Thursday.

"At least we will be going to the final round with very high morale," said RC assistant coach Rico de Guzman.

The Tri-Activ Spikers needed another strong game from veteran Aiza Pontillas, who tallied 19 kills en route to a 20-point effort, to break out of an early funk.

Bang Pineda and Maica Morada joined forces in a furious windup for Petron with 13 and 11 points, respectively.

"The girls made adjustments in the first set before heating up," said Petron coach George Pascua.

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Balikatan Joint Exercise Returns to the Philippines

From the US Embassy Manila (Mar 18): **Balikatan Joint Exercise Returns to the Philippines**

Balikatan 2016 (BK 16) began Wednesday, when the AFP started preliminary work on five different school buildings and community medical engagements. In the coming weeks U.S. forces will join the AFP as they work shoulder-to-shoulder during these engagements and throughout the exercise.

Balikatan is an annual Philippine-U.S. military bilateral training exercise that is a signature element of the Philippine-U.S. alliance focused on a variety of missions to include humanitarian assistance, maritime law enforcement, and environmental protection. BK 16 will take place in the Philippines April 4 to 16. The opening ceremony for BK 16 is scheduled to take place April 4, followed by several training events throughout the 12-day exercise, and the closing ceremony is scheduled to be held April 15.

During BK 16, Philippine and U.S. service members will conduct humanitarian civil assistance projects throughout Panay and Palawan. Preliminary work on community infrastructure projects begins at the end of March. BK 16 will demonstrate cooperation and interoperability between the Philippines and the U.S., consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty and Visiting Forces Agreement, as we continue our commitment to train, share information and provide support to each other through a range of military operations.

Throughout BK 16, AFP and U.S. forces will work together to enhance maritime law enforcement throughout the Philippines in order to meet annual training requirements, and enhance techniques, tactics, and procedures as a critical part of interoperability of our forces.

Military service members from both countries will also **conduct combined simulation supported events and operational events in three main commands of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Western Command, Northern Luzon Command, and Southern Luzon Command), and other major Philippine military camps such as Crow Valley, Fort Magsaysay, Clark Air Field, Subic Bay, Palawan and Panay** to improve their ability to work together, partnering in capabilities and plan follow-on operations. One of the main operations for this year's exercise will be the implementation of a joint rapid reaction force as part of the distributed operations in the vicinity of Panay, demonstrating the partnered capability in rapid response.

BK16 is the 32nd iteration of the annual exercise. A number of personnel from other regional partner nations will attend a portion of the exercise.

"Balikatan" in Filipino means "shoulder-to-shoulder" and characterizes the spirit of the exercise and the Philippines-U.S. alliance.

Media interested in covering this exercise should contact the Armed Forces of Philippines Public Affair Office at paoafp@gmail.com.

<http://manila.usembassy.gov/press-photo-releases-2016/balikatan-joint-exercise-returns-philippines.html>

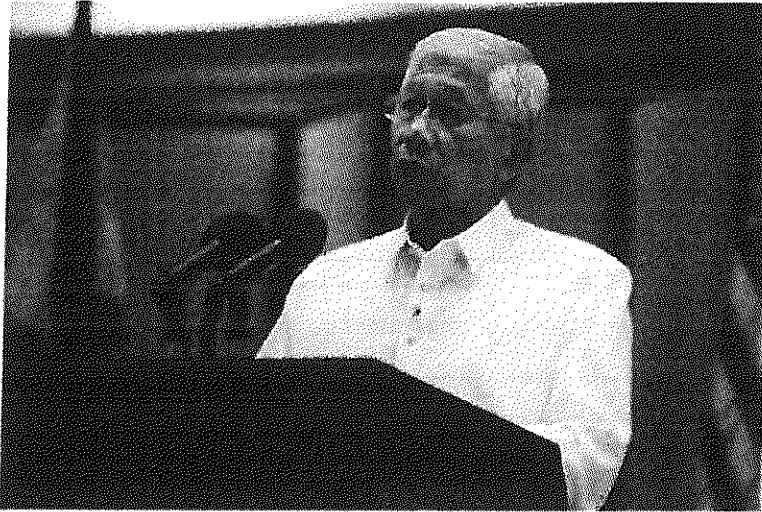
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Naval base to rise in Batanes

From the Philippine Star (Mar 19): Naval base to rise in Batanes



Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Batanes Rep. Henedina Abad led the groundbreaking ceremony for the P166.5-million project last Thursday

The Department of National Defense (DND) announced yesterday that a naval base is being built in Batanes.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Batanes Rep. Henedina Abad led the groundbreaking ceremony for the P166.5-million project last Thursday.

"We envision a naval base that shall have accessible naval installations which could provide logistics, training and other support services in the conduct of prompt and sustained fleet and marine operation," Gazmin said in his speech.

When completed, the naval base will include a logistics facility, wharf and beaching areas, small craft facility and communication and electronics facilities.

Aside from the Navy, the facility will also be used by the Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

With the base, the Navy aims to improve the existing capability and infrastructure of the current Mahatao boat shelter to be utilized for training exercises, combat and humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations.

"The place is chosen as the most strategic area based on historical facts during World War II. Its harbor spaces provide natural protection to our naval vessels, considering that the province of Batanes has been the frequent route of storms and typhoons, especially during rainy season," Gazmin said.

<http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/03/19/1564425/naval-base-rise-batanes>