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TEAM ARMY

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27 March 2016

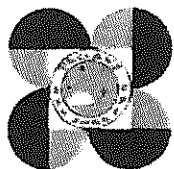
Sunday

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

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



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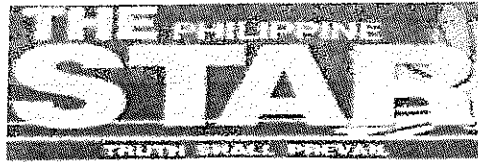
LOCATION	WEATHER	
CABANATUAN, Nueva Ecija		33 °C 24 °C
CALAPAN, Oriental Mindoro		33 °C 24 °C
KALAYAAN GROUP OF ISLANDS, Palawan		33 °C 25 °C
DUMAGUETE, Negros Oriental		31 °C 25 °C
ROXAS, Capiz		33 °C 25 °C
BORACAY ISLAND, Malay, Aklan		31 °C 25 °C
CATBALOGAN, Western Samar		34 °C 23 °C
TAGBILARAN, Bohol		32 °C 22 °C
SURIGAO, Surigao del Norte		33 °C 24 °C
GENERAL SANTOS, South Cotabato		37 °C 23 °C

DIPOLOG, Zamboanga del Norte		34 °C 23 °C
KIDAPAWAN, North Cotabato		35 °C 24 °C

LEGEND

				
Sunny	Cloudy skies	Cloudy skies with rainshowers	Cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorm	Light rains
				
Monsoon rains	Occasional rains	Partly cloudy skies	Partly cloudy skies to at times cloudy with rainshowers or thunderstorm	Partly cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers
				
Rains with Gusty winds	Stormy	Snowy		
				
4		0		

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Europe-wide terror raids: Suspect shot

BRUSSELS – Belgian police shot a suspect as part of a huge European terror crackdown that yielded several arrests Friday as France's president said a jihadist network that targeted both Paris and Brussels was being "destroyed."

Grieving Belgians held prayers in the rain in a central Brussels square carpeted with flowers and tributes to the 31 dead and 300 wounded in Tuesday's carnage, but there was also growing anger at the government for letting a string of militants slip through the net.

The raids came as under-fire Belgian investigators uncovered alarming new evidence of a European jihadist cell tied to bombings at Brussels' airport and metro, November's Paris attacks and a new French plot.

"Even if the one that committed the attacks in Paris and Brussels is in the process of being destroyed... there is still a heavy threat," French President Francois Hollande said.

The Belgian government has admitted "errors" and two ministers offered to resign after

Turkey said Ibrahim El Bakraoui, who blew himself up in the airport attack, had been arrested and deported and that Belgium had ignored warnings that he was a "foreign terrorist fighter."

Ibrahim and his brother Khalid, the suicide bomber in the metro attack, were also on a US counterterrorism watch list, CNN reported.

Ibrahim was on the list even before the November Paris attacks while Khalid was added soon after. Prosecutors have confirmed Khalid was the subject of an international warrant over the Paris attacks.

European authorities are under huge pressure to better coordinate the tracking of home-grown extremists and fighters returning from Syria, as evidence grows of a thriving jihadist

Turn to Page 8

Europe-wide From Page 1

network straddling France and Belgium.

A Belgian parliamentary commission on Friday heard from the ministers for justice, foreign affairs and the interior on how Ibrahim El Bakraoui had managed to evade the Belgian authorities.

The ministers said the information from Ankara had been vague but acknowledged a Belgian police officer at the embassy in Turkey had “blundered.”

Suspect shot in leg

French police said they had foiled a terror strike in France by 34-year-old Reda Kriket – a man previously convicted in Belgium in a terror case alongside Paris attacks ringleader Abdelhamid Abaaoud – after arresting him and discovering explosives at his home.

Belgian police later arrested three people in connection with the new French conspiracy, prosecutors said.

In dramatic scenes, one of the suspects was shot in the leg at a tram stop in broad daylight in a huge operation by police in the Belgian capital’s Schaerbeek district, where police this week found a bomb factory linked to the Brussels attacks.

Deepening the links, Belgian prosecutors revealed that Brussels airport bomber Najim Laachraoui’s DNA was found on a suicide vest and a piece of cloth at the Bataclan concert hall where 90 people were killed during November’s Paris attacks, and on a bomb at the Stade de France stadium.

A huge manhunt is still under way for at least two suspects – one of the airport attackers whose bomb failed to go off and another man seen in the metro with the bomber there.

Investigators also say Khalid El Bakraoui rented an apartment in Brussels used

by key Paris suspect Salah Abdeslam, who was taken into custody in the Belgian capital on March 18.

The nation’s federal prosecutor revealed Abdeslam “has invoked his right to silence” and has not spoken to investigators since a few brief interviews the day after his arrest.

‘Covered in blood’

US officials confirmed that two Americans were among the Brussels dead.

Secretary of State John Kerry said he stood by the Belgian people, echoing their backing for the United States after the 9/11 attacks.

“Then, voices across Europe declared, ‘Je suis American.’ Now, we declare, ‘Je suis Bruxellois’ and ‘Ik ben Brussel,’” Kerry said in French and Flemish, the country’s two main languages, after meeting Belgian Premier Charles Michel.

Harrowing stories continued to emerge from survivors of the attacks, in which people of around 40 nationalities were

killed or wounded.

Briton David Dixon, 51, who lived in Brussels, texted his aunt after the airport blasts to say he was safe, but happened to be on the metro system when a suicide bomber blew himself up, British media said.

A 19-year-old Mormon missionary was at the Delta airlines check-in counter when the explosions went off at Zaventem.

"My body was actually picked up off the ground for a moment," Mason Wells told CNN. "My left shoe was blown off and a large part of the right side of my body got really hot and then really cold and I was covered in... a lot of blood that wasn't mine."

Officials confirmed the deaths of young Dutch siblings Sascha and Alexander Pinczowski, who were reportedly on the phone with relatives when the airport bomb went off.

Among only three fatalities formally named so far was Peruvian Adelma Marina Tapia Ruiz, 37.

A Chinese national was also

confirmed among those killed. Others killed in the Brussels attacks were citizens of almost a dozen countries.

Bombers prepared 'satanic' cocktail

Meanwhile, an empty apartment block on a quiet street turned out to be the perfect place for the three suspected Brussels attackers to prepare the home-made nail bombs used in Tuesday's airport and metro attacks.

In a building undergoing renovation, there were no near neighbors to notice them taking in large quantities of strong-smelling household chemicals, as well as a suitcase of nails, to concoct an unstable white explosive powder known as TATP, or triacetone triperoxide, that they later used in their attacks.

"Even if someone had stopped them, they could have said the materials were for renovation," said Hassan Abid, an official at the local town hall, who was trying to

determine why authorities had no knowledge of the men living illegally on the fifth floor.

Belgian investigators do not answer questions on the case.

Having moved in two months ago, the Belgian brothers Khalid and Ibrahim El Bakraoui used the apartment in the largely middle class borough of Schaerbeek as a laboratory-cum-hideout, from where Ibrahim and two other men took a taxi on Tuesday morning to the airport to commit their attacks.

Mariah Carey cancels show

Pop diva Mariah Carey on Friday canceled a show in Brussels, saying she was concerned for security.

"I love my fans in Brussels and at this time I am being advised to cancel my show for the safety of my fans, my band, crew and everyone involved with the tour," the US superstar said in a statement on Twitter.

- Reuters, AFP, AP

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Balita

ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSA P8.00

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Video footage ng pamumugot sa Sarangani, peke—Army

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - Pinabulaanan ng militar ang katotohanan ng isang video footage na kumalat sa social media at nagpapakita sa pamumugot sa isang lalaki ng isang tagasuporta ng Islamic State, sa Sarangani.

Inilarawan ni Col. Ronald Villanueva, commander ng 1002nd Army Brigade, ang video footage bilang propaganda ng isang grupo ng terorista gamit ang social media.

Aniya, gumawa sila ng beripikasyon

sa pulisya sa Sarangani na itinanggi ang napaulat na insidente ng pagpugot sa isang lalaki sa siyudad na ito, na binihag umano matapos matuklasang nag-eespiya sa mga tagasuporta ng IS, sa pamumuno ni Commander Tokboy Maguid, opisyal ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) na nakabase sa Maasin, Sarangani.

Pinangunahan ni Maguid ang isang grupo ng mga armadong tagasuporta na nakaengkuwentro ng militar sa Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat noong

Nobyembre ng nakaraang taon.

Nakatakas si Maguid sa kasagsagan ng operasyon ng militar ngunit pito sa kanyang mga kasamahari ang napatay sa labanan.

Narekober ng tropa sa lugar ng labanan ang ilang baril at watawat na may simbolo ng IS.

Ayon kay Villanueva, posibleng pineke ang video footage upang palabasin na kinuhanan ito sa Sarangani.

Joseph Jubelag

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Pahina. 4

Search and rescue sa kinidnap na maglolo

Inilatag ang malawakang search and rescue operations ng mga elemento ng militar sa kinidnap na 70-anyos na negosyanteng lalaki at apo nito na binihag ng mga armadong kalalakihan sa Barangay Maruing sa bayan ng Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur.

Ayon kay Major Felimon Tan, spokesman ng AFP – Western Mindanao Command, puspusan ang operasyon upang iligtas ang maglolong sina Antonio Tan, at apo nitong si Rayray Tan, 20.

Lumilitaw na dinukot ng mga armadong kalalakihan na nakasuot ng camouflage uniform ang maglolo noong Miyerkules Santo kung saan isinakay sa dalawang pumpboats na nakapintura ng puti at asul na may tatak na Bote-Bote Basilan.

Gayunman, bagama't may indikasyon na mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf Group ang dumukot sa maglolo ay wala pang grupong umaako.

Inihayag pa ni Tan na pinaigting na rin ang naval blockade ng Philippine Navy sa Zamboanga del Sur upang maiwasan na mailipat ng lugar ang mga bihag.

Kaugnay nito, pinakilos na rin ng AFP-Westmincom ang tropa ng Army's 53rd Infantry Battalion at 6th Special Forces Battalion (SFB) upang mailigtas ang mga biktima.
Joy Cantos

Sarhento ng Army tiklo sa droga

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan – Kalaboso ang 41-anyos na sarhento ng Army na sinasabing notoryus na drug pusher matapos itong maaresto sa inilatag na buy-bust operation ng pulisya sa Barangay Tallungan, bayan ng Reina Mercedes, Isabela noong Huwebes Santo. Ayon kay P/Senior Insp. Edgar Pattaui, hepe ng Reina Mercedes PNP, nakatakadang kasuhan ang suspek na si Sgt. Rodel Dumalag ng 5th Infantry Battalion ng Phil. Army na nakabase sa Camp Upi, Gamu. Nasamsam sa suspek ang siyam na plastic sachets ng shabu at P500 mark money na ginamit sa buy-bust. **Raymund Catindig**

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The Manila Times

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Nationinbrief

CIDG NABS FAKE ARMY GENERAL

OPERATIVES of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) captured on Tuesday in Bataan a man who claimed to be a major general of the Philippine Army, a senior police official said on Saturday. CIDG Chief, Director Victor said that Salvador Escobar alias 'Orlando Pablo' was captured by CIDG and Army operatives by virtue of a warrant of arrest for violations of R.A. 9516 (Illegal Possession of Explosives) and R.A. 10591 (Firearms and Ammunitions Law). Deona said that Escobar along with his cohorts are responsible for extortion, falsification of military documents, illegal recruitment, and for holding a bogus Philippine Army Officer Candidate Course (OCC) Class 11 sometime in November 2014 in Las Piñas City. The CIDG chief added that Escobar's group, composed of fake officers, posed a serious threat when they were reportedly involved in a hostile plan during the then upcoming Papal visit of Pope Francis in the Philippines last January 2015. That led to the simultaneous implementation of search warrants against the group by the CIDG, days before the said Papal visit, but Escobar eluded arrest, Deona said.

ANTHONY VARGAS

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The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

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TROOPS NAB BOMB COURIER

By Francisco Tuyay

AN ARMY task force arrested a 22-year-old resident of Kidapawan City who was caught with explosives at a checkpoint in Davao City's Toril district on Good Friday, the authorities reported on Saturday.

The authorities arrested Roy Moreno, a resident of Sinsuat Street in Kidapawan City, hours after government troops clashed with Abu Sayyaf extremists in the hinterlands of Basilan province, resulting in the killing of two Abu Sayyaf militants.

Chief Inspector Milgrace Driz, spokesperson of the Davao City Police, said elements of Task Force Davao found two improvised explosive devices, bomb components and a hand grenade in the backpack of Moreno who was aboard a passenger van that was stopped at the checkpoint Friday evening.

But Moreno said on questioning that he did not know the backpack contained the bombs and claimed that he was only told by a certain Commander Bobby of the New People's Army Front 54 ordered him to bring it to Toril district.

Moreno, who is now facing charges of illegal possession of explosives and violations of the Omnibus Election Code, claimed the supposed leader told him he would be later told where to bring the bag.

Earlier on Good Friday, the military killed two Abu Sayyaf Group members, including an explosive expert, and injured six others in a three-hour clash starting 7:55 a.m. in Al-Barka, Basilan.

Also wounded in the incident were seven government troops—five soldiers and two militiamen. They were taken to Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City and are now in stable condition.

Western Mindanao Command spokesperson Maj. Filemon Tan said the slain ASG explosive expert was identified as Eric Ajibon, who is also a sub-leader, and the other one was only known as a certain Abu Ayan. Their remains are in the custody of the police for proper disposition.

Tan said Ajibon is believed to be responsible for a series of bombings against the government forces and business establishments in Basilan province.

According to Tan, the clash ensued after residents reported to the Army's 4th Special Forces Battalion the presence of around 40 ASG militants, led by Isnilon Hapilon, in Sitio Luglugi, Barangay Macalang, Al-Barka.

Tan said they received intelligence report that six followers of Hapilon were wounded during the clash and were dragged by their fleeing comrades.

He said the troops recovered war materiel and personal belongings at the clash site.

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Abu leader's son, 2 bandits slain in Basilan clashes

Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) fighters killed a son of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, while government security forces shot dead a suspected bomb expert of the bandit group and his companion in separate encounters that occurred in Basilan on Wednesday and Good Friday, respectively.

Haipa Hapilon was killed in a 10-minute clash with MILF fighters in Al-Barka

town on Wednesday morning, according to Capt. Filemon Tan, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom).

The MILF ambushed Haipa and his six armed followers in Barangay Linuan.

Haipa had been following his father's terrorist and criminal activities on the island province and in the

mainland Zamboanga Peninsula, Tan said.

Two days after Haipa's death, Army troopers clashed with about 40 bandits led by Hapilon himself, believed out to avenge his son's death.

The bandits were about to terrorize the village of Macalang, but the residents managed to prevent them and seek the help of the Joint

By JAIME LAUDE

Task Force Basilan

Tan said Abu Sayyaf sub-leader and bomb expert Eric Ajibon and a certain Ayan were killed in the firefight, which left five soldiers and two militiamen wounded.

The bodies of the slain bandits were taken to the local police station for proper disposition.

The wounded troopers

were taken to the Lamitan Hospital for treatment and later airlifted to Camp Navarro General Hospital at the Westmincom base.

Troopers pursuing the fleeing bandits reported that six Abus were wounded in the encounter.

"Ajibon was responsible for the series of bomb attacks on government and business establishments in Basilan," Tan said. – With Roel Pareño

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ASG leader, aide slain in Basilan encounter

By NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY – An Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) leader and his aide were killed while five soldiers and two government militiamen were wounded in more than two hours of fierce fighting in Sitio Luglugi, Barangay Macalang in Albarka, Basilan last Sunday.

Army Lt. Col. Andrew B Bacala, Jr, commander of the Fourth Special Forces Battalion (SF Battalion) in Basilan Province, reported Friday that his men encountered about 40 heavily armed ASG bandits, led by Eric Ajibon, at Sitio Luglugi, Barangay Macalang in Albarka town in Basilan province about 7:55 am, Sunday.

Bacala said that an initial exchange between the soldiers and the ASG lasted for 30 minutes before strategic, sporadic firing ensued and went on for two more hours.

When the smoke cleared on the gunfight, Ajibon lay dead, together with an ASG member identified only

as Aiyan. More bandits were believed to have been wounded, but their comrades were able to carry with them when they retreated to the forested areas of the village.

Bacala identified the wounded soldiers as T/Sgt Reynaldo I. Pagba, PFCs Eric V. Caturan, Raul A. Guialil, Edev Malaran, Welner Mallorca, Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) members Usri H. Usman and Randel A. Ramirez.

Usman took a shrapnel on his right jaw and is now in critical condition while the other government operatives only suffered minor wounds and are now recuperating at the Lamitan City Hospital.

Bacala said Ajibon is a bomb expert and was tagged in a series of bombings against government troops and business establishments in Basilan province.

The bodies of Ajibon and Aiyan are now with the Albarka police, Bacala said.

The soldiers also recovered war materials and personal belongings at

the encounter site

According to Bacala, the ASG withdrew to southwest direction of Barangay Macalang after helicopter gunships of the Third Air Division of the Philippine Air Force and the Western Mindanao Command (WMC) Na-

val component based in Zamboanga City extended support to the soldiers on the ground.

It was learned that several armed clashes between soldiers of Joint Task Group (JTG) Basilan and the ASG also transpired at Barangay

Macalang in the same town while the JTG-Basilan was conducting "Oplan Urgent Fury 2."

Continuous clearing operations are still ongoing with fire support coming from 8th Field Artillery Battalion of the Philippine Army.

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DEFENDING THE PEOPLE

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Noy's housing units 'hellish'

Christine F. Herrera

PRESIDENT Benigno Aquino III's close allies in Congress have demanded that the Palace account for the anomalous P18.6-billion housing projects as they condemned the "hellish, inhumane, and uninhabitable" shelters for military soldiers and policemen.

Magdalo Reps. Gary Alejano and Francisco Ashley Acedillo, close allies of the President, protested the "squatter treatment" accorded the men in uniform.

Alejano said the soldiers and policemen defied the order to occupy the multibillion-worth of hellish units even if the National Housing Authority threatened to revoke the awarded housing units if they continued to refuse to occupy the shelters.

"The multibillion, substandard housing units do not have access to social services, transportation, resulting in a burdensome life and a hellish residential environment for the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police personnel and their families," Alejano said.

"But the soldiers and cops are being forced to occupy the multibillion substandard units or the awarded units would be revoked. Is that how you treat the soldiers and cops who risk their lives for all of us?" Alejano said.

In an interview with The Standard, Alejano said the Magdalo lawmakers did ocular inspections and found that substandard design and construction of the units were the same in Baras, Rizal; Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon; Zamboanga; Bacolod; and Bulacan, with each province supposed to house 10,000 units.

He cited the case in Rizal where there were 2,000 units constructed but only 180 turned up to accept and occupy the units. There were 140 from the military and 40 from the PNP.

The same low occupancy rate was noted in other provinces, Alejano said.

"The communities where our military soldiers and policemen are being relocated did not have access to transportation, public markets, schools, hospitals and churches," Alejano lamented. "The areas are so isolated, the families felt they were not secure."

"The reason for the very low occupancy rate at less than 10 percent is because the units are not livable. It is hellish to live there. The government would only make their lives miserable and our soldiers and policemen would not be able to carry out their jobs if they would worry about the families they leave behind. There is no drainage, no water, no power, not even a playground for children," Alejano said.

"While the men and women in uniform were deployed to areas risking their lives fighting for all of us, their wives and husbands are left behind queuing to fetch water," Alejano said.

"The substandard AFP and PNP housing units bastardized the sacrifices rendered by our gallant soldiers and policemen," Alejano said.

Alejano said the P18.6-billion project was started in 2012 by the NHA that was placed under the Office of the President.

"The NHA is mandated to implement the AFP-PNP Housing program, a flagship program of President Aquino that seeks to provide permanent housing and security of tenure to low-salaried military and police whose need for housing must be addressed immediately," Alejano said.

He said some 120,000 soldiers from the AFP and 150,000 from the PNP were supposed to be the target recipients of the housing projects.

"Of the 67,000 units constructed and completed in phases one and two of the four phases, less than 6,700 soldiers and police opted to occupy the houses because of the hellish residential environment. All the rest are vacant and fast deteriorating. Some P18.6 billion in public

OFF:

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funds all going to waste," Alejano told The Standard.

"The foundation and walls [of the housing units] were not completely filled in with cement, the septic tank easily unearthed because of the thinness of the concrete cover and other pertinent issues related to poor construction," according to Alejano.

"The men and women of AFP and PNP deserve better housing conditions given their commitment, dedication and loyalty to protect and defend the Filipino people from harm," according to Acedillo.

The lawmaker-allies filed House Resolution 2466 urging Congress to investigate the National Housing Authority as to where it brought the P18.6-billion budget for Aquino's housing flagship program.

They said they were incensed but were not surprised to find that only less than 10 percent of the 67,000 soldiers and policemen who were awarded the housing units chose to occupy the uninhabitable and substandard houses.

Alejano described the housing units as "bahay kalapati," or pigeon coops, where there is no proper ventilation and elbow room to move around the house.

He said there was a provision for an attic but that the loft was too low the occupant had to bow low to get to move around the attic. The unit has

a floor area of only 22 square meters and is made of light materials.

"Worse, the units are not equipped with water and power amenities," Alejano lamented.

"As guardians of peace and protectors of democracy, the provision of decent housing is a small price to pay for the freedom we currently enjoy," Acedillo said.

Alejano said the 22-sq. m. substandard units are being paid for by the soldiers and police for P150,000 to P200,000 at P150 to P200 in monthly amortization, payable over 30 years.

Alejano said the NHA has failed to consult the end-users considering that the soldiers and policemen can easily afford even five units with monthly amortization of P1,000.

"The NHA obviously failed to consult our soldiers and policemen being the end-users because they were being treated like informal settlers who needed subsidy and preferably be provided with free housing. But these men and women in uniform are salaried state enforcers who deserve to be treated with respect and provided with decent housing that they can easily afford," Alejano said.

The AFP top brass informed the Magdalo lawmakers that the transfer to the completed units was hampered by the soldiers still assigned to the

field and have yet to find time to relocate their families.

The soldiers, the AFP leadership said, also needed some money to improve on their units particularly in making sure the provisions for power and water were fixed.

Alejano demanded that the NHA identify the developers that constructed the multibillion substandard housing units.

Alejano said they have raised their concerns with the NHA in October but that the agency has yet to give proper answers to their queries.

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Task Force Davao foils terror attack

By ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

DAVAO CITY – Members of the Task Force Davao (TFD) foiled what could have been a bombing incident in this city when they were able to intercept a man who had two improvised explosive devices (IEDs), a hand grenade, and other paraphernalia in his bag, at a checkpoint in Barangay Sirawan, Toril, Davao City Friday night.

An initial report said that while a squad of TFD was conducting a checkpoint, suspect Roy Bulat-ag Moreno, 22, and a resident of Sinsuat St., Kidapawan

City, was stopped and searched.

Authorities found two IEDs, a hand grenade and other bomb paraphernalia in his bag.

Moreno was immediately placed under arrest and is now undergoing investigation.

Authorities here are also looking into the background of the suspect, the reason why he was carrying the explosives, to which terrorist group he could

be working for.

Last Wednesday, TFD and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the whole region announced that they would be on high alert to ensure the safety and security of the residents in the area during the observance of Lenten season.

Part of the high alert status meant the tightening of checkpoints in places of entry into the region and city.

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Hukbong Katihan, saksi sa modernisasyon

NGAYONG umaga po, eksaktong 100 araw na lang ang natitira sa ating panunungkulan. Sa anibersaryo ng ating Hukbong Katihan, hindi ko maiwasang maalala ang nangyari nung unang beses akong humarap sa Sandatahang Lakas bilang Commander-in-Chief; sumagip po sa isip ko noon yung eksenang madalas makita sa telebisyon o pelikula, kung saan, dahil sa matinding kagipitan, may amang nagsasabi sa kanyang anak, "Pasensyaka na ha, hindi ko makakayanan."

Noong umpisa po, sa totoo lang: Sa dami ng problemang ipinamana sa atin, ilang beses sana natin itong nasabi sa Sandatahang Lakas. Pero sa Daang Matuwid, dahil sa ating pagbabayaranhan, ang dami nating nakayanan, at marami pa tayong makakayanan. Masasabi nga nating tumotoo tayo sa ating panata: Di hamak naman na mas maganda na ang kalagayan ng ating kasundaluhan.

Kayo po mismo rito sa Hukbong Katihan ang saksi sa modernisasyong nagaganap sa inyong hanay. Nabanggit na nga kanina ng ating Commanding General ang ilan sa naglalakihan at makabagong assets na nakuha ng Army sa pakikihakbang nito sa Daang Matuwid. Kayo nga mismo ang nakakaalam sa kung ano na ang kayang gawin ng ating Army sa mga panahong ito, dahil sa transpormasyong sama-sama nating itinulak. Abangan na lang po ninyo mula sa inyong mga pinuno at commanders ang iba pang makabuluhang kagamitang mapapasakamay ninyo sa nalalapit na panahon.

Hindi ko nga po ililista ang lahat, dahil may usapin ng national security sa pagbabahagi ng ganitong impormasyon. Ang puwede ko pong masabi: 68 big ticket projects, na nagkakahalagang P58.43 billion, ang atin nang naisakatuparan para sa buong AFP. 26 na proyekto po diyan o katumbas ng P7.79 bilyon ang napunta para sa pagpapalakas sa kakayahan, kaalaman, at kahandaan ng ating Hukbong Katihan. Ipunto ko lang: Itong AFP Modernization, hindi lang iyan lagpas-lagpas sa ina-



Talumpati ng Kagalang-galang Benigno S. Aquino III Pangulo ng Pilipinas sa ika-119 na anibersaryo ng Philippine Army (Inihayag sa Fort Bonifacio, Lungsod Taguig, noong ika-22 ng Marso 2016), - Ed

sahan nating magagawa sa loob ng arim na taon; lagpas-lagpas din iyan sa talagang nagawa ng tatlong administrasyong nauna sa atin.

Kasabay niyan, para sa hinaharap, nagpapatupad na rin tayo ng Army Transformation Roadmap 2010-2028 upang lalong mapalakas ang kultura ng epektibo at mabuting pamamahala sa inyong hanay. Bukod sa modernisasyon sa inyong kakayahan, nariyan din ang iba't ibang inisyatiba natin para talagang mapangalagaan ang kapakanan ninyong mga nag-aaruga sa sambayanan. Halimbawa: Higit sa 61,000 units na ang nakumpleto sa ilalim ng ating AFP-PNP Housing Program, at kasama ang Hukbong Katihan sa mga nakikinabang sa programang ito.

Nariyan din po ang livelihood programs na ipinapatupad para sa ating kasundaluhan, aktibo man o retirado, sa Fort Magsaysay sa Nueva Ecija, Camp Kibaritan sa Bukidnon, at Camp Peralta sa Capiz. Para po sa Army, ang banggit sa atin, nagsagawa na rin tayo ng 13,903 livelihood at 2,552 vocational trainings para sa 145,629 Army personnel at kanilang dependents.

Nasa P2.35 billion naman ang narelease na para sa kasuotan at angkop na kagamitan ng bawat kasapi ng Army, samantalang P249.28 million na ang nailabas para sa inyong medical at dental equipment. May P346.28 million na ring naibigay bilang reimbursement sa pagpapaospital ng mga nasa Army at kanilang sinusupportahan, bukod pa sa ayuda para sa mga naulila ng mga kawal

nating binawian ng buhay sa pagtupad sa tungkulin.

Sa ating panunungkulan, nagkaroon ng umento ang monthly combat pay para sa mga kawal nating sumusuong sa mga operasyon. Ang subsistence allowance naman, tinaasan din natin para sa buong unipormadong sektor. Gaya naman ng nabanggit: Napirmahan na rin natin ang EO 201 na saklaw ang umento sa inyong monthly hazard pay, at miski para sa inyong provisional allowance at officers' allowance.

Ngayong taon din, bagaman hindi naisabatas ang SSL4, bahagi naman ng ating aprubadong budget ang pondong pagkukunan ng inyong provisional allowance, kaya naman tuluyan nating naitaas ito para sa ating kasundaluhan. Pero ulitin ko lang ang panawagan natin sa ating Kongreso: Sana magtutuloy-tuloy na ang SSL4 hanggang 2019, at magagawa lang iyan sa pagsasabatas ng isang risonableng panukalang magtataguyod sa kapakanan ng lahat ng kawani ng pamahalaan.

Sa Daang Matuwid, hindi lang natin natutukan ang kapakanan ng ating mga kawal, kundi naipatupad din natin ang malawakang reporma upang sabay-sabay na tugunan ang pangangailangan ng ating mga Boss. Halimbawa na lang: Nitong nakaraang linggo, lumabas ang ulat ng NEDA na naabot natin ang record low pagdating sa poverty incidence sa buong bansa simula noong 2009. Kasabay niyan, naitala rin sa ilalim ng ating administrasyon ang pinakamababang unemployment rate sa loob ng isang dekada. Ayon naman sa fourth quarter 2015 survey ng SWS: Sa atin din narehistro ang pinakamababang annual average hunger rate sa loob ng 11 taon.

Isarin sa pinakamatingkad na halimbawa ng nakamit natin sa Daang Matuwid ang pagpapalakas natin sa ating Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, na mula sa dinatnang higit 786,000 na kabahayan ay napalawak natin para suportahan ang 4.4 milyong kabahayan sa kasalukuyan. Ngayong taon, sa wakas, matatapos

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na natin ang target na 4.6 milyong kabahayang benepisyaryo. Kakabit ng mga pagsisikap natin sa pagtugon sa kahirapan ang magandang balita na higit 7.7 milyong kababayan natin ang tuluyan nang naitawid sa poverty line.

Sa imprastruktura naman: Naipagawa na natin at naisaayos ang mahigit 18,500 kilometro na national roads at 107,000 lineal meters na mga tulay. Kasama na po ryan ang dinayo natin kahapon lang na Basilan Circumferential Road, na inabot ng 16 taon para maisakongkreto. Dahil sa ginawang hatid ng ganitong imprastruktura, lalong mapapalapit ang mga puso at isipan ng taumbayan sa pamahalaan at maging sa inyo. Dahil tangan naman ninyo ang simpatya ng karaniwang Pilipino, mas mahahadlangan ang masasamang balak ng mga halang na elemento.

Mga kasama, hayaan ninyong bigyan ko ng diin: Nagawa natin ang lahat ng ito nang hindi nagpapataw ng karagdagang pabigat sa ating mga kababayan. Sa totoo lang, nabigyang daan ang kaunlaran da-

hil sa pakikibalik ninyo at dahil ginawa natin ang tama. Tunay nga ng makakamit lang ang katiwasayan at positibong transpormasyon, kung merong kaayusan at estabilidad. Maliwanag po: Dahil ginagampanan ninyo ang inyong mandato, dahil tumotoo kayo sa motto na "Serving the People, Securing the Land," talaga namang ang layo na ng ating narating.

Sa ating Hukbong Katihan, at maging sa ating buong Sandatahang Lakas, 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." Pero ito rin ang mismong sangkap na kung gagamitin para isulong ang tama at makatarungan ay maghahatid sa atin sa isang mas maganda, mas patas, mas tahimik na kinabukasang maipapamana sa susunod na salinlahi. Kaya naman, sa paparating na halalan, malinaw ang atas sa atin ng sambayanan: Manatili sa kanilang parig, huwag makihalo sa pulitika, at sigu-

ruhing mananaig ang nagkakaisang tinig ng bayang tumatahak sa landas ng demokrasya.

Sa pagtupad naman ninyo sa inyong mandato, nariyan ang mga hepe ninyo sa serbisyo, sa pangunahin ni DND Secretary Volts Gazmin, na matagal nang itinutulak ang modernisasyon ng ating Army, ang ating AFP Chief of Staff na si Gen. Hernando Iriberrri, ang ating Commanding General na si Eduardo Año, at inyong nagkakaisang liderato, na buong paninindigan kayong gagabayan sa bawat sandali ng paglilingkod ninyo sa serbisyo.

Ngayong narito tayo sa Fort Bonifacio, hindi ko maiwasang maging personal dahil nag-full circle na po tayo. Alam niyo po, nung batangbata ako, at pihadong matatandaan ng mga kahenerasyon namin ito: May tv series na ang pamagat ay "Combat." Dahil dito, masasabi kong ginusto kong maging sundalo pagdating ng panahon. Wala pang Playstation noon, kaya ang laro namin, cowboys at indians saka baril-barilan.

TO BE CONTINUED

27 March 2016



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Davao City: The Philippine Army's 'success story'

THE DEFENSE WATCH

Paul's Alarm



By Paul Gutierrez

BAGO ang lahat, nag-papasalamat tayo sa Panginoon dahil sa kanyang gabay at "pag-aalaga," nakalabas na sa ospital ang aking panganay na kapatid.

Salamat din siyempre sa kanyang asawa, kay Ate Auring, at sa kanyang mga anak sa kanilang patuloy na pag-aaruga sa kanya bagaman nga talagang "pasaway" ang kapatid kong ito.

And speaking of "gratitude," we commend the Philippine Army for its continued commitment to its "mot-to" of "protecting the people and securing the land" against all threats to our national security and our way of life.

On this, their 119th anniversary, the Philippine Army truly has many outstanding accomplishments to look back to and to be proud of.

Although founded formally on December 21, 1935, with the signing of Commonwealth Act No. 1, the Philippine Army, correctly, traces its roots back to March 22, 1897, when the creation of our 'Revolutionary Army' under the infamous 'Tejeros Convention' were among the attendees' "other order of business."

Topping the agenda

that day, of course, was the usurpation of the Katipunan leadership under Gat Andres Bonifacio by the "Ilustrado" faction headed by Emilio Aguinaldo and the Bonifacio brothers' subsequent murder.

(His wife, Gregoria, was also probably the first recorded rape victim and Bonifacio's death the first official record of political assassination undertaken in the name of personal and factional interests. Two years later, on June 5, 1899, 'Kabitismo' would again triumph against 'Patriotismo' with the murder of Gen. Antonio Luna also by Aguinaldo's group in Cabanatuan.)

Anyway, despite the scandalous and embarrassing manner by which the Philippine Army was founded, we pay tribute to the gallant stand it has made in resisting Spanish colonialism, US Imperialism and Japanese Imperialism back in those days.

We also pay tribute to the commitment it continues to show and the sacrifices made by our soldiers in defending our "democracy" despite its truly being rotten from the inside, exploitative in practice and exclusive only to the elite.

I am writing this piece by the way, when

the "other claimant" to our revolutionary past and traditions, the New People's Army (NPA) is set to celebrate its own 47th anniversary this March 29.

But frankly though, those 'Nice People Around' would have not much to crow about and celebrate after more than four decades of armed struggle.

Indeed, in the last two years, setbacks and defeats of the NPA has been piling up on top of each other, "courtesy" of course, of the Philippine Army.

In January 2014, the military captured Tirso 'Ka Bart' Alcantara, the most able NPA military leader that yours truly has ever met. This was followed by the rounding up of almost the entire CPP-NPA leadership in Southern Tagalog and the Bicol region that resulted to Southern Luzon losing its then premier title as the "bastion" of communist power in the country.

But even as the military is putting the "final touch," so to speak, in making the entire Solcom area "peaceful and ready for further development" (PRFD), it is also implementing its own plan, to eliminate the "last bastion" of communist strength in the country, Eastern Mindanao.

(Yours truly reported extensively on this in my 6-part special report last December).

Last year too, then ISAFP chief and now Philippine Army com-

manding general and good friend, Lt. General Ed Año, made sure that the Philippine Army would have something to crow and brag about -- the capture of CPP chairman Benito Tiamzon and his wife, party secretary, Wilma, in Cebu on March 22, 2015.

At 'yung pumalit, si Edilberto Silva, nahulirag, talaga naman kapag "mamalasin," hehehe, ayy, huhuhu!

Ahead of this year's 'Army Day' celebration, yours truly is of the opinion that its most "significant accomplishment" in the area of its internal security operations (ISO) was the declaration last March 16, during the 'Araw ng Dabao, of the city as "PRFD."

This is a positive development "measured" in terms of blood spilled not only by the combatants but also, by those civilians caught in the cross-fire all these years and one that I speculate would send a "shock-wave" of fear, dismay and disillusionment to the remaining CPP-NPA forces not only in Mindanao, but in the entire country as well.

Davao becoming PRFD should be considered the most significant accomplishment to date, of the Philippine Army in particular and, the Armed Forces (AFP) in general, considering that Davao City has always been a "hotbed" of insurgency in Mindanao dating back to the dying days of the US-Marcos dictatorship.

Of course, in this "success story," credit should also be given to Mayor Rodrigo 'Digong' Duterte, to be fair to the man.

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Davao...

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His critics leisurely accused Mayor Digong of either being himself a communist, a "friend" and a "supporter" of the CPP-NPA.

To a certain extent, there may be some truth on this but on the whole, Mayor Digong is just demonstrating what an astute and smart local politician he is -- he would do what is necessary in ensuring the safety of his fellow citizens and in the promotion of Davao

City's larger interests.

(In Davao City, it is an acknowledged "secret" that the NPA and Duterte has an "agreement" that there would be no shooting or killing in the city's business and commercial centers and other guerilla acts that would embarrass his leadership).

Ditto, the transformation of Davao City as "PRFD" is enough to convince everyone that at the end of the day, Mayor Digong is for the rule of law and for an end to lawlessness.

Again, to the Philippine Army, kudos!!! Mabuhay kayo!!!