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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

21 March 2016

Monday

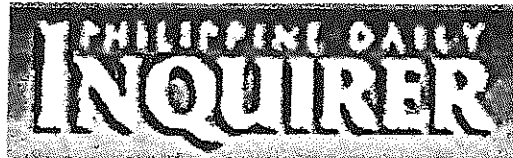
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 21, 2016 | MONDAY

EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (MARCH 20, 5:00 AM)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
6:00 AM	6:07 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
4:26 PM	4:21 AM
FIRST QUARTER	FULL MOON
MAR 16 1:02 AM	MAR 23 6:02 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
3:58 AM	9:08 PM
-0.03 Meter	0.84 Meter

- Partly cloudy skies
- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers
- Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms

MAR 22		MAR 23		MAR 22		MAR 23		MAR 22		MAR 23	
METRO MANILA	23 - 34 °C	24 - 33 °C	TAGAYTAY	22 - 30 °C	22 - 30 °C	TACLOBAN	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C			
TUGUEGARAO	23 - 36 °C	24 - 36 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C			
LADAG	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	24 - 34 °C	24 - 34 °C			
BAGUIO	15 - 24 °C	15 - 25 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 35 °C	25 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 34 °C	24 - 35 °C			
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 34 °C	24 - 35 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C						

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SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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Fireworks in 2nd debate

Candidates come out swinging in Cebu

By PAOLO ROMERO
and ALEXIS ROMERO

This time around, the candidates yesterday pulled no punches as they resorted to name-calling and dragging family members in the fray as they tore at their rivals in a heated televised debate.

The second leg of the PiliPinas Debates 2016 debate in Cebu City was delayed for more than an hour reportedly over the insistence of Vice President Jejomar Binay to bring documents to the event, which was strongly opposed by administration candidate Manuel Roxas II.

Roxas and the other candidates, Sen. Grace Poe and Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, remained standing at the podium for over an hour waiting for the decision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) on whether to allow Binay to bring his documents to the stage.

The debate, held at the University of the Philippines campus in Cebu City, resumed after a lengthy clarification was made disallowing Binay to bring any document to the podium.

Before the debates began, Binay explained to the audience that he

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Fireworks From Page 1

wanted to present a waiver on his bank accounts that he signed to prove he was for transparency, challenging Duterte to sign the same document.

Duterte was about to sign the waiver but they were stopped by debate moderator Luchie Cruz-Valdes of TV5.

First salvo

Poe fired the first salvo against Binay on the issue of the failure of the administration to pass the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill, a campaign promise of President Aquino.

"With all due respect Mr. Vice President, there're many questions that you did not answer in the Senate. How can you make us believe that you'll support the true FOI Bill?" Poe asked Binay, referring to the corruption allegations against the Vice President that was investigated by the Senate.

Poe also took potshots at Roxas, saying the administration was not really supporting the FOI bill.

The debates heated up when Binay raised the issue of Poe's citizenship, citing the recent Supreme Court ruling on her citizenship issue.

"Are you a true Filipino? You're ashamed to be a Filipino!" Binay asked Poe and went on to read the oath of allegiance for new US citizens.

"The oath of allegiance says 'I abjure'— that means I'm ashamed of where I come from. I'm ashamed of being a Filipino," he said.

Poe shot back saying Binay

was insulting overseas Filipino workers and referred again to the corruption allegations against him.

"Did I say that you pocketed funds? All I said was it's better to leave and work honorably rather than to rely on your parents or steal," Poe blurted out.

The candidates were so bent in demolishing their rivals that they veered away from the issues at hand.

Binay ended up being pounded by his rivals on the allegations of corruption.

Roxas, on the other hand, was pummeled for his supposed failures and corruption while he was secretary of the Departments of the Interior and Local Government and Transportation and Communications.

While discussing energy security, Binay scoffed at Roxas' plan to ensure stable power supply, saying the administration candidate was incapable of being decisive.

"Mr. Roxas was guilty of paralysis by analysis. He can never make a decision," Binay said and went on to accuse his rival of stealing in connection with an MRT contract.

"You really are a disciple of Goebbels," Binay said, referring to Josef Goebbels, the propaganda minister of Adolf Hitler.

Roxas shot back and defended his "clear, effective and accomplished track record that helped our countrymen."

"I don't really move when it comes to stealing," Roxas said.

Duterte steered the issue back to energy, saying "noth-

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Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Sen. Grace Poe and former interior secretary Manuel Roxas II engage in banter while waiting for Vice President Jejomar Binay prior to the start of the second presidential debate at the University of the Philippines campus in Cebu yesterday.

KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

ing can be achieved by just talking here."

At one point, Duterte kidded Roxas, who made a lengthy presentation of his program, for plagiarizing his platform.

Roxas also hit Binay for his "convoluted thinking" on the latter's proposal to exempt individuals earning P30,000 a month from income tax.

Poe also hit the administration for persecuting its political opponents while rewarding its allies, particularly those with the ruling Liberal Party.

Roxas, however, pointed out that many LP members have been charged.

Roxas also chided Duterte for mouthing his anti-crime

stance when Davao City has a high crime rate, particularly drug cases.

"Those crime statistics are malicious, listing all violations of law...urinating in public goes into those statistics," Duterte replied, adding Roxas should be blamed for the rising criminality in the country during his stint as DILG chief.

"You're a fraud, even claiming that you graduated from Wharton when you did not...the problem is you're afraid to die and kill. If you can't do that, look for another job," Duterte told Roxas.

Roxas countered that Wharton School in the US issued a certification that he had indeed graduated from there.

Haunted by issues

All the four presidential candidates were haunted by the controversies linked to them during the fireworks-filled debate.

Candidates veered away from the issues raised by panelists to take a jab at their rivals during the intense nearly three-hour debate organized by The STAR, TV5, BusinessWorld and Bloomberg Philippines under the Comelec.

The mudslinging started after Binay said he would follow the rule of law in the event that his son, former Makati Mayor Junjun Binay, is convicted for corruption.

"Whatever will be the decision, we will follow. We must be a government with

a rule of law," Binay said.

Poe, however, pointed out that someone seeking the presidency should also follow the rules of the debate, alluding to the earlier discussions on Binay's insistence on bringing documents.

"It would be a good signal from those who are for rule of law if they respect the rules of the debate," Poe said, adding that Binay should have attended the Senate hearings on the corruption charges against him.

Poe's statement did not sit well with Binay, who hit back at the senator by bringing up the controversy surrounding the senator's citizenship. - With Christina Mendez, Helen Flores, Robertzon Ramirez

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30 rebels charged for Isabela attack

TUGUEGARAO CITY
– Fourteen suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas, along with 16 others have been charged for the attack on Army troopers in San Mariano, Isabela early this month.

The provincial police office filed multiple frustrated murder, attempted murder and direct assault against agents of authority against Manuel Ayat, Luz Reyes, Rodolfo Velasco, Delay Padilla, Melecio Casasola, Pepito Reyes, Arcadio Tangonan, Joey Ramos, Loida Reyes, Rod Gawit, Rafael Ladia, Michael Eraña, Rodolfo Valencia, a certain Noah and 16 others whose names were not immediately available.

The charges were filed with the Provincial

Prosecutor's Office in Ilagan City last Friday.

Isabela police director Senior Superintendent Leon Rafael said the respondents were identified by three soldiers and their officers, whom the suspects exchanged fire.

The troops were pursuing the members of the Central Front Committee in the villages of Buyasan and Tappa, when the suspects reportedly shot at them.

Wounded in the attack were Army 1/Lt. Randy Alog, Cpl. Reagan Malican, and Pfc. Joe Andy Binoya and Edgar Abloy of the 45th Infantry Battalion.

The wounded soldiers were taken to Camp Melchor dela Cruz Hospital in Gamu town.

– Raymund Catindig

7 hurt in Bicol NPA attacks

CAMP GUILLERMO NAKAR, Lucena City – Five soldiers and two civilians were wounded in separate attacks believed perpetrated by New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Bicol region over the weekend.

Four soldiers and two civilians were wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED) went off yesterday morning in Camarines Norte.

The soldiers were traveling along the Mahawan-hawan Road in Labo town when their vehicle hit the IED at around 8:30 a.m.

The troopers were on their way to a market to buy supplies for their unit.

Wounded were Cpl. Reynaldo Rivera, and Pfc. Ricky Obina, Rodelio Urbano Jr. and Carlon Duriza. The names of the two civilians were not immediately available.

Meanwhile, 2/Lt. Jonathan Baay of the Army's 31st Infantry Battalion was wounded when an IED exploded as he and his companions were engaging rebels in a firefight in Gubat, Sorsogon on Saturday.

– Michelle Zoleta

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7 minors arrested after clash with military in Bukidnon

By **CANCER ORDONEZ IMAM**

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – Seven minors were apprehended in a group of 12 armed men, who were believed to have belonged to a group that engaged troopers from the Fourth Infantry Division (4th ID) Thursday in the outskirts of Barangay Delapa, Quezon Bukidnon.

The arrested men were with a group from the New People's Army (NPA) Guerilla Front 6, North Central Mindanao Regional Committee that clashed with the soldiers at around 3 p.m. Thursday.

Seized from them were ammunition, magazines and trigger mechanism for an AK-47 rifle.

The apprehended individuals were immediately turned over to the local police for proper disposition and filing of appropriate charges.

The seven minors were immediately turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development office in the area, as provided for under the law, while the five adults were charged with illegal possession of ammunition and attempted murder.

According to Capt. Norman Tagros of the Eighth Infantry Battalion (8th

IB), no casualty were reported on the government side while it was believed that there were casualties on the side of their enemies because of the bloodstain that were found by the troops along the rebels' withdrawal route.

The security operation was conducted by the troops of the 8th IB, which is under the 4th IB, after the command reported receiving complaints from local residents in the area about the presence of NPA rebels near their community.

The complaining local residents said these men belonged to the same group that was conducting attacks in Quezon town and Valencia City in Bukidnon by burning vital installations.

Tagros also denied an allegation made by the NPA in a press statement that eight soldiers who were killed during the clash.

"Their leaders, who openly and continuously lie to the public by hiding beneath aliases and code names, have long wooed media practitioners to publish their false statements as these rebel leaders cannot be held accountable for what they say because of impersonating bogus personalities," Tagros said.

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13 NPA rebels yield in Compostela Valley

By **ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ**
and **ELENA L. ABEN**

DAVAO CITY – Thirteen members of the communist New People's Army (NPA) surrendered themselves to the elements of 46th Infantry Battalion (46th IB) on Saturday in Sitio Diat Palo, Barangay Napnapan, Pantukan, Compostela Valley.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar 10th Infantry (Agila) Division chief information officer told reporters here that the NPA militias also handed over to authorities five high-powered firearms that included an M60 general purpose machinegun (GPMG); two M16A1 Armalite Rifles; and two rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launchers.

The former rebels also turned over to the Army an improvised explosive device (IED) with detonating device, blasting cap and battery; a commercial high frequency (HF) radio with charger; and volumes of subversive

documents.

The NPA militias were led by Roberto Hiyan alias Bobby Dallas, the commanding officer (CO) of Milisya ng Bayan (MB) that operates in the areas of Dallas, Pentagon and Sapang Lubog in Pantukan town.

The names of those who laid down their arms were withheld for security reasons, Batchar said, adding that former rebels and their families were immediately evacuated from their communities for their safety.

Medical teams from 10th ID and the provincial government of Compostela Valley, together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) were immediately dispatched to Napnapan to conduct medical assessment and counselling to the families of the former rebels.

The families, especially the children were also provided with food packs and other immediate needs, Batchar said.

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NPA bomb attacks hurt 7 in Bicol

By DANNY J. ESTACIO

CAMP G. NAKAR, Lucena City — Five soldiers and two civilians were hurt in separate explosions perpetrated by New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Bicol region over the weekend, the military's Southern Luzon Command (SOLCOM) said.

Lt. Col. Angelo Guzman, SOLCOM spokesman, said that in Camarines Norte, four soldiers and two military dependents were hurt when an improvised explosive device hit the KM450 military truck around 8:30 a.m., yesterday along Mahawan-hawan Road in Labo town.

The military vehicle was on its way to the Labo Public Market for

food provisions of the unit.

The wounded soldiers were identified as Cpl. Reynaldo V. Rivera, Pfc. Ricky R. Obina, Pfc. Rodelio D. Urbano, Jr. and Pfc. Carlton Z. Duriza, while the names of the two military dependents were not disclosed for security reasons.

Guzman added that while in Sorsogon, Army 2nd Lieutenant Jonathan O. Baay of the 31st Infantry Battalion was hit by fragments from an IED blast during a five-minute encounter with 10 NPA rebels in Barangays Union and Sangat in Gubat town around 10:15 a.m. on Saturday.

He added that military field units are conducting pursuit operations in connection to the said two explosions.

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The Manila Times

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Army foils NPA plot, 12 rebels captured

BY FERNAN MARASIGAN
REPORTER

SECURITY forces foiled an alleged plot of the New People's Army (NPA) to attack two economic installations in Bukidnon and arrested 12 suspected rebels, seven of them minors following a clash over the weekend, belated reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City (Metro Manila) said on Sunday.

The report did not identify the arrested persons, who the military authorities said were immediately turned over to the police and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The five adults were charged with illegal possession of ammunition and attempted murder.

Capt. Norman Tagros, public affairs officer of the Philippine Army's 8th Infantry Battalion,

4th Infantry Division, said the arrest of the 12 came following an encounter with the band of NPA belonging to Samahang Partido Propaganda 5, Guerilla Front 6, North Central Mindanao Regional Committee at the outskirts of Barangay Delapa, Quezon, Bukidnon over the weekend.

Tagros said the firefight lasted for about 20 minutes. No casualties were reported on the government

side while the Army believed there were a number of rebels who were either killed or wounded as bloodstains were seen on their withdrawal route.

As the government troops were conducting clearing operations, the 12 suspected rebels were arrested in the encounter site. Found on their possessions were ammunitions, magazines and trigger mechanism for an AK-47

assault rifle.

According to Tagros, the security operations was conducted by the Army in response to repeated reports of local residents in the area about the presence of NPA rebels near their community whom they revealed were allegedly planning to attack vital economic installations in the areas of the municipality of Quezon and Valencia City in Bukidnon.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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15 NPA militiamen surrender

BY VICTOR REYES

FIFTEEN members of the New People's Army's Milisyang Bayan, the counterpart of government's Caggu, have surrendered to the Army's 46th Infantry Battalion in Pantukan town in Compostela Valley, military officials said yesterday.

The 15 NPA militiamen brought with them 20 family members during their surrender, and turned over an M60 machine gun, two M16 rifles, two rocket-propelled grenade

launchers, an improvised explosive device with detonating device, blasting cap and battery, a high-frequency radio with charger, and documents.

Col. Macairog Alberto, commander of the Army's 1001st Brigade, said the 15 were led by Roberto Hiyanalyas alias Bobby Dallas, commanding officer of the Milisyang Bayan operating in Pantukan town.

Capt. Rhyen Batchar, public affairs officer of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, said Hiyanalyas and four of his

men yielded last Friday. The rest surrendered Saturday, he said.

Alberto said the 15 cited several reasons for their surrender, including the danger they face as NPA militias. "They also felt they are being exploited by the NPA. They are in a difficult situation," he said.

He said NPA militiamen are usually involved in landmine attacks on government forces and harassment of soldiers involved in development outreach programs in the communities.

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NPA militia unit leader, 12 followers yield to soldiers

The leader of a New People's Army militia unit and 12 of his followers surrendered to the government in Compostela Valley Saturday.

Capt. Rhyon Batchar, spokesperson, Army 10th Infantry Division, said Roberto Hiyan, alias "Bobby Dallas," commanding officer of the NPA's Dallas, Pentagon, and Sapang Lubog militia units, voluntarily turned himself in to the Army's 46th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Diat Palo, Barangay Napnapan, Pantukan.

Four of his followers, identified

only as Bebiano, Remno, Benigno, and Isagani, joined Hiyan in his decision to return to the fold of the law.

Recovered from them were one M60 general purpose machine gun, two M16A1 Armalite rifles, two rocket propelled grenade launchers, one small improvised explosive device, blasting cap and battery, one commercial high frequency radio with charger, and subversive documents.

Upon learning that their leader has abandoned the armed struggle, eight other people's

militia members accompanied by their families also voluntarily submitted themselves to the 46th IB in Sitio Logpaton, Barangay Kingking, Pantukan.

Batchar said the former NPA militia members and their families were immediately evacuated out of the area for security considerations.

"Combined elements of the 10th ID and officials of Compostela Valley immediately facilitated their return to the folds of the law," said the 10th ID spokesman. (Elena L. Aben)

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The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

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PH hails accord giving US use of 5 local bases

THE Philippines on Sunday hailed a new accord giving the US military access to five of its bases, saying this would strengthen its defensive capabilities and maritime security.

The agreement between the two close allies comes as the Philippines and other countries are embroiled in a tense dispute with China over conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

Under the agreement, US forces would be able to rotate through five Philippine bases including those close to the South China Sea.

"The [agreement on the] five agreed locations... reaffirms the shared commitment of the Philippines and US to strengthening their

alliance in terms of ensuring both countries' mutual defense and security," Foreign Affairs department spokesman Charles Jose said in a statement.

Defense department spokesman Peter Galvez said separately the agreement "would greatly enhance our capabilities" in maritime security and disaster relief.

Philippine and US officials meeting in Washington on Friday announced that they had agreed to the rotation of US military personnel

under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which went into effect last January.

The agreement was reached during the sixth Bilateral Strategic Dialogue between the Philippines and US under the Edca.

One of the installations is the Antonio Bautista Air Base in Palawan, directly facing the South China Sea.

Another is Basa Air Base north of Manila, home of the Philippines' main fighter wing, which is also close to disputed waters.

Apart from Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa, Palawan and Basa Air Base in Floridablanca, Pangasinana, the other bases are in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija; Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan De Oro; and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Mactan.

China claims virtually all the South China Sea, despite conflicting partial claims by Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines.

It has been asserting its claim by occupying more reefs and outcrops in these waters, and building artificial islands including airstrips on some of them.

Bautista Air Base is just 300 kilometers east of Mischief Reef, an outcrop occupied by China in the 1990s despite angry protests by the Philippines.

Basa Air Base is about 330 kilometres from Scarborough Shoal, occupied by Chinese vessels after a tense confrontation with Philippine ships in 2012. AFP, Sandy Araneta

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Chinese drove away 2nd PH boat

By Allan Macatuno
Inquirer Central Luzon

SUBIC, Zambales—Another fishing boat carrying at least 10 fishermen from Zambales was also chased away by the Chinese Coast Guard from Panatag Shoal (international name: Scarborough Shoal) on March 7, according to the crew of the fishing boat FB Bughoy, which itself was reportedly attacked days before on March 5 and 6.

Junmar Pumicpic, 25, captain of the Bughoy, said on Sunday the other fishing boat remained at sea, its crew struggling to get away from the Chinese Coast Guard vessels that had been patrolling around the shoal.

Pumicpic, whose boat was driven away by two Chinese rubber boats twice on March 5 and 6, said he and his 10 companions saw the Chinese coast

guards harass the other fishing boat.

"That group of fishermen tried to evade the Chinese patrols by throwing rocks at them. Unfortunately, the glass windows of their fishing boat were damaged during the chase," Pumicpic said.

He said he was worried about the safety of those fishermen who were left behind, fearful the Chinese coast

guards appeared determined to forcibly block off the shoal from Filipino fishermen.

"We haven't heard from them since we decided to return home. We're hoping the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) will check on them," he said.

Protection needed

The captain urged the government to protect Filipino fishermen who are trying to make a living in the shoal, a traditional fishing ground. The shoal is located 230 kilometers from Masinloc town in Zambales, within the Philippines' 370-km exclusive economic zone.

China seized the shoal from the Philippines after a two-month standoff between Chinese and Philippine vessels in 2012. It has since cordoned off the shoal, driving away Fil-

ipino fishermen.

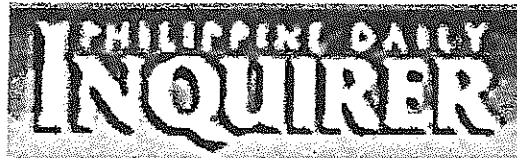
"We're investing so much every time we sail out to sea. We're also risking our lives so we're asking our Coast Guard to defend us and our territory from China," Pumicpic said.

Their boat returned to shore here early Saturday. Pumicpic said his boat was accosted by Chinese coast guards on rubber boats.

"This is China Coast Guard. Go back to Subic," he quoted one of the Chinese coast guards as telling them.

Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Marfil, commander of the PCG station at Subic, said his office had yet to receive a report on the alleged harassment of the local fishermen. Personnel from the PCG intelligence unit have gathered the statements of the crew of the Bughoy.

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More bases may make China blink, say solons

By Christine O. Avendaño

SENATORS Gregorio Honasan and Antonio Trillanes IV said yesterday they had expected there would be more than five bases made available to the Americans in the Philippines under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Edca) to counter China's aggressive encroachment in the South China Sea.

Honasan even suggested the United States set up a facility in the conflict zone just west of the Philippines.

"I hope China will blink so that when they blink, it will pave the way for negotiations. And that is what you call leveraging," said Honasan, the vice presidential running mate of Vice President Jejomar Binay.

At the conclusion of their annual strategic dialogue on March 17-18, Manila and Washington announced the US military would have access to the following facilities in the Philippines: Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa, Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro, Basa Air Base in Floridablanca and Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu.

The 10-year Edca was signed in 2014, but it only received the green light in January after the Philippine Supreme Court affirmed its constitutionality. The deal—a key part of the Obama administration's effort to reassert the US presence in Asia—allows

Washington greater access to Philippine military bases through the rotation of troops, ships and aircraft for humanitarian and maritime security operations.

"To be honest, I was expecting around eight locations," Trillanes said in a text message. The former Navy officer said there were three more "ideal locations" for the US forces—in Sulu, Maguindanao and General Santos City.

He said the announcement of the five locations for US access was "the shot in the arm that the security sector has long been waiting for since the US bases were removed in 1991."

One of the benefits of this arrangement is the local economies of these areas flourishing, Trillanes said.

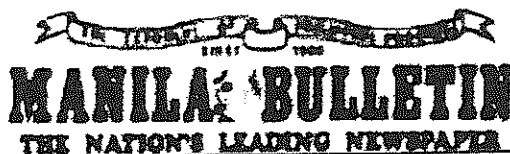
Asked whether the access arrangement would deter China from its reclamation activities in the West Philippine Sea, Trillanes said: "That is not the primary intention of Edca but that would be one of the effects."

Honasan, a former Army colonel, said the net effect of Edca would be to "contain" China, pointing out the Chinese already occupied 800 hectares in disputed areas.

The senator urged the Philippines to consider proposing that the United States put up an installation in the West Philippine Sea—at Panatag Shoal and other areas of conflict—since it has gone as far as agreeing to Edca.

With Julie M. Alipala; AFP

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BBL remains best option for peace in Mindanao

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) remains the top recommended action as a means to end the decades-old Bangsamoro armed struggle, according to a report released by the Swiss-led Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC).

In the public launch held in Makati City recently, the TJRC report stated that a legislated Bangsamoro law that provides for a political and institutional infrastructure pursuant to the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) could guarantee the non-recurrence of the Mindanao armed conflict.

"The TJRC recommendations cannot replace a durable peace agreement and its legal framework," TJRC chairperson Mō Bleeker said. "Solving the Bangsamoro situation in a durable manner offers a unique opportunity for a modern State to manage the diversity inherent in any modern democracy in a constructive manner."

"Similarly, the Bangsamoro aspire to a political framework, which will enable them to practice good governance, to develop their region and their people, to proudly assert their identity, and to ensure a constructive engagement with their own multiethnic constituency."

The TJRC also stressed that the implementation of the CAB "was a unique and extraordinary opportunity not only for Bangsamoro, but also for the whole Filipino nation".

"It offers an opportunity for the historical and cultural resilience of the Bangsamoro and indigenous peoples to be recognized as a vibrant and constructive part of the Philippines, based on the acknowledgement of plural identities. This is indeed a historical opportunity for the Bangsamoro and that this is indeed a historical opportunity for the Philippines," the report stated.

The report was first launched publicly in Cotabato City earlier this week in an event that was attended by Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles, Government of the Philippines (GPH) chief negotiator Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, together with more than 200 individuals, organizations, and representatives from local, regional, national, and international entities.

As stipulated in the CAB, the TJRC was mandated to undertake a study and to make recommendations, based on consultations and expert's studies, with a view to promote healing and reconciliation among the conflict-affected communities in the Bangsamoro. The said TJRC report was a product of consultations with more than 210 Moro, indigenous, and settler communities in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, involving some 3,000 community members and local officials.

Deles said Executive Secretary Paquito N. Ochoa Jr. has already issued a memorandum of instruction to the OPAPP to put the recommendations in the TJRC report in motion.

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The long-term goal, a world-class Army

TOMORROW MARKS the 119th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army. It was on March 22, 1897, at Tejeros, San Francisco de Malabon in Cavite, that members of the Magdalo and Magdiwang factions of the Katipunan met in a convention to map out the setting up of a republican government, and the formation of a regular army. The armed organization would consist of three corps of 10,000 men each. Artemio Ricarte was elected captain general of the army of the Philippine republic.

Historians have different takes on the significance of the Tejeros Convention. Some view the meeting more as the breaking point between the Aguinaldo

REVEILLE

Ramon
J. Farolan



do and Bonifacio factions of the Katipunan. But there is no question about the choice of Ricarte as the first leader of an organized Filipino army in the service of an independent republic. Ricarte, whose nom de guerre was "Vibora" (viper), had a reputation as a vicious and deadly fighter. He is best known for his refusal to take an oath of allegiance to the United States after the end of the Philippine-American conflict, preferring to remain in exile abroad. Perhaps, this is one reason why no major installation of the Army has been dedicated to his memory. Unfortunately, this is part of the colonial mentality that keeps us hostage to the past. I am confident however, that things will change as new leaders emerge.

The present chief of the Philippine Army, Lt. Gen. Eduardo M. Año, is a bemedalled combat veteran whose solid accomplishments include the capture of Benito Tiamzon, chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, along with his wife Wilma, the party secretary general. General Año hails from the province of Rizal, and is the 57th in the long line of distinguished predecessors starting with General Ricarte.

In a commemorative book "Missions and Milestones" that was recently launched to mark the Army's foundation anniversary, General Año reported to the nation some of the more important developments in the continuing effort to bring soldiers and citizens together, working for peace and progress in the community.

• The readiness of a province to take on more development programs is an important milestone. The term "Peaceful and Ready for Further Development" (PRFD) is used to confirm that the province has reached a status of having a relatively peaceful environment and is ready for further development. The conferment of this status is the result of an agreement between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the provincial government. This declaration of a province as PRFD is to encourage civil authorities to recognize their lead role in orchestrating peace and security in their localities.

Of the 76 provinces affected by the insurgency, 64 have been declared as PRFD since 2008. The target for 2016 is for the rest of the provinces to be also declared as PRFD.

• The Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanihan, born of the experiences and insights from years of fighting the insurgency, has been able to break new grounds and produce significant gains. The joint effort of all parties in governance has made for a truly dynamic approach, bringing to its lowest level the internal threat of insurgency.

• The Army Transformation Roadmap (ATR) is based on a commitment to reform and innovation. Its long-term goal: a world-class army that is a source of national pride. In adopting the ATR, the focus is on the institution rather than individual personalities; long-term strategies, rather than short-term tactics; and approaches all matters from a systems perspective in order to address priorities instead of single issues. Under the ATR, the presence of the Multi-Sector Advisory Board provides stakeholders with inputs and guidance, as well as a different perspective that serves to enhance the decision-making process.

• The Capabilities Upgrade Program has resulted in the acquisition of more than 56,000 assault rifles, 81-mm mortars, squad automatic weapons, night-fighting systems, and refurbished armored personnel carriers.

• The soldier is everywhere. He is the most accessible and recognized face of government, especially in remote and far-flung areas of the country. In times of calamities and emergencies, the Army is often tasked to provide quick response and fast action.

• In the last few years alone, so many of our men and women have laid down their lives fighting against the enemies of the state. They stood tall and fought for peace, for the Filipino. We remember their sacrifices; they will never be forgotten. (The list of casualties is more than five pages long. Most of those killed in action were on the battlefields of Mindanao.)

In connection with the Army celebrations, I am reminded of the remarks made by Fr. Roberto Layson at a Senior Leaders' Conference conducted by the Philippine Army many years ago. It remains as relevant today as it was in the past.

Father Layson said: "The Army has the most powerful weapon in its arsenal, the potential of which has not been fully maximized. I am referring to the [Civil-]Military Operations of the Army."

Father Layson went on to say that the Army is often deployed in remote communities that are impoverished. These areas are neglected and become potential breeding grounds for an insurgency. The situation could be viewed as a danger signal or an opportunity to serve. The Army could simply unleash its military strength against a possible enemy or it could look at the area as a place for collaboration, a chance to serve the community in the fight against poverty, sickness and illiteracy.

Father Layson also said that in adapting the latter stance, the Army does not win battles but it uses its resources precisely to address some of the root causes of rebellion. For residents of the community who benefit from these actions, it is kindness that is not easily forgotten.

Father Layson concluded by saying that "Every bullet fired always leaves in the consciousness of a people a negative memory that may take generations to forget. But the goodness that a soldier leaves is something that will always remind them of an Army that takes care of people."

The Philippine Army is fortunate in having Col. Arnulfo Burgos Jr. as its new assistant chief of staff for Civil-Military Operations.

Army Core Purpose: Serving th

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EXCLUSIVE:

PNoy Housing for AFP, PNP called 'sub-standard'

(1st of 3-parts) • By Alfred Dalizon

SERGEANT Juan de la Cruz (not his real name) is a Mindanao veteran who after more than 20 years still had no home he could call his own until he became one of the recipients of a National Housing Authority-supervised P4.2 billion housing program under the Aquino administration in 2011.

However, Dela Cruz's dream of having a quality but affordable small home turned out to be a nightmare after discovering that the NHA-built house he acquired is not really suitable for a family of more than six persons.

"It's a nightmare living in there but what can we do? I am just one of the thousands of poor soldiers in this country who can't afford an ideal house. Forgive me but our house is much smaller than the servants or driver's quarters of many of our millionaires, government officials included," the battle-tested trooper who is the father of five kids told the Journal Group on condition of anonymity.

Just like de la Cruz, Police Officer Jose Cruz (also not his real name) found himself applying for an NHA-house which turned out to be not ideal for living. "It turned out to be a house with a lot area of 30 square meters and with a floor area of 18-20 square meters. Just imagine how you will squeeze in the toilet, the sink, the dining room and the bedroom in that small space?" the cop, also a homeless policeman, said.

The two are just among the countless soldiers and policemen who have been complaining about the "sub-standard" living conditions at the NHA-built housing projects for members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police. The complaints are coming amid claims by NHA officials that they have fulfilled the dreams of our soldiers and policemen to have a house they can call their own, complete with decent amenities that will give them peace of mind while away from their families and fighting criminals and terrorists.

A Journal Group check showed that the houses for both officers and non-commissioned officers have the same lot and floor areas. The only difference is that the houses for officers have a provision for loft or mezzanine.

The house is good only for a family of 3-4 persons, meaning the beneficiary, his wife and two kids only. An

excess person or two means there will be overcrowding.

Many officers and men who have seen the NHA-built units said that apart from being "bare", the houses have very little tiles and have no cabinets – many of the units also present parking problems.

It turned out that many of the units were built in one-way streets. "There should be two-lanes even in interior roads but that's not the case in those NHA housing projects. If a soldier parks his jeep or old car in front of his house, the other occupant of the house just across the street could not anymore park his vehicle since he would be blocking the entire road. In the end, that would spell trouble for the entire neighborhood," one official said.

CONGRESS CALLS FOR PROBE

Magdalo Representatives Francis Ashley Acedillo and Gary Alejano have called for a congressional investigation into the "sub-standard" housing units built by the NHA for the country's soldiers and policemen. The two lawmakers particularly cited the housing units constructed by NHA in Baras, Rizal and Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

The two even compared the NHA-built houses to a "bahay ng kalapati" which is not conducive to decent living. In a statement, Reps. Acedillo and Alejano said they also discovered during actual inspection that apart from lack of water and electricity, the foundation and walls of the housing units were not completely cemented.

They also cited the lack of an ideal septic tank for the housing units as well as the lack of access to schools, health centers and workplaces.

Officers and men interviewed by the Journal Group confirmed the observation of the two party-list congressmen.

"It should be noted by Congress that the NHA was the one which designed the housing units, looked for the location of the units and the ones in charge of the procurement of the materials for the development of the housing units. The only role played by the AFP and the PNP in those housing projects is to determine who will be the recipients from the military and the police," one officer noted.

(Coming next: RUMORS ON ALLEGED SUB-STANDARD HOUSING STARTED IN 2011)

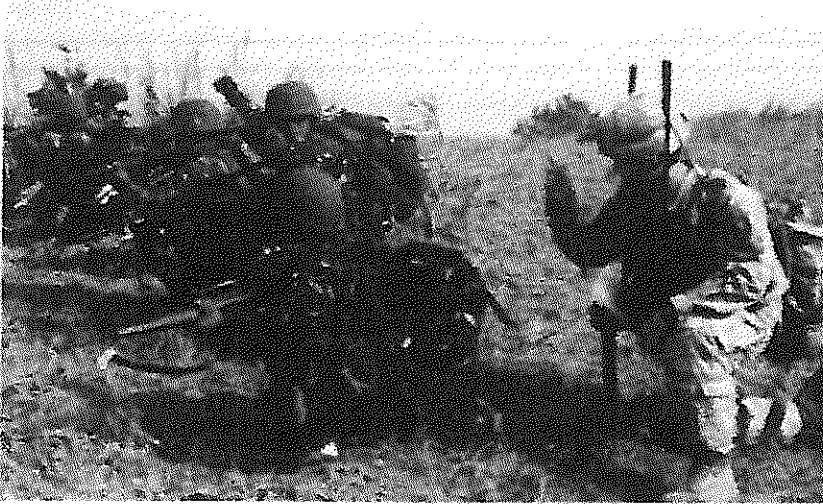
ONLINE NEWS

21 MARCH 2016

PH, US agree on 5 EDCA bases

By: InterAksyon.com

March 19, 2016 7:44 AM



An American soldier instructs Filipino troops during the Balikatan military exercises.

InterAksyon.com

The online news portal of TV5

MANILA, Philippines -- (UPDATE - 10:27 a.m.) The Philippines and United States have agreed on the five military bases in the country where the Americans can build facilities under the Enhanced Defense Agreement Cooperation.

The five "EDCA Agreed Locations" identified during the sixth Bilateral Strategic Dialogue in Washington DC this week are:

- Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa, Palawan
- Basa Air Base in Floridablanca, Pampanga
- Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija
- Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro
- Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Mactan

The annual dialogue was co-chaired by Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel and Assistant Secretary of Defense David Shear for the US, and Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Evan P. Garcia and Undersecretary of National Defense Pio Lorenzo F. Batino for the Philippines, the Philippine embassy in Washington DC said in a statement.

Questioned by nationalists who argue it practically allows the re-establishment of foreign military bases in violation of the Charter, the EDCA, signed on April 28, 2014 by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg, was declared constitutional by the Supreme Court in January this year.

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Under EDCA, the US can not only increase its military presence in the country but also build facilities in local bases under the supervision of the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, expanding on the Visiting Forces Agreement.

The *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* immediately protested plans for the five Philippine bases, calling the agreement a "midnight deal" and accusing the government of "desperately rushing the approval of these so-called 'agreed locations'" before President Benigno Aquino III steps down on June 30.

Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said they would press whoever succeeds Aquino to terminate the EDCA.

Aquino, he said, "will go down in history as the president who brought back US bases to our shores."

The tensions in the South China Sea also figured prominently in the March 17-8 talks with both sides voicing "their firm opposition to the ongoing militarization of outposts in the South China Sea and ... their common view that the installation of new military assets on the outposts escalates tensions" as well as "options to address further militarization and unilateral actions" in the vital sea lanes.

Both sides also reiterated their position that any ruling by the arbitral tribunal before which the Philippines has filed a case against China "would be legally binding" on both countries.

They also discussed US assistance to the AFP's modernization, including the US defense department's proposal to allocate "a significant amount under the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative" in the 2016 fiscal year "for mutually-agreed projects that directly support the (Philippines') maritime security priorities."

Aside from the security discussions, both countries also held talks on March 16 under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, a consultative mechanism to periodically review the status of the bilateral economic relationship.

A large part of the discussions were on the Philippines' "keen interest" in joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

"The meeting also discussed other key bilateral issues, including investment, customs, intellectual property rights, agricultural trade issues, and the US Generalized System of Preferences," the Philippine embassy said.

13 'Tired' rebels surrender in Compostela Valley

From Update.Ph (Mar 20): 13 'Tired' rebels surrender in Compostela Valley



Tired of the incessant fighting, a rebel leader along with 12 of his men formally surrendered to government forces in Pantukan town, Compostela Valley Saturday.

Initially, 'Milisya ng Bayan' (Militia of the People) head Robert Hiyan and four of his men voluntarily surrendered to

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troops of the 46th Infantry Battalion at 10:00 a.m. at Sitio Diat Palo, Barangay Napnapan, said 10th Infantry Division public affairs office chief Capt. Rhyen Batchar.

They were followed later by eight other companions of Hiyan who surrendered to government forces at Sitio Logpaton, Barangay Kingking, also in Pantukan.

Hiyan's men were not identified for security reasons.

The group also handed to military authorities an M-60 general purpose machine gun, two M-16A1 automatic rifles, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, one small improvised explosive device with detonating device, blasting cap and battery, one commercial high-frequency (HF) radio with charger and voluminous subversive documents.

The surrendered rebels are now undergoing re-integration procedures as of this posting.

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