

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



ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

24 March 2016

Thursday

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

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

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 23, 2016 | THURSDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

LAOAG CITY
23 - 34 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY
23 - 35 °C

BAGUIO CITY
15 - 25 °C

SBMA/CLARK
24 - 35 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY
33 °C

METRO MANILA
23 - 35 °C

LEGAZPI CITY
25 - 32 °C

ILOILO/ BACOLOD CITY
25 - 34 °C

TACLOBAN CITY
24 - 32 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA
25 - 33 °C

METRO CEBU
25 - 33 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO
22 - 32 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY
25 - 35 °C

METRO DAVAO
25 - 35 °C

RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA EXTENDING OVER NORTHERN LUZON (MARCH 23, 5:00 PM)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:57 AM	6:07 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:48 PM	6:20 AM
FULL MOON	LAST QUARTER
APR 23 8:01 PM	APR 31 1:17 PM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
6:56 AM	11:18 PM
0.10 Meter	0.70 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

Partly cloudy to or broken clouds with rain showers and/or thunderstorms

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

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People's Television

AIR 21

SAGUT KO, PADALA MO!

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24 March 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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'Why only Wong and Xu?'

Koko wants raps vs more 'actors'; bank apologizes

By Leila B. Salaverria and Doris Dumlao-Abadilla

THE ANTI-MONEY Laundering Council (AMLC) should also bring criminal complaints against officials of companies to which mysterious computer hackers wired \$81 million they stole from the Bangladesh central bank last month, and not just against two Chinese businessmen in whose accounts the money had been traced, Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said yesterday.

WHY ONLY/AS

Pimentel was not satisfied with the AMLC's criminal complaint against Chinese casino junket operator Xu Weikang and Cagayan-based restaurateur Kam Sin Wong, also known as Kim Wong, over the laundering of the stolen money through the Philippines.

He said the money passed through other parties before reaching the accounts of Xu and Wong, but the AMLC asked the Department of Justice (DOJ) to file charges only against Xu and Wong on Tuesday.

Unless other people are also charged, Pimentel said he would ask the AMLC why only Xu and Wong were sued when the Senate blue ribbon committee resumes its inquiry into the scandal next Tuesday.

'Cover-up'

Earlier, the AMLC filed a criminal complaint against Maria Santos-Deguito, manager of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC) branch on Jupiter Street, Makati City, where the hackers wired the \$81 million.

Deguito's lawyer accused the AMLC of a cover-up, saying his client was singled out for prosecution.

The \$81 million was wired to four accounts in Deguito's bank branch under fictitious names, which were consolidated into an account in the name of Chinese-Filipino businessman William So Go, then converted into pesos through the remittance company Philrem, which transferred the funds to Xu and casino operators Hawaii Leisure Co. and Bloomberry Hotels Inc.

Pimentel noted that when he asked the AMLC what it had against Wong, the council cited its discovery of his Philippine National Bank account after part of the \$81 million was remitted to Eastern Hawaii Leisure Co. Ltd., of which he is president.

"So what happens now to the actors before the money reached Eastern Hawaii? Who are these actors? Philrem and RCBC, the bank itself, and Mr. William So Go," he told reporters at the Senate.

"How come they have not

been included [in the suit]? There must be a reason," he added.

Pimentel said he was not insisting that Philrem, RCBC, or Go be charged by the AMLC as well. He said he just wanted an explanation for their exclusion from the lawsuit.

RCBC apologizes

RCBC apologized to the public yesterday for the involvement of its employees in the scandal.

"RCBC offers its sincerest apologies for the involvement of its personnel in the money-laundering scheme now subject of Senate blue ribbon committee and AMLC investigations," the bank said in a statement.

The bank said it "recognizes the evils wrought by money laundering and will do its utmost in the fight against it."

The RCBC board also accepted a second offer of the bank's president, Lorenzo Tan, to go on leave.

"Tan insisted on taking a leave to allow him to focus on clearing his name in the money-laundering issue a board committee is investigating," RCBC said.

"So far, no evidence has been presented against Tan linking him to the issue and the board has taken cognizance of the statement of Deguito before the Senate that Tan had nothing to do with the opening of the accounts that received the \$81-million remittance," it said.

RCBC chair Helen Yuchengco-Dee will take over the bank's daily operations during Tan's absence. She will be assisted by a management committee led by vice chair Cesar Virata and Armando Medina, the bank announced yesterday.

RCBC fired Deguito and her deputy, Angela Torres, on Tuesday.

Others to be sanctioned

Maria Cecilla Fernandez-Estavillo, RCBC head for legal and regulatory affairs, said on Tuesday that other branch and bank officials were expected to be meted out sanctions in the coming days.

The bank would also bring charges against Deguito and Torres next week, she said.

"The (internal) process is going to end by next week. The investigation has ended. Sanctions are expected to be out by next week. There are different degrees of culpability and participation (among employees)," Estavillo said yesterday.

Asked how high up the responsibility went, Estavillo said: "From our investigation, it's very clear there's no criminal collusion at the head office level. There were lapses by some personnel but no criminal collusion. Definitely, had there been criminal collusion, the immediate action would be to remove these people. But we don't see that [happening] and with a very high level of confidence, we can say there's no criminal collusion."

Liabilities

Asked whether RCBC was bracing for liabilities arising from the heist, Estavillo said: "We don't see that they can go after us because to begin with—we don't know the full story (in Bangladesh), but it looks like there were also problems from their end. In cases where there's a theft, they have a cause for action against the thief but not against the bank."

But if the case is brought to court, Estavillo said, "that's the proper venue to give our defense."

Asked whether RCBC was preparing for potential fines from the regulators, she said: "We'll just defend ourselves. We will explain ourselves to the regulator. We will cooperate with them."

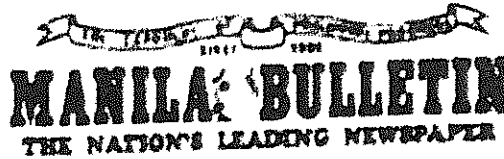
Internal controls

In its letter of apology, RCBC vowed to identify weaknesses in internal controls and operations that may have facilitated the entry of the \$81 million stolen from Bangladesh.

"We're engaging third-party foreign consultants to just review the processes so we can strengthen them further," Estavillo said.

"The changes that we will make are in response to the changing face of crime, the more sophisticated changing face of crime," she said.

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**MANILA BULLETIN**
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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2 Brussels suicide bombers identified

Brothers linked to suspect in Paris carnage

BRUSSELS (AFP) – Two suicide bombers who blew themselves up in Brussels are believed to be brothers who were being sought for links with Salah Abdeslam, the prime suspect in the Paris attacks. RTBF television reported Wednesday, citing police sources. This developed as Belgium declared

three days of mourning for around 35 people killed in the twin attacks by suspected Islamic State jihadists.

RTBF named the two as Khalid and Ibrahim El Bakraoui, saying Khalid last week rented an apartment in Brussels under a false name where police found Abdeslam's fingerprints after a raid. Police arrested Abdeslam, ►6

Europe's most wanted man, in a dramatic operation in Brussels on Friday that had been hailed as a "victory" in Belgium's campaign against terrorism.

Khalid is also linked to renting an apartment in the southern Belgian city of Charleroi from where Abdeslam and the other Brussels-based Islamic State jihadists set off to carry out the November 13 Paris attacks which left 130 people dead.

A police source told AFP on Tuesday that a man in the middle of three men seen on closed circuit television at the airport just before the twin blasts could be Ibrahim El Bakraoui.

Other reports Wednesday said one of the brothers, who they did not name, could have been involved in the separate attack Tuesday on the Brussels metro station of Maalbeek, which left about 20 dead.

Bombs in bags

Belgian police had earlier Wednesday issued an appeal for information about the two men believed to have blown themselves up at the airport.

The police posted several tweets with the caption "Terrorism: Who knows this man?" – showing CCTV close-ups of two men pushing trolleys with suitcases through the airport departure hall.

They gave three slightly different images for each of the two men who the federal prosecutor said Tuesday had likely blown themselves up in the attack.

A third man, dressed in a light colored jacket and wearing a dark hat, who was shown with the two others in a CCTV grab issued Tuesday, is believed to have fled the scene and is now the subject of a massive manhunt.

"They came in a taxi with their suitcases, their bombs were in their bags," Zaventem Mayor Francis Vermeiren said.

"They put their suitcases on trolleys, the first two bombs exploded. The third also put his on a trolley but he must have panicked, it didn't explode."

Belgian authorities had been on alert after Abdeslam, Europe's most wanted man, told investigators he had been planning an attack on Brussels.

He was caught on Friday after evading capture for four months including, officers believe, escaping a shootout that saw a Kalashnikov-wielding man killed and four police officers wounded.

Two massive suicide blasts hit Zaventem Airport on Tuesday morning, leaving blood and mangled bodies strewn across the check-in hall and sending terrified travellers fleeing.

At around 9 a.m. (0800 GMT), an hour after the airport blasts, a third explosion rocked Maalbeek metro station,

in the heart of the city's EU quarter, just as commuters were making their way to work.

As the manhunt continues, prosecutors said raids were carried out across Belgium, adding that a bomb, an Islamic State flag and chemicals had been found in one apartment.

The fact that extremists were able to hit high-profile targets in Brussels, capital of the European Union, just months after IS militants killed 130 people in Paris, will raise fresh questions about the continent's ability to prevent terrorism.

It also underscores doubts about how Belgium has allowed extremism to develop unchecked, coming days after key Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam was arrested in Brussels following four months on the run.

"This is a day of tragedy, a black day," Prime Minister Charles Michel said, vowing the country would not be cowed by the "deadliest attacks we have ever seen in Belgium."

Belgium in mourning

Flags will fly at half mast at public buildings across Belgium for three days of national mourning through Thursday, after crowds gathered in the Place de la Bourse square to sing songs and lay flowers in memory of the dead.

"People were just going to work, to school and they have been cut down by the most extreme barbarity," Michel said. "We will continue to protect liberty,

our way of life.”

The Islamic State claimed the bombings, saying “soldiers of the caliphate” had carried out the attacks against “the crusader state” of Belgium.

Leaders across Europe reacted with outrage, with the EU vowing to combat terrorism “with all means necessary” on a continent that has been on high alert for months.

“The whole of Europe has been hit,” said French President Francois Hollande, whose country is still reeling from November’s attacks.

Landmarks from the Eiffel Tower in Paris to Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate were lit up in the black, yellow and red of Belgium’s national flag in solidarity, while social media users shared images of beloved Belgian cartoon character Tintin in tears.

Thousands also posted tweets using the #StopIslam handle to express their anger against Muslims after the attacks, although others rejected it as Islamophobic and racist.

US President Barack Obama vowed to stand with Belgium in the face of the “outrageous” attacks, while the FBI and New York police said they would send investigators to help.

Hundreds of flights and trains were cancelled as Europe tightened security, while the US warned citizens about the “potential risks” of travelling in Europe and New York and Washington stepped up security.

‘Bombs in their bags’

Pierre Meys, spokesman for the Brussels fire brigade, told AFP at least 14 people had been killed at the airport, while Brussels Mayor Yvan Mayeur said “around 20” died in the metro.

The first to be identified was Adelma Marina Tapia Ruiz, a Peruvian woman who had been living in Brussels for six years and was with her family in the airport when the blast went off, according to the foreign ministry.

More than 200 people were wounded in the two attacks, including four Mormon missionaries – three Americans and one French – two Britons, two Colombians and an Ecuadorian. France said eight of its nationals were hurt, though it was unclear if this included the Mormon.

Analysts said the attacks pointed to a sophisticated jihadist network operating in Europe, and Australia’s Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said Europe had “allowed security to slip,” as he questioned the EU’s Schengen passport-free zone.

Belgian authorities were still checking whether the attacks were linked to Abdeslam’s arrest, said prosecutor Frederic Van Leeuw.

Islamic State warned of “black days” for those fighting it in Syria and Iraq. Belgian warplanes have joined the coalition in the Middle East, but Brussels, home to the European Union and NATO headquarters, has long been a center of Islamist militancy.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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For ex-NPA militiamen, days of hardship are over

By ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

NABUNTURAN, Compostela Valley – “Dili na namo maantos ang kalisud sa sulod sa kalihukan. Wala na pud mi kasegurohan, apil na ang among pamilya (We could no longer bare the hardships inside the movement. Uncertainties hound us, including our families)”

This was the statement given by Roberto Hiyan, alias Bobby Dallas, commander of the Milisya ng Bayan of the New People's Army (NPA) based in the hinterlands of Pantukan town, who surrendered with 14 of his men to the elements of 46th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army last March 19 in Sitio Diat Palo, Barangay Napnapan, Pantukan, Compostela Valley.

Hiyan and his men, together with their families and children were presented by Col. Macairog Alberto, commander of the 1001st Brigade to Compostela Valley Vice-Governor Manuel 'Way Kurat' Zamora, who represented Governor Arturo Uy, on Tuesday at the provincial capitol in Nabunturan town.

The former rebels also turned over high powered firearms that included an M-60 general purpose machine-gun (GPMG), two M-16 rifles, and two rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers.

Each of the returning rebels received P5,000 cash assistance from the provincial government during the occasion.

“The cash given is to support them while they are staying in a half-way

home (to await) processing of the livelihood assistance from the government as part of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program or CLIP,” said Zamora, adding that each of the former rebels will get an additional P50,000

from the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and P10,000 from the provincial government.

“Welcome back to the government and utilize the livelihood support given to you as you start again your lives peace-

fully,” the vice-governor pointed out.

The half-way home provided by the provincial government will also ensure their safety and security while the assistance from the government is being processed, said Alberto.

After receiving it, they have the option to return to their respective communities, or some of the former members, once found to be qualified, may join the Army or train to become members of Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

“The decision is up to them. We will not influence their choices once they already receive full assistance from the government,” Alberto added.

Hiyan said most of them are not originally from the areas of Diat Palo, Napnapan and Kingking in Pantukan from where their NPA command operated.

“Nanarbaho lang ang kadaghanan sa amoa sa mga minahan diha. Ang uban gikan pa sa laing lugar sa Dabaw ug sikbit probinsya (Majority of us are in the area as workers of mining tunnels. Others came from the other areas in Davao and the nearby provinces),” he stressed.

As militiamen, he added, they served as the village-based and support forces of the regular NPA combatants.

Hiyan averred that, while he had 33 members under his command, only 14 decided to join him to go back to the fold of the law while the others opted to abandon the mining sites and return home.

Hiyan expressed gratitude to the government for accepting them back and the support it provided especially to their families and children.

For his part, he said he will go back to his community, although he did not elaborate where for security reasons. He added that he will just concentrate on farming and raise his children.

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Outstanding soldiers honored as Army marks 11th anniversary

PRESIDENT Benigno S. Aquino III on Tuesday led the awarding of medals to outstanding soldiers during the 119th founding anniversary of the Philippine Army (PA) in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

The President was joined by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando Iriben, and PA Commanding General Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año in the presentation of awards and plaques of recognition to those who have contributed to the accomplishment of the Army's mission.

The Distinguished Conduct Star, the second highest combat medal after the Medal of Valor, was conferred on 1Lt. Dionizer Mark delos Santos for his "acts of conspicuous courage and gallantry in action" during an encounter with New People's Army rebels in Abra last November.

Delos Santos, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 2008, led a platoon from the Army's 41st Infantry Battalion during the firefight that resulted in the death of five rebels.

In his speech, President Aquino thanked the Army for living up to its mandate of "securing the land and serving the people".

"Sa tuwing merong bagyo, sa harap ng matinding buhos ng ulan at hagupit ng hangin, nariyan ang Sandatahang Lakas at iba pang mga kasaping gobyerno, gumagawang paraan na mai-clear ang kalsada para makapasok ang ayuda, gaya na lang ng nasak-sihan natin noong mga bagyong Yolanda, Ruby, Lando, at iba pa. Saganitong pagkilos, talagang batid ninyong nasalikod ninyo ang ating mga Boss, at ang dulo nito ay isang virtuous cycle ng tiwala, pag-aambagan, at positibong pagbabagong makabubuti para sa ating lahat."

With only 100 days left as commander-in-chief, President Aquino said he is proud to leave the AFP with a high morale and the respect of the Filipino people.

The President also noted the 68 big-ticket projects worth P58.43 billion that have benefitted the AFP. The amount included the P7.79 billion for facilities and equipment upgrade.

President Aquino also mentioned that aside from livelihood programs for active and retired uniformed men, 61,000 units have been completed under the AFP-PNP Housing Program.

Recipients of the Gold Cross Medal were 2Lt. Franz Arvin Balmaceda of the 73rd Infantry Battalion and Corporal Clifford

Bade, a gunner of the 8th Scout Ranger Battalion. Col. Juvymax Uy, commander of Task Force Zamboanga, was presented the Philippine Legion of Honor (Degree of Legionnaire) for his "exceptionally meritorious and valuable service rendered" as commander of the Army's Intelligence Security Group "during the actual conduct of extensive and intensive case build-up and intelligence operations" from September 21, 2014 to May 3, 2015.

The other awardees were Col. Francisco Millare (Outstanding Achievement Medal); Lt. Col. Rosendo Abad, Jr. (Distinguished Service Star); Major Gen. Edmundo Pangilinan (Gawad sa Kapayapaan); Lt. Col. Wilfredo Manalang III (Military Achievement Medal); Col. Cirilito Sobejana (Gawad sa Kaunlaran); Pfc. Leonel Torrel (Bronze Cross Medal); Cpl. Victorio Ang (Military Merit Medal); CAFGU Active Auxiliary Gregorio Laginan (Kagitingan sa Barangay Maginoo); Pfc. Erenio Besonia, Jr. (Enlisted Personnel of the Year); Sandy Sentelices (PA CAFGU Active Auxiliary of the Year); Nelda Maghanoy and Virginia de Luna (Model Employee of the Year); 1Lt. Abdul Dumpao (Best Reservist of the Year); Cdt. 1Cl. Jestoni Kimpalong (Best ROTC Male Cadet of the Year); and Cdt. 1Cl. Jenny Joy Tindaan (Best ROTC Female Cadet of the Year). **EMontano**

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Page. 4

PNoy sa Army: Huwag makisawsaw sa pulitika

Muling tinagubilinan ni Pangulong Aquino ang militar na manatiling neutral upang hindi magamit sa eleksiyon sa Mayo 9, hindi tulad ng malagim na karanasan noong panahon ng batas militar.

"Sa paparating na halalan, malinaw ang atas sa atin ng sambayanan. Manatili sa kanilang panig, huwag makihalo sa pulitika, at siguruhing mananaig ang

nagkakaisang tinig ng bayang tumatahak sa landas ng demokrasya," pahayag ni Aquino sa kanyang pagdalo sa ika-119 na anibersaryo ng Philippine Army sa Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, karnakalawa.

Babala ni PNoy, hindi na dapat maulit ang manipulasyon sa mga sundalo noong panahon ng diktaduryang Marcos. At dahil kontrolado ng yumaong Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos ang militar nang mga

panahong iyon, napalawig nito ang termino nang mahigit dalawang dekada at binalewala ang karapatan ng mamamayan.

"Bilang mga tagapagtanggol ng kapwa ninyo Pilipino, at bilang lehitimong puwersa, tangan ninyo ang mga sangkap para mangyari ang tinatawag na 'monopoly of armed power,' aniya.

Genalyn D. Kabiling

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Seasoned election official allays fear of disruption of polls in Lanao

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY (PNA) – The recent violence in Butig, Lanao Del Sur, including the threat on the Ulama League in the Lanao provinces, will not deter the conduct of the local and national elections in the area, an election official, who has had extensive experience in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur, said Tuesday.

Joseph Hamilton Cuevas, provincial election officer of Misamis Oriental,

opined that it will be unlikely that armed men in Butig, who identified themselves with extremist groups such as the Islamic State and Jemaah Islamiyah, can cause the failure of the May 9 elections in Lanao Del Norte.

Cuevas issued the assurance after the Ulama Alliance in the Lanao provinces reported last week that the Ulama were threatened by still unidentified personali-

ties believed to be sowing terrorism in the area.

Cuevas, who was the Lanao Del Norte provincial election officer for 11 years before being transferred to Lanao del Sur in 2004, said he was optimistic that the presence of the military in the province would provide the necessary deterrent to discourage belligerent forces from sabotaging the May 9 polls.

He said that the Philippine Army has deployed two mechanized infantry battalions and two infantry battalions to foil any attacks that might disrupt the election process in the province.

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Seguridad ng deboto, tiniyak sa S. Kudarat

ISULAN, Sultan Kudarat – Nagtutulungan ang iba't ibang ahensiya ng gobyerno sa Sultan Kudarat upang matiyak na magiging maayos ang paggunita ng Semana Santa sa lalawigan sa mga susunod na araw.

Magkatuwang ang Land Transportation Office (LTO) at Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) sa masusing pag-iinspeksiyon sa mga terminal ng mga sasakyang bumibiyahe patungo sa iba't ibang bahagi ng Mindanao.

Kasabay nito, siniguro naman ng Department of Health (DoH) provincial office na magtatalaga itong mga ambulansiya at magbubukas ng mga emergency center sa mga pagdarausan ng prusisyon, misa, at iba pang aktibidad kaugnay ng paggunita sa Kuwaresma.

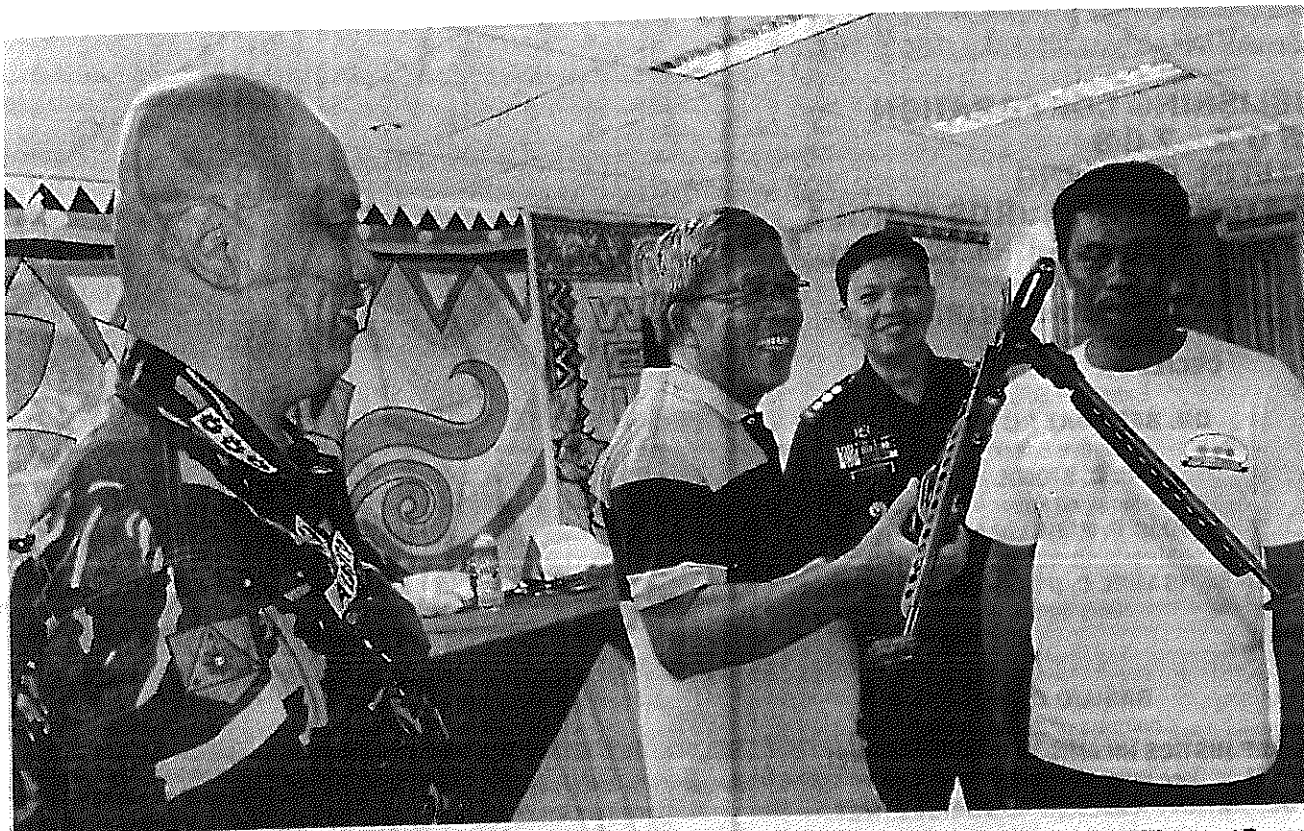
Nagbigay din ng katiyakan ang Sultan Kudarat Police Provincial Office at Philippine Army na hindi sila magkukulang sa pagkakaloob ng seguridad sa mamamayan, partikular laban sa posibilidad ng pagkilos ng mga armadong grupo sa hangganan ng mga bayan ng Esperanza, Lambayong, at President Quirino.

Leo P. Diaz

29 March 2016

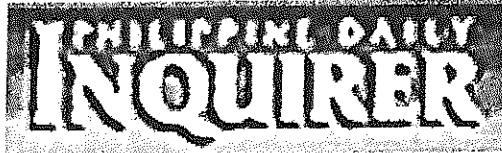
MANILA BULLETIN
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TIRED OF FIGHTING – For Robert Hiyon, also known as Bobby Dallas and former commander of the Millsya ng Bayan of the New People's Army (NPA) in Patukan, Compostela Valley, (right) his days of fighting in the mountains are over after he led 14 of his men in surrendering to authorities last March 19. He is shown in photo after turning in an M-60 general purpose machinegun (GPMG) to ComVal Vice Governor Manuel 'Way Kurat' Zamora (second from left). With them are Col. Macalrog Alberto (left, commander of the 101st Army Brigade and Sr. Supt. Albert Ignatius Ferro, director of the Philippine National Police in Nabunturan, Compostela Valley where the turnover rites were held. (Alexander D. Lopez)

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PH-US War battle marked key date for rallies vs Edca

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Protesters will time the start of what they said are massive rallies against increasing US military presence in the Philippines with a day being commemorated here for a little known battle of the Philippine-American War.

Church leaders in Northern Mindanao said protesters would start a series of rallies against the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Edca) between the Philippine and US governments on April 7, the anniversary of the little known Battle of Cagayan de Misamis (the old name of Cagayan de Oro).

On April 7, 1900, dozens of Filipino revolutionaries, led by Gen. Nicolas Capistrano, attacked an American barracks under the command of Col. Edward Goodwin.

At least 52 revolutionaries were killed, nine were wounded and 10 were captured during the Battle of Cagayan de Misamis. The Americans, who had superior firepower, suffered four casualties and nine injuries.

Bravery, patriotism

Though lopsided in favor of the Americans, Bishop Rudy Juliada, of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), said the battle should be remembered for the bravery and patriotism of the people of Cagayan de Oro during those times.

On this day, Juliada said Patriyotiko Northern Mindanao, a group led by IFI, would launch the first of a series of mass actions against Edca, which would give American soldiers at least five sites, including the former Lumbia Airport in the city, that they could use as bases in the Philippines.

Many senators had insisted that Edca should be treated as a treaty that needed Philippine

Senate concurrence but a ruling by the Supreme Court upholding the pact's constitutionality rendered these opinions moot.

Bishop Juliada said Edca should be scrapped.

The US Embassy in Manila, on its web site, said Edca will "further strengthen US-Philippine bilateral relations."

The pact, said the embassy, is a "mutually beneficial agreement that will enhance our abil-

“Education on history and nationalism is vital to this campaign (against Edca),” said Juliada.

“Many of us do not even know our past,” he said. “That is why we are not critical of issues that entail our nation’s future,” he added.

The start of a “citizen-initiated campaign” against Edca, he added, would be in commemoration of the Battle of Cagayan de Misamis and in honor of Filipino revolutionaries who went to battle against the US colonial government.

Legal, moral question

Bishop Melza Labuntog, of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), said while Edca may have been given a stamp of legality by the Supreme Court, the pact’s morality is in question.

“Not all laws and treaties of the land legally passed in [Congress] and approved by the highest [court of the land] represent the voice and sentiments of the people,” said Labuntog.

“They may be legal but not necessarily moral,” said Labuntog in a statement.

Edca, said the UCCP bishop, is an example of “a one-sided pact that does not benefit God’s people.”

“On the contrary, it poses imminent threat to our national sovereignty,” said Labuntog.

Jigger Jerusalem, Inquirer Mindanao

ity to provide rapid humanitarian assistance and help build capacity for the Armed Forces of the Philippines.”

“We look forward to working closely with our Philippine partners on the implementation of this agreement,” the embassy said.

But Bishop Juliada said Edca would just continue to reinforce the Philippines’ colonial experience under the United States.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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US reassessing China part in Pacific naval war games

WASHINGTON—The United States said on Tuesday that it was “reassessing” China’s participation in a large naval drill in the Pacific this year, amid tensions with Beijing over maritime claims.

China took part in Rimpac, or

the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, the largest international maritime warfare exercises involving some 20 countries held biennially under US leadership for the first time in 2014.

With Rimpac, the United
US REASSESSING/A4

States Pacific Command seeks to enhance interoperability between Pacific Rim armed forces, ostensibly as a means of promoting stability in the region to the benefit of all participating nations.

Rising tensions

But soon after China’s initial participation, aimed at reducing distrust, renewed incidents caused tensions to flare up anew.

China’s land reclamation and military buildup in the South China Sea have drawn international condemnation, including from the United States.

The Chinese “have an invitation for Rimpac and we will continue to review that,” Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told the armed services committee of the US House of Representatives.

“Our strategy in the Asia-Pacific is not to exclude anyone, but to keep the security architecture going there, in which everyone participates,” he testified at a congressional hearing.

‘Self-isolating’

“China is, however, self-isolating ... that’s why all these partners are coming to us,” Carter said.

“We are constantly reassessing” the opportunity to have China participate in the exercise, he added.

US Pacific Command chief Adm. Harry Harris has warned lawmakers that Beijing was “clearly militarizing” the South China Sea.

Washington recently struck an accord with the Philippines, making it possible for US forces to rotate through five Philippine bases, including those close to the South China Sea.

Assertive Beijing

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

claim is demarcated in vague terms by the so-called nine-dash line, a U-shaped boundary that loops down from Taiwan as far as Indonesia’s Natuna Islands.

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

Rimpac is held every two years during June and July of even-numbered years from Honolulu, Hawaii. It is hosted and administered by the US Navy’s Pacific Fleet, headquartered at Pearl Harbor. The US invites military forces from the Pacific Rim and beyond to participate.

Modern creation

Rimpac 2014 involved 23 countries, some 50 ships, six submarines and more than 25,000 troops.

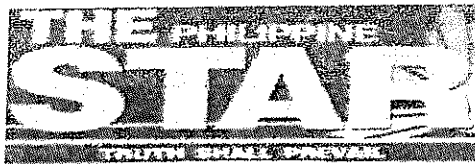
Although China’s claim to the South China Sea area of about 3.5 million square kilometers (1.4 million square miles) is based on historical records and geographic proximity, the nine-dash line is a modern creation. It first appeared on 1947 maps produced by the government of the Republic of China, which was replaced by the communist People’s Republic on the mainland just two years later.

Picking fights

China has refused requests to clarify the exact geographical coordinates of its South China Sea boundary. It also declines to say whether it considers the South China Sea to be Chinese territorial waters, an exclusive economic zone or some other legal designation.

Beijing says that it in no way impedes freedom of navigation, and its diplomats accuse others of picking fights. However, rising tensions, including Indonesia’s worries over China’s designs on waters around the Natuna Islands, threaten to make China’s preference for ambiguity no longer tenable. *Reports from AFP and AP*

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48 areas in N. Mindanao on poll watchlist

By GERRY LEE GORIT

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – The number of towns and cities in Northern Mindanao on the election watchlist of the Philippine National Police (PNP) has increased to 48.

These "areas of concern" are in Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and Lanao del Norte, said Chief Superintendent Lyndel Desquitado, Region 10 police director.

"We are now on heightened alert," Desquitado told a recent press conference.

At a briefing attended by local officials in January, the PNP said only 21 towns and cities in Northern Mindanao are on the election watchlist.

Iligan City and the municipalities of Kauswagan and Pantao Ragat in Lanao del Norte as well as Cagayan de Oro City are being monitored

for "intense" political rivalry, police said.

Desquitado said the areas are also being monitored for the presence of armed groups, including New People's Army (NPA) rebels.

He said the Armed Forces of the Philippines would assist the PNP in providing security during the campaign sorties of candidates for local positions in Valencia in Bukidnon and Gingoog, Misamis Oriental.

A special task force was created to address election-related concerns in Lanao del Norte, he added.

"We are prepared. We have beefed up security at police stations... not only for the election period and the Holy Week, but also the anniversary of the NPA on March 29," Desquitado said.

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PNoy creates task force for unified action on West Philippine Sea issue

With less than 100 days in office, President Aquino has created a high-level task force that would synchronize a “unified” government action in protecting the country’s sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea.

In Memorandum Circular No. 94, the President assigned the National Security Adviser to chair the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea with several government departments and security agencies as members. ►6

The formation of the high-level task force came amid the country’s protest against China’s aggressive reclamation activities to assert its claims in the West Philippine Sea. Manila is still waiting for a decision of the UN tribunal on its petition asserting maritime entitlements in the disputed territory.

“Consistent with the Constitution, the Philippines’ interests in the West Philippine Sea include the maintenance and protection of Philippine sovereignty, preservation and defense of territorial integrity, and promotion of the welfare and well-being of the Filipino people,” the circular read.

“Given the country’s national interest, national policies and evolving strategic lands, a more deliberate and coherent approach in addressing the West Philippine Sea issue is needed for the purpose of orchestrating the national effort on achieving unified action in the West Philippine Sea,” it added.

The President acknowledged that the issues and actions required in the WPS transcend maritime security domain since these extend to other areas of con-

cern such as “diplomatic, politico-legal, information, military and law enforcement, and socio-economic fields.”

Task force members

Members of the new task force include the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of National Defense, Department of Justice, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Transportation and Communications, Department of Finance, and National Economic and Development Authority.

Other task force members are National Coast Watch System, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, Philippine Coast Guard, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

In the MC 94 signed last March 17, the new task force will receive guidance from the President through the Cabinet Cluster on Security, Justice and Peace.

It will also be responsible in orches-

trating and synchronizing the employment of the different national government agencies’ capabilities to achieve the national objectives in the WPS. Regular reports will be submitted to the President through the cabinet security cluster.

The same circular created an Area-level Task Force that will coordinate the efforts of the different government agencies at the area level. Tactical-level Task Forces (TTs) may also be organized to perform mandates with the direction from the ATF.

The President also directed government agencies and local government units to render support and cooperation to the new task force.

Taiwan’s Taiping island

Meanwhile, on an island named Itu Aba in the Spratly archipelago of the South China Sea, a Reuters story told of Taiwanese coast guard officials proudly hauling a small wooden bucket of water from one of several simple concrete wells on the coral outcrop. The water is key to Taiwan’s argument that Itu Aba is legally the only island among the hundreds of reefs, shoals and atolls scattered across the hotly disputed region.

Itu Aba, which the Taiwanese call

Taiping, is coming into focus as the Philippines challenges the legality of China's claims to most of the South China Sea.

As part of a case now being considered by an international court in The Hague, the Philippines has argued that no feature in the Spratlys could be legally considered islands because they lack the ability to sustain human habitation or economic life.

But if Itu Aba is determined to be an island it is entitled to a 200 nautical mile (370 km) exclusive economic zone under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Such a ruling would complicate territorial disputes across the vital trade route and resource rich region, where Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei also have claims.

The Philippines presented its case to the judges' panel of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in November and a ruling is expected in the next few months.

China says case valid

China has refused to participate in the case, saying it is invalid and the panel has no jurisdiction. Taiwan, which China deems is a breakaway province, is not a member of the UN and not a signatory to UNCLOS.

Taipei is instead waging a propaganda campaign on Itu Aba, including a high-profile visit by President Ma Ying-jeou in January and Wednesday's first ever visit by international journalists.

The group, which included Taiwanese journalists and local scholars, were shown vegetable gardens and plantations of coconuts, sweet potatoes and papayas.

According to an AP report, Wednesday's trip for journalists was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Bruce Linghu, who says the intent is to demonstrate that Taiping is an island capable of sustaining human habitation, and not simply a rock as the Philippines claims in a case brought before the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Serviced by a 1,200-meter airstrip, other features on Itu Aba include a hospital, solar generators, a temple, wharf and a lighthouse.

While Taiwan has occupied the 46-hectare outcrop almost 2,000 km south of Taipei for decades, China, the Philippines and Vietnam also claim it.

Wang Mao-lin, a senior coast guard official, said Chinese fishing vessels and Vietnamese fishing vessels are sometimes seen in the seas around Itu Aba. (Genalyn D. Kabling, Reuters, and AP)

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5 Marines hurt in clash with BIFF

MAGUINDANAO – Five Marines were wounded in a series of encounters with suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao on Tuesday.

The gunfight erupted when BIFF gunmen attacked the Marines patrolling Barangay Andavit in Datu Salibo around 7 p.m., members of the municipal peace and order councils in Datu Salibo told **The STAR**.

The bandits were reportedly led by a certain Hohaiden Animbang, Zacaria Mendo and Ibad Damiog.

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US submarine arrives in Subic amid fresh maritime tension

By ELENA L. ABEN

The United States' guided-missile submarine USS Ohio (SSGN-726) arrived at Subic Bay Tuesday morning for a scheduled port visit.

Ohio is the second US submarine to dock at the former American naval base, and the sixth US warship to visit the country this month.

A statement released by the US embassy said the arrival of Ohio at Subic Bay marks the conclusion of its Indo-Asia-Pacific deployment.

China concern

Ohio's visit comes days after a top US naval official expressed concern that Beijing may be expanding its presence at Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, which China seized from the Philippines in 2012 after a two month standoff. It is located 240 kilometers from Subic.

Reports quoted Admiral John Richardson, head of US naval operations, as saying that the US military had seen Chinese activity around the shoal.

"I think we see some surface ship activity and those sorts of things, survey type of activity, going on. That's an area of concern... a next possible area of reclamation," he said.

The submarine's arrival also comes amid latest spat between Filipino fishermen and Chinese Coast Guard vessels in the area.

'Stabilizing force'

Capt. Michael Lewis, Ohio's commanding officer, described their presence in the region as a "stabilizing force".

"Our presence in the region provides a stabilizing force and through engagements with our partners, such as this port visit to Subic Bay, we aid in maintaining that stability," said Lewis.

"Our mission was to support the 7th Fleet commander in a multitude of operations and the crew of 165 came to the region fully ready to accomplish any and all missions. To be blunt, they performed admirably in all aspects. I could not be prouder of all they have accomplished," he added.

PH - US ties

Master Chief Machinist's Mate William Catron, said their visit to Subic provides Ohio's crew "the opportunity to represent the best that America has to offer to the community and the Republic of the Philippines."

For most of its crew members, this

is their first time to visit the country, so they are looking forward to experiencing the local culture.

Electrician's Mate 2nd Class Daniel Nagle said he is excited for the shopping opportunities and the food and is looking forward to eating "balut" (boiled fertilized duck egg).

Super sub

Measuring more than 560 feet long and weighing more than 16,000 tons when submerged, Ohio is one of the largest submarines in the world.

It is capable of supporting a multitude of missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike, naval special warfare involving special operations forces, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare and mine warfare.

With a payload of more than 100 Tomahawk missiles the USS Ohio is also ideal for strike operations.

The USS Ohio was the first Trident-class nuclear powered fleet ballistic submarine and the fourth US vessel to bear the name of Ohio.

The ship was converted to a guided-missile submarine in 2006 and is forward-deployed to Guam with the crews based in Bangor, Washington.

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Peace process with MILF best deterrent to ISIS terrorism — Marcos

By Marlon Purificacion

VICE presidential candidate Senator Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr. yesterday said continuing with the peace process is the best deterrent to the entry of the international terrorist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) into the country.

Marcos was reacting to the twin bombing attacks in Brussels, Belgium which claimed the lives of at least 34 people and wounded more than a hundred others.

With the ISIS owning up to the bombings, Marcos said this should be another compelling reason why the peace process should be pursued at all cost.

“The peace process is the key and the logic is really quite simple. Dapat magkaroon tayo ng pagkakaisa sa mga kapatid nating

MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) at MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) at iba pang grupo upang sila ay patuloy na kasama sa ating lipunan at para hindi sila sumama sa mga grupo katulad ng ISIS,” Marcos said.

He said he is deeply saddened by the twin bombings in Brussels and while the incident is quite far from the country and no Filipino is involved, the event still is highly relevant because terrorism can happen in any country.

Marcos, however, expressed doubt that ISIS has entered the country despite the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and BIFF (Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters) claiming allegiance to the international terrorist group.

When asked who among the current presidential candidates can best address the problem of terrorism, Marcos said it could either

be his running mate Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago or Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

“I think Senator Miriam could very well handle it because she is an expert in foreign relations and international law. And also Mayor Duterte because he is the only one who has had an experience in negotiating with forces outside of the law,” the senator explained.

He said the government should closely watch the situation and implement measures to ensure the safety of every Filipino all over the world.

We should all watch this closely and we should continue to enforce peace and continue to bring everyone to the table to talk peace until we find the true and lasting peace that we have all been long searching for,” he said.

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EDITORIAL

A borderless war

Closed-circuit TV footage showed the three men pushing luggage carts into the check-in area at the Brussels airport. On each cart sat bags, now believed to contain the two bombs that were set off last Tuesday morning in the Belgian capital. Two of the men wore black gloves, believed used to conceal detonators.

The two died as they set off the explosives; the third man walked out of the airport as people lay wounded and dying. Probers believe his bomb failed to detonate. Shortly after the attack, another explosion ripped through the Brussels Metro system. As of yesterday, 14 people had died in the airport attack and 20 in the Metro train.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria has claimed responsibility for the worst terrorist attack in the city that hosts the headquarters of the European Union.

The attack is just the latest warning about the borderless war that ISIS is waging, if not directly then through adherents inspired by its gospel of hate.

In the Philippines, security of-

ficials have downplayed reports of local extremists pledging to support ISIS. The group is said to be trying to gain a solid foothold in the Philippines. This shouldn't prove too hard, considering that the country is already home to several of Southeast Asia's extremist troublemakers: the Abu Sayyaf, Jemaah Islamiyah, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and other rogue elements of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front.

These groups have launched terrorist attacks from Mindanao to Metro Manila in the past two decades, killing hundreds of civilians and security forces. Authorities cannot discount the possibility that apart from being inspired by ISIS, these homegrown extremists might receive funding from the Islamic State, using the same financial loopholes exploited by money launderers. The attacks in Brussels should lead to tighter security controls, not only in terms of public safety but also in preventing terrorist financing.

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www.pna.gov.ph

AFP beefs up security, intel ops in wake of Brussels attack

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 23): AFP beefs up security, intel ops in wake of Brussels attack

In the aftermath of the terror attack in Brussels, Belgium which left 30 people dead and 230 others wounded, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced that it has intensified its security and intelligence gathering operations in a bid to prevent a similar incident in the country.

This was disclosed by AFP public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato in a message to the PNA Wednesday.

"The AFP together with other security forces have taken up the necessary steps to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the country. We are constantly monitoring the situation on the ground to ensure that similar incidents will not happen here," he added.

Detoyato stressed that intensified security and intelligence gathering efforts are ongoing to monitor and if needed, foil and deter such attempt by terror groups.

He added that the AFP is also strongly condemning the attack which targeted helpless civilians.

"The AFP strongly condemns this dastardly act targeting innocent civilians. This attack cannot be justified by any ideology and has no place in any civilized society," the military official revealed.

In line with this, Detoyato said the entire AFP is extending its heartfelt sympathy to the victims of the attack in the Belgian capital.

"And we hope that the victims will find the strength and resolve to move forwards," he added.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=869520>

www.pna.gov.ph

DND anti-submarine project helicopter awarded to AgustaWestland

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 23): DND anti-submarine project helicopter awarded to AgustaWestland

The contract for the Philippine Navy (PN)'s first two anti-submarine warfare (ASW) helicopters was awarded to Anglo-Italian aircraft manufacturer AgustaWestland.

This was confirmed by Department of National Defense (DND) undersecretary for finance, munition, materiel and modernization Fernando Manalo in a message to the PNA Wednesday.

But he did not give the exact date of the contract awarding.

Manalo earlier said in January that AgustaWestland is now undergoing post-qualification checks after being selected as sole proponent of the DND's PHP5.4 billion ASW helicopter project.

Post-qualification refers to the background check to determine the capability of the manufacturer to deliver the equipment on time and comply with the specifications requested by the contracting party.

AgustaWestland was selected by the DND as the possible supplier of its two ASW helicopters late in 2015.

Manalo said AgustaWestland offered the Philippines its brand-new AW-159 "Wildcat" anti-submarine helicopter.

The AW-159 (previously called the Future Lynx and Lynx Wildcat) is an improved version of the Westland Super Lynx military helicopter.

It is ordered for the British Army and the United Kingdom's Royal Navy.

It has a crew of two, has a maximum speed of 291 km/h (181 mph), range of 777 km (483 miles), ferry range of 963 km (598 miles) and an endurance of one and a-half hours (four hours and 30 minutes if fitted with auxiliary fuel)

The AW-159 is fitted with forward firing CRV7 rockets and machine guns, pintle mounted machine gun, Sea Skua missiles and Sting-Ray torpedoes and depth charges.

The ASW helicopter project is one of the seven military modernization projects which President Benigno S. Aquino III has given DND the green-light to go into a "multi-year contract" last November.

Projects placed under the "multi-year contract" include the two missile-armed frigates, eight amphibious assault vehicles, two long-range patrol aircraft, six close-air support aircraft, munition for the brand-new FA-50PH jet fighters and surveillance radars.

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

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

Payment from the seven projects will run from 2015 to 2018.

Granting of the "multi-year contract" will allow to pursue the military modernization program beyond Aquino's term, he added.

Total value of the seven projects is about PHP44 billion.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=869555>

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