

Army Vision: By 2038, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

03 May 2016

Tuesday

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

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



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Science and Technology
PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA)
Weather Forecasting Section, Weather Division
WFFC Bldg., B/R Road, Diliman, Quezon City 1100

24-Hour Weather Forecast and Extended Weather Outlook for Selected Cities:

ISSUED AT: 5:00 PM 02 MAY 2016

VALID BEGINNING: 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

CITIES	24-Hr Weather, Winds and Sea Condition Forecast <i>from 5PM today until 5PM tomorrow</i>			Extended Weather Outlook <i>Duration: 5PM until 5PM of the following day</i>				
		02 MAY		03 MAY	04 MAY	05 MAY	06 MAY	
Metro Manila		26°C 36°C	Light to Moderate East Munika Bay: Slight to Moderate		26°C 36°C		25°C 35°C	
Tuguegarao City		25°C 36°C	Moderate East-Southeast		26°C 37°C		25°C 36°C	
Laoag City		25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East-Southeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 33°C		24°C 33°C	
Baguio City		17°C 25°C	Light to Moderate East-Southeast		17°C 26°C		16°C 27°C	
SBMA (Olongapo) / Clark Zone (Angeles City)		25°C 35°C	Light to Moderate East Subic Bay: Slight to Moderate		25°C 35°C		24°C 36°C	
Tagaytay City		23°C 33°C	Light to Moderate East		22°C 33°C		23°C 32°C	
Lipa City		26°C 35°C	Light to Moderate East		25°C 35°C		24°C 34°C	
Legazpi City		26°C 34°C	Moderate East Coastal Waters: Moderate		27°C 34°C		26°C 34°C	
Puerto Princesa City		27°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		26°C 34°C		25°C 34°C	
Ibilo City / Bacolod City		27°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		26°C 34°C		25°C 34°C	
Metro Cebu		27°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		27°C 34°C		26°C 34°C	
Tacloban City		27°C 33°C	Moderate East Coastal Waters: Moderate		26°C 33°C		25°C 34°C	
Cagayan de Oro City		25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 34°C		24°C 33°C	
Valencia City		21°C 32°C	Light to Moderate East		20°C 32°C		19°C 33°C	
Metro Davao		26°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 34°C		25°C 34°C	
Zamboanga City		25°C 33°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		25°C 33°C		25°C 34°C	

LEGEND:

	Clear skies		Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Occasional Rains		Rains with Gusty Winds
	Partly Cloudy Skies		Cloudy skies with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Monsoon Rains Rains		Stormy
	Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers		Light Rains				

END OF FORECAST

PREPARED BY: GMQ

CHECKED BY: SEBJ

03 May 2016

INQUIRER

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Nuns all over PH pray for divine intervention

They call on voters to choose 'servant-leaders'

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo
Opinion Columnist

DESPERATELY seeking divine intervention, Catholic Church parishes, religious congregations and various groups are turning to prayer and fasting in the run-up to the national elections on May 9.

Given the muck, mud, slime and scum being thrown about during the election campaign, given the quality of candidates lording it over at the hustings and regaling crowds with pies in the sky and inappropriate jokes, these are desperate times indeed.

On May 1, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president, Socrates Villegas, issued a "pastoral appeal" titled "Prophets of Truth, Servants of Unity" that urged voters to "discern (their) choices."

"In this novena of rosaries and Masses, we claim from the Lord the gift of a godly electoral pro-

NUNS / AR

From page A1

cess," said the archbishop of Lingayen. "With the permission of the bishops, the Blessed Sacrament may be exposed for public adoration to beg the Lord for the gift of peaceful elections."

He told the candidates: "Pray! Pray not only to win but pray that the Lord may show by His signs His chosen leader for this nation, this nation who calls on Him at the crossroads of its national life."

But even before the CBCP pastoral appeal, some religious congregations have already been on their knees, fasting, praying novenas and the rosary for clean elections and so that voters would be discerning and choose exemplary servant-leaders.

At the Carmelite monastery in Lipa City, the contemplative nuns have been praying a novena to the Holy Spirit since April 30.

A novena is a series of nine-day prayers for a particular intention.

"We have been praying daily the four mysteries of the rosary specifically for the elections," said Mother Prioress Mary Grace Rillo, OCD.

At the Cubao diocese, women and men from religious congregations have composed common daily intercessory prayers and have used them since April 30, said Fr. Aris Sison, rector of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral.

'Veritas' prayer

Sr. Sonia Aldeguer of the Religious of the Sacred Heart said her community had incorporated the prayers for the elections into their community night prayers.

They use the "Veritas" prayer that came from the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines and its Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation task force.

Another prayer composed by one of the sisters ends with an intercession for administration candidates Mar Roxas and Leni Robredo.

Aldeguer said a religious congregation in Taguig City on Friday held a forum and mock elections among their mission partners. The winners, Aldeguer said, were Roxas and Robredo.

The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) are also among the congregations that have taken to prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the elections.

Sr. Asuncion Borromeo, superior of a Cubao community of FMMs, said they were also pray-

ing the Veritas prayer. The Veritas prayer asks the Holy Spirit for “divine wisdom and insight” for the Philippine electorate.

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters have been also praying and fasting, said Sr. Mary John Mananzan OSB, head of St. Scholastica’s College Institute of Women’s Studies.

No endorsement

In his statement, Archbishop Villegas said: “We encourage you to pray the rosary every day and receive Holy Communion starting May 1 until May 9. In this novena of rosaries and Masses, we claim from the Lord the gift of a godly electoral process. With the permission of the bishops, the Blessed Sacrament may be exposed for public adoration to beg the Lord for the gift of peaceful elections.”

According to him, the Catholic Church has never asked any political candidate to seek its endorsement.

“But the Catholic Church has always demanded of Catholic voters that they cast their votes as an act not only of citizenship but also as a public declaration of faith. We ask this most earnestly of all of you, Catholic brothers and sisters, in the forthcoming election,” Villegas said.

He noted that the desire for change was understandable because the people had suffered from “incompetence and indifference.”

“But this cannot take the form of supporting a candidate whose speech and actions, whose plans and projects show scant regard for the rights of all, who has openly declared indifference if not dislike and disregard for the Church specially her moral teachings,” Villegas said.

‘Servant-leaders’

In a two-page pastoral letter issued on Sunday, Bishop Buenaventura Pamadico of San Pablo City urged the Catholic faithful to vote “servant-leaders” and reject candidates belonging to political dynasties.

“This is the day when we can prove how we truly love our country by using our single vote as reflection of ourselves and our share in God’s saving actions,” Pamadico said.

“Selling your votes and buying votes by candidates degrade into mutual manipulation between voters and candidates,” he added. *With reports from Tina G. Santos and Romulo O. Ponte, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Bombing spree averted with discovery of 19 IEDs

KORONADAL CITY (PNA) - The military, police, and villagers prevented what could have been a bombing spree by suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels in South Cotabato with the discovery of 19 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in a raid at the insurgent group's lair on Monday dawn.

Acting on tips from villagers, combatants of the 27th Infantry Battalion seized the IEDs in a compound they raided in a remote village of Dumangas in T'boli, South Cotabato.

Lt. Colonel Benjamin Leander, 27th IB commander, said government troops recovered 19 IEDs in Sitio Tabudtud, Barangay New Dumangas believed to be owned by rebel group.

"Civilians informed us about the presence of armed men in a

safe house, we responded but the armed men were gone," Leander told reporters.

After a thorough search of the camp, government forces found the large cache of explosives.

Army and police bomb experts are now carefully transporting the IEDs to the military headquarters to prevent any accidental explosion.

Leander said the recovered IEDs were similar to landmines used by communist guerrillas in South Cotabato and nearby areas.

No one has claimed ownership of the explosives, but the military said these could be owned by communist rebels, who have been attacking government forces, construction companies and multi-national firms in South Cotabato.

More troops deployed after school bombings

SULTAN MASTURA, Maguindanao (PNA) - Police and military personnel have been deployed in this town, eight days before the national and local elections following a series of bomb attacks on seven public elementary schools to be used on election day.

Col. Earl Badio, commander of the Army's 603rd Infantry Brigade, said soldiers from the 37th Infantry Battalion backed by Provincial Public Safety Battalion have been deployed in Sultan Mastura's 13 villages to ensure that next Monday's election would be peaceful and orderly.

Unidentified men fired rifle grenades, lobbed hand grenades and strafed school buildings in seven barangays of Sultan Mastura, a town not included in the Commission on Elections as hot spot areas.

"We are securing the villages, our mandate is to ensure the areas are safe for voters to exercise their rights of suffrage," Badio told reporters.

On Wednesday dawn, unidentified armed men fired rifle grenades toward six elementary schools in Sultan Mastura that

the poll body will use as voting centers in the national and local elections.

Bombed were elementary schools in Barangays Tuka, Durungan, Darping, Simuay Sea shore, Tariken and Tariken Da Care Center.

The seventh school also attacked with grenades at about 10:00 p.m. was Tambo Elementary School in Barangay Tambo. The school building's ceiling and concrete walls were destroyed.

As in previous attacks, nobody was hurt in the Tambo Elementary School attack, according to Senior Inspector Wendylyn Banico, chief of the Sultan Mastura municipal police.

Badio said he has ordered the deployment of more troops as peacekeepers to ensure the election will push through.

Kurais Dali, Sultan Mastura election officer, said there was still no declaration of whether or not the town will be placed under Comelec control.

"Not all schools buildings were bombed, there are still other schools that can be used on election day," she said.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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NDFP sees end to insurgency under Duterte

LUCENA CITY—The chief peace negotiator of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is hopeful that the more than 40-year-old communist rebellion would end once Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte wins the presidential election next week.

“Because Mayor Duterte has consistently declared the necessity of peace dialogues with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People’s Army (NPA) and the NDFP to solve the long-standing armed conflict, peace talks under his presidency,

should he win and become the next President, will have a favorable basis to resume,” Luis Jalandoni said in an online interview on Sunday night.

“With the firm guidance of the principals of both sides, the two negotiating panels, following the stand of the leaderships of both sides, would have a good basis for finding ways and means to resume the peace talks, with a common respect and strong political will to move forward,” said Jalandoni, who is based in The Netherlands.

Duterte, the candidate of Par-

tido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban), had declared that he would reopen peace negotiations with NDFP should he be elected President.

In the INQUIRER’s “Agenda of the Next President” series published when the national campaign started in February, Duterte, Vice President Jejomar Binay and Sen. Grace Poe cited their positions on the peace negotiations with rebel groups.

Duterte, in that series, had said he would “reengage the peace process with rebel groups.”

The communist leadership

has been demanding the release of detained rebels and leaders before the resumption of the negotiation, citing the provisions of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) signed by both parties in 1995. The government, however, rejected this precondition.

Jalandoni hopes that under the prospect of a Duterte presidency, with the mutual willingness of both parties to reopen the peace negotiation, any misunderstanding could be resolved. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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Rebels free cop taken at Misamis 'checkpoint'

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—After more than a month of negotiations with church leaders and local government officials, communist rebels on Monday released one of several policemen they seized at road checkpoints they set up in three provinces in Mindanao.

SPO4 Rene Rombo, who was taken by a New People's Army (NPA) unit in Medina, Misamis Oriental, was freed in Barangay Banglay, Lagonglong town, also in the same province.

The turnover was facilitated by a certain Ka Maya of the NPA's Eastern Misamis Oriental and Northeastern Bukidnon Command and Gov. Yevgeny Vicente Emano, who received the policeman.

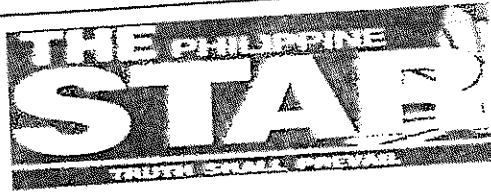
Rombo is the first to be released after third-party facilitators, headed by the Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) and local government officials, coordinated with the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the NPA.

Bishop Felixberto Calang of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente and PEPP coconvener said he was thankful for the coordination of all concerned parties, and to Emano, who heads the local crisis committee, for his active efforts to finalize the negotiations.

Earlier, the rebels had demanded a suspension of police and military operations for the safe passage of the NPA custodial team. The PNP and AFP responded by ordering a "stand down" of its forces in areas identified by the rebels as their custodial team's routes and venue of the turnover.

Today, the NPA is expected to turn over SPO1 Warren Coñales and PO3 Edwin Castor in Bukidnon and Privates First Class Glenn Austia and Diven Abion Tawide in one of the Agusan provinces, Calang said. *Jigger J. Jerusalem, Inquirer Mindanao*

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NPA frees lawman

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY
– A police officer seized last month by New People's Army (NPA) rebels was released in Lagonglong, Misamis Oriental yesterday morning.

Senior Police Officer 4 Rene Rombo was turned over by a certain *Kumander* Maya to Gov. Yevgeny Vincente Emanò in Barangay Banglay.

Rombo was among three police officers and two Army troopers seized by the rebels, who were conducting a road blockade along the Misamis-Bukidnon-Caraga Highway on April 1. – Gerry Lee Gorit

03 May 2016

The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: 1

Tribal leader killed by military, lumad claim

by John Paolo Bencito

MORE indigenous people are being killed as the Aquino administration comes to a close, a lumad rights group said Monday, citing the death of a tribal leader allegedly at the hands of the military in Surigao del Norte last week.

"The Aquino administration has no compassion for the people. They contin-

ue to kill the lumad...in the mountains that soldiers continue to terrorize," the group Kahugpungan sa mga Lumad-nong Organisasyon sa Caraga (Kasalo-Caraga) said in a statement.

Cristina Palabay of rights group Karapatan, said the administration had a grim track record.

"As of March 2016, there were 318 victims of extrajudicial killings under the

BS Aquino presidency. 89 of them are indigenous peoples," Palabay said. "There were 152 victims from Mindanao, and 64 from the Bicol region," she added.

The latest victim was identified as Datu Arnel Nayer, a vocal Mamanwa tribal leader who opposed a government plan to award an ancestral land claim by the Manobo tribe in 2013. He was found

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dead along the mountain road of Sitio Kalatingga, Brgy. Camam-onan, Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte on April 24.

The day before, Datu Arnel was among the six Mamanwa who went to their farms in Sitio Kalatingga to get some sweet potatoes. At around 1 p.m. however, as they rested, 10 soldiers in full combat gear about 20 meters from them opened fire, witnesses said.

Datu Arnel's other companions—Lino Mansumay, 25, Anthony Anrique 55, Esmoter Anrique, 55, Ronel Anrique, 27, and Binbin Patusa 26, survived because they were able to run. Mansumay suffered splinter wounds on his back of his left shoulder and arm.

Nayer's body was found Tuesday in a neighboring sitio, "buried in a small and shallow pit, covered by dirt and dead leaves," the group Kasalo-Caraga said.

In November 2015, the Mamanwa community in Sitio Kalatingga were evacuated due to aerial bombings of the 36th Infantry Battalion-Philippine Army and other augmentation forces from the 4th Infantry Division.

Palabay said that last Tuesday April 26, four farmers from Dagami-Isabela were illegally arrested and detained for allegedly occupying their land being claimed by a landlord, Manuel Tio of Surigao del Sur.

Police dispersed them violently, Palabay said. "Many of the victims were minors. The next day, farmers Marlon Matusalem, Rogelio Gameng, Dennis Gameng and Renato Gameng were released from detention but are facing charges of trespassing," she added.

A recent fact-finding mission found that members of the 30th and 29th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army were responsible for the strafing of civilians and the murder of Nayer, Palabay said.

Narsing Nayer, wife of the late datu, told the mission, "I want justice for my husband."

Kasalo-Caraga believes that the "plunder of ancestral lands" is the reason behind the lumad killings in the area.

"Gigaquit is targeted for coal mining by Timberwolves Resources Inc. This is the reason for the worsening militarization of our communities," the group said.

Liberal Party senatorial bet Leila de Lima expressed concern over the investigation of the conflict affecting lumad communities after militant groups voiced their disappointment over her failure to bring to justice the killers of three lumad leaders and the displacement of hundreds of families in Surigao del Sur.

09 May 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

AFP ready for poll mission

We take orders from Comelec – military

By **ELENA L. ABEN**
and **LESLIE ANN AQUINO**

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is making available its land, sea, and air assets to help the Commission on Elections (Comelec) transport vote-counting machines (VCMs) and other paraphernalia to be used in the coming May 9 national and local elections.

"We take orders from them (Comelec) as long as it is election and security-related movement," Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP public affairs office (PAO) chief, said.

"We will not do it on our own, (these missions) are always done with the presence of Comelec (representatives)," said Detoyato, adding that this is part of their role as deputized agency of the Comelec.

Detoyato said that the military is currently helping in the delivery of VCMs and other paraphernalia, particularly in far-flung areas not served by commercial and logistics companies.

He, however, emphasized that Comelec representatives are usually present in these mis-

AFP ready for...

sions that started late April.

The AFP-PAO chief went on to say that: "The Comelec is the lead agency and we, the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP), are the support (agencies)... we are always under their supervision."

Comelec Chairman Andres Bautista said the poll body is more prepared in conducting the May 9, 2016 elections compared to previous polls.

"I think if we will compare the preparations of Comelec in 2010 and 2013, I can say that we are more prepared now in this elections," he said in an interview at the Araullo High School in Manila, where the Final Testing and Sealing (FTS) of the VCMs was held.

The deployment of the VCMs in all regional hubs, he said, was already finished.

Bautista also expects the certification of the Technical Evaluation Committee for the automated election system to come within the week.

The FTS of the VCM, he said, is already being conducted nationwide to ensure that the machines are ready for the May 9 elections.

"We want to make sure that the machines are counting correctly... in the FTS it is the BEIs (Board of Election Inspectors) themselves that test the machines to see if it's really ready," Bautista said.

The Comelec in Palawan, meanwhile, requested the AFP for three Lockheed C-130 Hercules missions to bring election paraphernalia to isolated areas in Palawan and Pagasa Island.

These flights will take place on May 3 and May 8 with return flights scheduled on May 10 and May 11.

Candidates' responsibility

As this developed, Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle yesterday reminded candidates in the May 9 elections that being elected is a responsibility.

"In being candidates, you need to know that it is a blessing that comes with a responsibility. If you win, it means you must represent the people's dreams and common good," he said in his homily at the Manila Cathedral attended by on 17 out of the 66 national candidates invited to the Truthful, Responsible, Upright, Transparent, and Honest (TRUTH) covenant.

"You are blessed but you have a great responsibility. Blessings cannot come without responsibilities. They go hand-in-hand," added Tagle.

This is why His Eminence asked the candidates to know what the real needs of the people.

"The candidates also need to study what are the real needs of the people that voted for him. That will go beyond party politics because we are already talking about common good," Tagle said.

The cardinal also referred to the upcoming elections as a "blessing," saying in some countries there are still some people not allowed to vote.

"To us, it (voting) is just ordinary," Tagle said.

"We participate through our vote in forging the destiny of our country," said Tagle.

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“We participate by choosing people who will represent our dreams, our desires, our destiny... because the people we elect will be the representatives of the people,” he added.

TRUTH covenant

A mass was held before the candidates were asked to sign the TRUTH covenant, with Tagle as one of the witnesses.

However, only two out of the five presidential candidates attended the mass and signing of the TRUTH covenant – Vice President Jejomar Binay of the United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) and Mar Roxas of the Liberal Party (LP).

Among the six vice presidential bets, only Camarines Sur Rep. Leni Robredo sent a representative.

For senator, the candidates present were Manila Vice Mayor Isko Moreno, former Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, former MMDA chairman Francis Tolentino, Toots Ople, Rafael Alunan, Getulio Napanas, Senator Tito Sotto, Rey Langit, Martin Romualdez, Princess Jacel Kiram, Risa Hontiveros, Roman Romulo, Cresente Perez, and Diosdado Valeroso.

In the covenant, the candidates pledged not only to advocate for TRUTH in the May polls but also to support and promote the right of every Filipino, among others.

“We pledge to strongly admonish our relatives, friends, followers and supporters to desist from using violence, deceit, fraud and other unfair and dishonest practices,” read the covenant.

The Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting and the Comelec witnessed the covenant signing.

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AFP ready to provide military support, security for 2016 polls

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is ready to provide the much-needed muscles in transporting and securing election paraphernalia to far-flung areas.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP-public affairs officer, said that the AFP, as deputized by the Commission on Elections, can assist in transporting and securing Comelec paraphernalia.

"We are ready to support the needs of the Comelec to include transport and security of VCM (vote counting machines) and Comelec officials doing official work," said Detoyato.

"As deputized by the Comelec, we take orders from the Comelec to all matters concerning the elections," he said.

Detoyato said that where commercial transport cannot reach, the military is ready to provide muscles to Comelec.

He cited an instance in 2010 when an Army soldier was killed while assisting in the transport of election paraphernalia in Rizal province.

"But we will not do it on our own, we are always under the supervision of the Comelec," Detoyato said.

In some far-flung areas, Detoyato said that the military is tapped to secure some VCMs.

Detoyato stressed that the AFP is actively coordinating with the Philippine National Police (PNP) to ensure peaceful and orderly polls on May 9.

The AFP set up a centralized command center in Camp Aguinaldo to ensure real-time information from all the major military units throughout the country.

Equipped with broadband global area network, the AFP election command center is capable of real-time video teleconferencing.

Detoyato said that the center allows AFP-General Headquarters to closely monitor security situation on the ground before, during and after the elections.

3 May 2016

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THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Security beefed up in La Union after terrorist-type bomb attack

By **ERWIN G. BELEO**

CAMP DIEGO SILANG, La Union — Security forces from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) were deployed in this province yesterday to beef up security for Monday's national and local elections, following a terrorist-type bomb attack in Agoo town last Saturday.

Senior Superintendent Angelito Dumangeng, La Union Police Provincial Office (PPO) director, confirmed yesterday that the bomb explosion that wounded six people in the convoy of La Union 2nd District Rep. Eufanio Eriguel during a campaign sortie for Vice President Jejomar Binay was a politically-motivated attack aimed at eliminating the congressman.

"Politics is the motive in this incident because the target is Congressman Eriguel," Dumangeng told the Manila Bulletin after welcoming scores of security

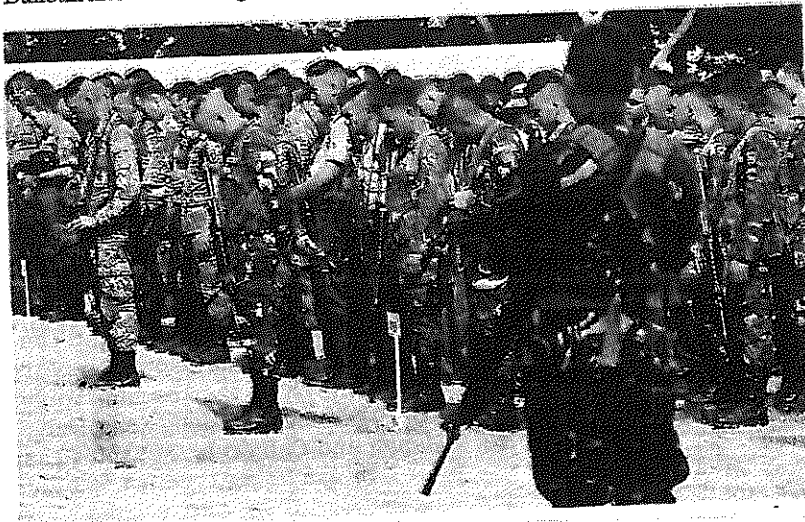
personnel from the AFP, PNP and PCG who arrived at this camp for the upcoming polls. Part of the augmenting force will be deployed in Agoo, one of the six areas in La Union under the "election watchlist."

"We've been very peaceful here in Agoo, but now there are evil people who want to sow terror in our town just for their political gain," said Rep. Eriguel, who stopped short of identifying his suspect in Saturday's attack.

Eriguel, a second-term, has opted to field his wife, Agoo Mayor Sandra Eriguel, as the next representative to Congress, instead of seeking a third and final term. Their daughter Stephanie is running for the mayoral post.

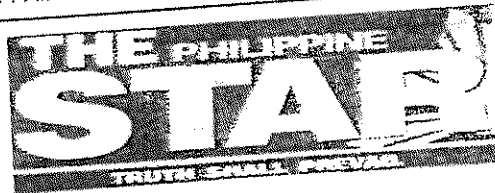
His family is a staunch supporter of Binay and was campaigning for the Vice President when a motorcycle-bomb was remotely detonated, wrecking his back-up van and wounding its four occupants — Eriguel's police escort Senior Police Officer 2 Jack Baguan, driver Jovanne Cacayuran, and supporters Samuel Ofiaza, and Anthony Casem.

A source from Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD) said remote-controlled bomb used in the attack is of the same make as those used by terrorists in Mindanao.



ELECTION DEPLOYMENT — Military, police, and coast guard personnel deployed to La Union to secure 'election hotspots' gather at Camp Diego Silang in San Fernando City, La Union, upon their arrival yesterday. (Erwin G. Beleo)

03 May 2016



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AFP brings service closer to urban communities

By ED AMOROSO

The social-community service arm of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) reserve command has put up its headquarters to bring the free services "Tulong Ligas" closer to urban communities in Laguna.

The headquarters was located along Narra road, Southridge, Barangay San Antonio, San Pedro City, Laguna.

More medical missions such as dental, medical check-up, surgery, livelihood programs and seminars are among the lined up services of the reserve command, according to Lt. Col. Francisco Ramos, deputy brigade commander of the 301st Technical and Administrative Service (TAS) Group command-Southern Luzon of the Philippine Army.

Other services are free haircut, circumcision, tree planting, free training for disaster responders to earthquake, flooding, fire and road accidents, Ramos said.

The concurrent Battalion



Lt. Col. Francisco Ramos and MSgt Mel Haller along with volunteers of the Guardian group and retired militarymen, and businessman Rogelio Bon Jr., president of the Canlubang Business Association pose as they inaugurated the first headquarters located along Barangay San Antonio, San Pedro City, Laguna recently. Photo by Ed Amoroso

commander of the Calabar region (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Rizal) said more service headquarters are to be built in urban areas of the various districts of the provinces of

the Calabar region.

There is ongoing talks with local government officials including barangays for the creation of the headquarters that can quickly help the military

assist the community through public service.

MSgt Mel Haller, Battalion Sergeant head and spokesperson for TAS service command, said more volunteers, individuals and retired military and members of the 'Guardian' company expressed their willingness to be a part of the community service arms of the Philippine Army.

"Individuals and other volunteers who want to join the military as reservists must be ready for the training program every weekend. They will undergo physical and mental tests and prepare themselves for community services," Haller said.

Businessman Rogelio Bon Jr., president of the Canlubang Business Association in Calamba City, said he was encouraged to join the advocacy of the military because of the genuine programs as well as to learn, experience and share his knowledge and effort to serve the community.

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Pledge. Military and police officials vow to work for a peaceful election at Camp Diego Silang in Carlatan, San Fernando City, La Union. **CHRISTINE JUNIO**

03 May 2016

INQUIRER

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MNLF worked for Indonesians' release

By Julie S. Alipala, *Inquirer Mindanao*

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Credit for the release of the 10 Indonesian hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf should go to Nur Misuari, founding chair of the Moro National Liberation Front, according to the MNLF itself.

Habib Mudjahab Hashim, MNLF Islamic Command Council chair, said that since the hostage crisis broke out on March 26, Misuari and his commanders had worked to secure the Indonesians' release.

The kidnap victims—Peter Tonson, Julian Philip, Alvian Elvis Peti, Mahmud, Surian Syah, Surianto, Wawan Saputria, Bayu Oktavianto, Reynaldi and Wendi Raknadian—were dropped off outside the home of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan II in Jolo town at noon on Sunday.

The Indonesians, all crew members of a tugboat delivering coal to the Philippines from Borneo, were seized by armed men in the waters of Sulu.

Hashim said the MNLF negotiations with the Abu Sayyaf were held clandestinely, and the military and police allowed it to happen because of the big chance all 10 Indonesian hostages would come out safely.

"Maas (Misuari) led the talks with elements of the Abu Sayyaf," he said.

Hashim said the Indonesians

were released for purely humanitarian reasons, and if money was involved, no amount was specified but some Abu Sayyaf members wanted to be reimbursed for expenses. A ransom figure of P50 million was mentioned, but this was denied by the authorities.

From an undisclosed place, the 10 Indonesians were supposed to be brought to Misuari's home in the mountains of Indonesian town.

But since Misuari is facing charges for allegedly ordering the 2013 Zamboanga siege, they decided to bring the Indonesians to the governor's house, Hashim said.

"We are grateful to the Armed Forces of the Philippines for giving way, even if they had operations against the Abu Sayyaf. We are also thankful to the gov-

ernor for opening his home and feeding the Indonesians," Hashim said.

Chief Supt. Miguel Antonio Jr., Western Mindanao police chief, said they did not know about any negotiations and learned only later about the release.

The former hostages were flown to Zamboanga where a private plane waited to take them to Indonesia, Antonio said.

"Negotiations? I think the Indonesians negotiated with them (Abu Sayyaf). We don't talk about ransom here," Antonio said.

Two Philippine Air Force Huey helicopters flew on Sunday afternoon from Jolo to Edwin Andrews Air Base in this city.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., Western Mindanao Command spokesperson, also denied any knowledge of the hostage release.

"Our attention has been focused on ongoing military operations," he said.

Antonio said the police were readying charges against the abductors of the 10 Indonesians.

"We are going to pursue cases against the Abu Sayyaf. I don't know if they (Indonesians) will file their own," he said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) on Monday said the government was doing all it could to obtain the immediate and safe release of all the 19 hostages still in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf, following the terror group's recent release of 10 Indonesian hostages.

"The Philippine government is pleased at the positive developments resulting in the safe release of 10 Indonesian nationals abducted by the Abu Sayyaf on March 26, 2016," the DFA

said in a statement on Monday.

At least 19 people remain in Abu Sayyaf hands in Mindanao—four of them Indonesian, four Malaysians, a Canadian, a Norwegian, a Dutch, a Chinese and seven Filipinos.

The statement said that "while intensified operations were continuing on the ground, the DFA is maintaining close coordination with the foreign governments concerned to ensure the safe return of all the remaining hostages."

Foreign Secretary Jose Almendras said the government was doing all it could to facilitate the release of the hostages.

"The DFA team has been on top of the situation since Day 1," Almendras said. "I can literally say that we have not been sleeping." *With a report from Estrella Torres*

Local: 5285. 5295

OFFICIAL

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INQUIRER

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Hostage tells of ordeal in hands of Abu Sayyaf

JAKARTA—An Indonesian sailor told on Monday how Islamic militants threatened to slit his throat during a terrifying kidnap ordeal, a day after he and nine other crew members were released.

The sailors were freed on Sunday in Sulu after more than a month in the hands of Abu Sayyaf militants, and flew back to Jakarta.

The Indonesians were among about 20 foreigners abducted in a recent Abu Sayyaf kidnapping spree, and their release came just days after the militants beheaded a Canadian hostage.

The sailors, who were taken hostage in late March from a tugboat transporting a coal barge, were reunited with their families on Monday after doctors confirmed they were in good health.

Crew member Julian Philip described how they were taken hostage by eight militants disguised in Philippine police uniforms, who boarded the tug from speedboats and tied up the sailors.

The barge was then abandoned, and the Indonesians were taken to an island and divided into two groups. They were moved every few days to avoid the military, which

has launched an assault against Abu Sayyaf.

"We were all stressed out because they frequently threatened to slit our throats," he told reporters after the 10 were reunited with their families at the foreign ministry.

However, Philip added the militants did not harm them and he thought that in reality "they did not want any of us to die as they would not get any money." He said he did not know whether a ransom was paid for their release.

"We were just put in a car and sent on our way and told to look for the governor's house," he said.

The sailors turned up at the house of the governor in Jolo, a mountainous and jungle-clad island that is an Abu Sayyaf stronghold.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi on Monday dodged questions about whether a ransom had been paid. The Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless ransom demands are met.

Authorities say the group is still holding at least 11 foreign hostages—four sailors from Indonesia and four others from Malaysia, a Canadian tourist, a Norwegian resort owner and a Dutch birdwatcher. **AFP**

3 May 2016



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Freed Indonesian sailors arrive home

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AFP) – Ten Indonesian sailors held hostage by Abu Sayyaf Islamic militants returned home Sunday after being freed in the southern Philippines, less than a week after the gunmen beheaded a Canadian captive.

About five weeks after being abducted, the 10 tugboat crew turned up outside the house of the provincial governor on the remote Philippine island of Jolo.

They flew back to Jakarta later the same day, arriving on a private plane at an air force base before being driven away in a minibus without speaking to reporters.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said they would undergo medical checks before being sent home.

"Our prayers have been answered," Rahmat Mansyur, brother of freed hostage Wawan Saputra, told AFP in Indonesia's South Sulawesi province.

"A few days ago when the kidnappers beheaded a hostage we were very worried, but now we heard he is safe we feel so blessed."

Officials did not say if any ransom was paid

for the 10 Indonesians. Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless a ransom is paid.

There has been a recent upsurge of kidnappings in the strife-torn southern Philippines, and the Indonesians' release came just six days after Abu Sayyaf beheaded Canadian tourist John Ridsdel, for whom they had demanded a \$21 million ransom.

Authorities said the group is still holding at least 11 foreign hostages – four sailors from Indonesia and four others from Malaysia, a Canadian tourist, a Norwegian resort owner and a Dutch birdwatcher.

'HOPE AND PRAY'

Provincial governor Abdusakur Tan Jnr on Jolo hailed the "good news" of the men's recovery after they were brought to his home by unidentified men during a heavy midday downpour.

On learning who they were, the politician's guards let them in and they were fed before being turned over to the police.

"We hope and pray that the others may also walk freely away from their captors," Tan said.

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AFP not aware of ransom payment to Abu Sayyaf

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces is not aware of any negotiation or ransom paid to secure the freedom of 10 Indonesian tugboat crewmen who were released last Sunday by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu after more than a month in captivity.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the military establishment has been "fully focused" on the conduct of search and rescue operations for Abu Sayyaf kidnap victims in the past weeks.

"We have devoted full attention to the rescue of the victims and the decimation of the kidnap-for-ransom group in the island," he said.

Reports said the owner of the tugboat Brahma paid P50 million for the release of the 10 crewmen who were seized on March off Tawi-Tawi.

"We are not aware of any ransom payments or negotiations to that effect. We are not also aware of the actual circumstances of their release," said Padilla, referring to the Indonesian captives who are

now back in Indonesia.

The victims were brought to the residence of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan Jr. in Jolo town on Sunday afternoon. Military helicopters were later dispatched to transport the victims from Sulu to Zamboanga City.

Padilla reiterated the government's appeal to all parties not to give in to the ransom demand of the Abu Sayyaf. "The payment of ransom, besides being against the government's policy of no ransom and no negotiation with criminal and terrorist groups, will only encourage further activities of the same nature," he said.

Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said the command is not also aware of negotiations or ransom payment.

He said the military learned of the release from local government officials when they requested military aircraft to transport the victims to Zamboanga City. He said the victims were turned over to the PNP's Anti-Kidnapping Group upon arrival in Zamboanga City.

President Aquino reiterated

that the full force of the law would be brought down on groups that answer only to force and violence.

The President, in an interview after his meeting with Iglesia Ni Cristo Executive Minister Eduardo Manalo in Quezon City, said the Abu Sayyaf had long caused trouble and it is high time to end the problem of the Abu Sayyaf.

The Abu Sayyaf is holding dozens more kidnap victims in Sulu, including four Indonesian and four Malaysian tugboat crew members who were abducted in separate incidents off Tawi-Tawi last month, a Canadian, a Norwegian, a Filipino woman, a Chinese, and a Dutch.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it is continuously working for the safe release of all foreign captives.

The release of the Indonesians came a week after the Abu Sayyaf beheaded Canadian John Ridsdel after the government failed to pay the P300-million ransom the group demanded.

– With Jocelyn Montemayor and Ashzel Hachero

03 May 2016



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Abus threatened to slit our throats—Indonesian hostage



Home Indonesian sailors, who were taken hostage by Abu Sayyaf Islamic militants in the Philippines, get off a plane upon their arrival at Halim

JAKARTA — An Indonesian sailor yesterday disclosed how the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf threatened to slit his throat during a terrifying kidnap ordeal, a day after he and nine other crew members were released.

The sailors were freed last Sunday in Jolo, Sulu, after more than a month in the hands of the militants, and flew back to Jakarta.

The Indonesians were among about 20 foreigners abducted in a recent Abu Sayyaf kidnapping spree, and their release came just days after the bandit group beheaded a Canadian hostage.

Abus threatened to slit our throats — Indonesian hostage

From page 1

The sailors, who were taken hostage in late March from a tugboat transporting a coal barge, were reunited with their families yesterday after doctors confirmed they were in good health.

Crew member Julian Philip described how they were taken hostage by eight militants disguised in police uniforms, who boarded the tug from speedboats and tied up the sailors.

The barge was then abandoned, and the Indonesians were taken to an island and divided into two groups. They were moved every few days to avoid the military, which has launched an assault against the Abu Sayyaf.

"We were all stressed out because they frequently threatened to slit our throats," he told reporters after the 10 were reunited with their families

at the foreign ministry.

But Philip added the militants did not harm them and he thought that in reality "they did not want any of us to die as they would not get any money."

He said he did not know whether a ransom was paid for their release.

"We were just put in a car and sent on our way and told to look for the governor's house," he said.

The sailors turned up at the house of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan on the remote island of Jolo that is an Abu Sayyaf stronghold.

Mum on ransom

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi yesterday dodged questions about whether a ransom had been paid. The Abu Sayyaf does not normally free hostages unless ransom demands are met.

Authorities say the group is still holding at least 11 foreign hostages — four sailors from Indonesia and four others from

Malaysia, a Canadian tourist, a Norwegian resort owner and a Dutch birdwatcher.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) also distanced itself from the alleged P50 million ransom.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of the AFP-Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the military has nothing to do with the reported ransom payment, stressing they are focused on the rescue operations.

"We are focused on the operations to rescue the kidnap victims, we don't know anything about that," he said.

"We stick to the government's no-ransom policy... we have been very vocal about that," the military official added.

Tan, however, admitted that there were Indonesians monitored in the area before the release.

"There were Indonesians

monitored in the area but we did not exert effort (for that) because our main focus is the rescue operations," he said.

Tan vowed relentless military operations against the terrorist Abu Sayyaf both in Basilan and Sulu provinces.

"We will continue to apply pressure in the operations," Tan said.

The Philippine government, for its part, said it is pleased with the safe release of 10 Indonesian sailors as it assured foreign governments that it continues to work for the freedom of their nationals still being held by the militants.

"While intensified operations continue on the ground, the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) maintains close coordination with concerned foreign governments in ensuring the safe return of all the remaining hostages," a Foreign Affairs statement said.

Mario J. Mallari, AFP and PNA

03 May 2016



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Gov't vows to pursue, punish Abu Sayyaf

By GENALYN D. KABILING

In a determined bid to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), President Aquino on Monday declared that the government would pursue without letup these lawless elements following the release of Indonesian captives in Sulu.

The President said the ASG has been causing trouble in the country long enough and must now face the full force of the law for their atrocities.

"I repeat that in our administration, we have talked to those who believe in the power of dialogue. But for those who chose the language of force or violence, we must show the full force or might of the State," the President said in Filipino following his visit to the Iglesia Ni Cristo headquarters in Quezon City.

"I am confident that our security sector, the military and police, will not stop to bring an end to the Abu Sayyaf problem," he added.

The President made the remarks after the ASG released 10 Indonesian sailors in Jolo, Sulu after five weeks in captivity.

The Indonesians were turned over to local officials of Sulu following talks for the safe

release of the hostages. The crew members were abducted by the bandits while sailing from Jakarta to Batangas last March 26.

Meantime, the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday assured that it will maintain close coordination with concerned foreign governments in ensuring the safe return of all the remaining hostages being held by the ASG bandits.

The Abu Sayyaf still holds four Indonesian crew members of another tugboat seized on April 1 in the waters off Semporna, Sabah and brought to Sulu.

Also being held hostage by the terrorist group are the three remaining Samal tourists who were kidnapped along with the beheaded Canadian businessman John Ridsdel - Canadian Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, and a Filipino woman, Teresita Flor. Other identified hostages

were a Dutch national, four Malaysians, a Chinese national and six Filipinos. (with a report from Roy C. Mabasa)

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SOUTH CHINA SEA WATCH: SCARBOROUGH SHOAL AS A RED LINE

BEING so close to the main Philippine island of Luzon, the Scarborough Shoal is a particularly sensitive piece of real estate.

The uninhabited coral reef was exploited both Filipino and Chinese fishermen, and was used as a bombing range by the United States Air Force until Washington closed bases in the Philippines in 1991. In 2012 Chinese vessels seized the shoal, following a tense standoff with Filipino ships.

The *South China Morning Post* reported, citing an anonymous military source, that Beijing will start reclamation work on the shoal later this year and may add an airstrip to extend the air force's reach. Transforming the shoal into another military outpost so close to Manila and the busy Luzon Strait, which connects the South China Sea with the Pacific Ocean, would be the biggest challenge yet for the Philippines and its ally, the US.

China did not confirm nor deny the report.

The Philippines has contested China's vast claims in the South China Sea at a United Nations tribunal, which is expected to rule soon in what many believe will be an unfavorable outcome for Beijing. China has refused to take part in the proceedings, and there are worries whether it might respond by cementing its island holdings, or even expanding them by fortifying Scarborough, too.

Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines College of Law's Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, cited historical documents showing the US ceded the shoal to the Philippines as part of American administered territory at independence in 1946. This is evidence that the shoal is covered by the Mutual Defense Treaty, and thus, the US has an obligation to prevent it from being permanently controlled by China, he said.

CONTINUED ON A4

SCARBOROUGH SHOAL AS A RED LINE

CONTINUED FROM A1

The shoal, therefore, represents “a red line” to the US and its allies, he said.

China says Huangyan Island—Chinese for Scarborough—appears on maps as Chinese territory starting in 1935. Last week the new US Air Force contingent from Luzon flew sorties near Scarborough, drawing a mild rebuke from China.

The Wall Street Journal quoted US officials as saying that Navy ships canceled a freedom of navigation operation scheduled for April, in order to “lower the temperature” in the South China Sea.

US lawmakers want more naval operations

MEMBERS of the US Congress are urging the Obama administration to order more naval operations in the South China Sea.

“I don’t know why we are not doing it weekly, or monthly,” said Republican Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations

Committee, noting the US has about 60 percent of its naval vessels in the Pacific region.

Sen. Cory Gardner said sending US ships into the area every three months “is simply insufficient to send a strong message to China.”

Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said such operations will take place regularly.

Blinken agreed with Sen. Marco Rubio that China’s objective was control of the entire South China Sea. Blinken said China was

China’s ‘consensus’ with 3 Asean members questioned

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s statement that Beijing had reached a consensus with Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia and Lao PDR on the South China Sea has been met with some skepticism—and concern from other Asean members.

Cambodian government spokesman Phay Siphan said that no new agreement with China on the issue has been reached. Laos and Vietnam, which is also squabbling with China, issued a joint statement pledging to accelerate the settlement of disputes in line with international law. They also called for a binding Code of Conduct to govern disputes, something Beijing has been reluctant to conclude.

Singapore’s senior diplomat Ong Keng

“No matter how many and how frequently US ships come to the South China Sea, that would not change the fact that the islands and adjacent islands are China’s inherent territory.”—CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN COL. WU QIAN

Yong said Beijing may be trying to split the regional bloc.

“Having [the Chinese] foreign minister announce that two of non-claimant states, namely, Cambodia and Laos, have decided that they are not going to do this and that, seems to me like interfering in the domestic affairs of Asean,” said the former Asean secretary-general. China asked Singapore to clarify Ong’s comments. **AP**

3 May 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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WANG YI TALKS ABOUT CHINA'S FOUR-POINT CONSENSUS ON SOUTH CHINA SEA ISSUE WITH BRUNEI, CAMBODIA AND LAOS

VIENTIANE, April 23 (Xinhua) - On April 23, 2016, Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed at inquiry when meeting with journalists in Laos that, during my visits to Brunei, Cambodia and Laos, I have exchanged in-depth views with all parties on current situation of the South China Sea, and reached important consensus respectively. The consensus can be summarized as follows:

First, China and the three countries all agree that disputes over some Nansha islands and reefs are not an issue between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and should not affect China-ASEAN relations.

Second, China and the three



countries all agree that the right enjoyed by sovereign states to choose on their own ways to solve disputes in line with the international law should

be respected, and an imposition of unilateral will on others is opposed.

Third, China and the three countries also agree that disputes over territorial and maritime rights and interests should be resolved through dialogues and consultations by parties directly concerned under Article 4 of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

Fourth, China and the three countries believe that China and ASEAN countries are able to jointly maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea through cooperation. Countries outside the region should play a constructive role rather than the other way round.

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Balita
ANG NANGUNGUNANG PAHAYAGANG TAGALOG SA BANSÀ ₱8.00

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VERSUS TAIWAN NAMAN?

Isla sa Batanes, bantay-sarado vs illegal fishing

Ni Elena L. Aben

ITBAYAT, Batanes – Upang hindi maulit ang pagkordon ng mga dayuhan sa mga pangisdaan ng Pilipinas, gaya ng nangyari sa Panatag o Scarborough Shoal sa Zambales, itinirik ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang watawat ng bansa sa tuktok ng Hill 200 sa Mavulis Island sa Itbayat, Batanes, sa layuning igiit ang ating soberanya sa dulong hilaga ng bansa.

Kasama ang mga mangingisda, iba pang mga opisyal ng militar at lokal na pulisya, pinangunahan ni Northern Luzon

Command (NolCom) commander Lt. Gen. Romeo Tanalgo ang pagtitirik ng watawat ng Pilipinas nitong Sabado ng tanghali sa Mavulis Island, kasunod ng pag-awit ng “Lupang Hinirang” at pananalangin.

“Ang purpose ng pagtitirik ng ating bandila ay upang igiit ang ating soberanya, upang malaman ng lahat na bahagi ito ng ating bansa,” sabi ni Tanaldo, at idinagdag na iniwasang maulit ang nangyari sa Panatag Shoal, nang kinordon ng mga Chinese kaya hindi na makapangisda roon ang mga Pilipino.

“Determinado tayong protektahan

ang islang ito. Ito ay para sa ating mga mangingisda,” dagdag niya, at tiniyak sa mga taga-Batanes na tuluy-tuloy na magpapatrulya sa isla ang Philippine Navy (PN) at Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

Nauna rito, iniulat ng ilang mangingisda sa lugar na tinatakot at binabantaan sila ng mga mangingisdang Taiwanese, na nagsabing ang Mavulis ay bahagi ng exclusive economic zone (EEZ) ng Taiwan.

Ayon sa mga mangingisda, halos araw-araw nang eksena sa isla ang ilegal na pangisda roon ng mga banyaga, idinagdag na kahit ang endangered species na mga halaman ay tinatangay ng mga ito.

Kuwento ng mangingisdang si Cyrus Baluca, 52 anyos: “Dati ang mga illegal fishermen dito, mga Taiwanese, madali silang itaboy. Tutukan mo lang sila ng patpat ng kawayan, o kahoy, tatakbo na. Pero itong mga nakaraan na taon, hindi na sila naitataboy. Kami na ang hinahabol nila.”

Dagdag pa niya, hindi lamang sila basta nawawalan ng pagkakakitaan, kundi nasisisira rin ang coral reef sa isla dahil sa ilegal na pangisda ng mga dayuhan.

Sinabi naman ni Itbayat Mayor Reulle Ibañes na kung hindi aaksiyunan ang problema ay posibleng mangyari rin sa Batanes ang nangyayari ngayon sa West Philippine Sea, na agresibong inaangkin ng China ang ilang bahagi ng Spratlys.



BAHAGI NG PILIPINAS Nagtulung-tulong ang mga sundalo, pulis, mangingisda, at residente sa pagtitirik sa watawat ng Pilipinas sa tuktok ng Hill 200 sa Mavulis Island sa Itbayat, Batanes, upang bigyang-diin ang soberanya ng bansa sa islang nasa dulong hilaga ng Pilipinas.

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Military in all-out bid to save Abu hostages

By Florante S. Solmerin

THE military on Monday said it is hell-bent on rescuing all the remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf Group based in Sulu amid news that the employer of the 10 Indonesian sailors paid P50 million for their safe release on May 1.

Military spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla insisted the military was not aware of any ransom payment made by the Indonesian tugboat owner, saying that the state troopers are focused on freeing the kidnap victims.

"The [military] has been fully focused on the conduct of military operations in the area for the past couple of weeks. We have devoted full attention to the rescue of the victims and the decimation of the kidnap-for-ransom groups in the island. We are not aware of any ransom payments or negotiations to that effect. We are not also aware of the actual circumstances for their release," Padilla said.

The 10 Indonesians whom the ASG abducted recently off Tawi-Tawi were dropped off by unknown men Saturday night in front of the residence of Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan II.

Padilla said they expect concrete results from the ongoing military operations to rescue the kidnap victims.

"We do believe that the ongoing operations we have launched since the other week have a profound effect on the ability of these groups to conduct their activities at will. We assessed that we have made their world smaller and in due time we will come to a decisive engagement to force them to release the remaining hostages they current hold," Padilla said.

He also reiterated the government's no ransom policy and the military will adhere to it.

"We want to end this series of criminal acts. The payment of ransom, besides being against the government's policy, will only encourage further activities of the same nature," he explained.

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Bang the gong for Digong?



Ernesto M. Hilario

ABOUT TOWN

IF the latest surveys up to this point are accurate, it's all over but the shouting for Davao City Mayor Rodrigo R. Duterte in the presidential derby.

Picture him in your mind at the Luneta Grandstand at noon of June 30 wearing a crisp Barong Tagalog, his right hand upraised, his left hand resting on a Bible, and repeating the oath of office, with his family—Sara and the two boys, plus who else?—by his side. Then, he prefaces his inaugural speech with a loud, “*P_____na, magtago na kayong mga kriminal at mga magnanakaw sakaban ng bayan!*” or words to that effect.

What's wrong with this picture? That may happen, or it may not. After all, anything can take place in the last five days to Election Day, particularly if the other front-running candidates make full use of their money and political machinery to muscle their way to Malacañang.

But if Duterte makes it past Sen. Grace Poe, Vice President Jejomar C. Binay and Manuel A. Roxas II, he would achieve a first in Philippine political history: he would be the first city mayor to be catapulted to the highest elective position as chief executive and commander in chief of the armed forces.

Duterte's 33-percent rating in the latest voters' preference surveys, or an 11-percent lead over Poe, may be due largely to broad support for his core message, which is to wield an iron fist against crime, illegal drugs and corruption.

That core message of significantly reducing crime and corruption within six months has been hammered home by Duterte in sortie after sortie, even after his rivals had a headstart in the campaign, as it took him a while to make the decision to run.

While it is true that the police are making headway in the war against illegal drugs, they have been unable to stop or deter murder, rape, robbery and petty crimes, such as cell-phone snatching. The result is that many ordinary citizens feel unsafe and insecure out in the streets and even in their own homes.

At the same time, it appears that despite the Aquino administration's mantra of *daang matuwid* or straight path, corruption goes unabated from the highest to the lowest levels of the bureaucracy. Transparency International, the global civil-society organization leading the fight against corruption, ranked the Philippines 95th out of 186 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index for 2015, 10 notches lower than its rank in the previous year. It said the Philippines scored 35/100 in the latest survey, which covered 186 countries in 2015 and 175 countries in 2014.

We cannot overemphasize the fact that an unstable peace and order

If Duterte makes it past Sen. Grace Poe, Vice President Jejomar C. Binay and Manuel A. Roxas II, he would achieve a first in Philippine political history: he would be the first city mayor to be catapulted to the highest elective position as chief executive and commander in chief of the armed forces.

situation and pervasive corruption will set back efforts to sustain the momentum of economic growth needed to reduce poverty to manageable levels and extirpate one major cause of armed rebellion.

The promise to restore law and order, and curb corruption has overshadowed Duterte's advocacy of federalism, the basic idea of which is to decentralize governance and allow the various regions to exercise real autonomy. The federalism agenda has long been pushed by PDP Laban Chairman Emeritus and former Sen. Nene Pimentel. It is what distinguishes Duterte's platform from the rest of the pack, although this requires a constitutional amendment that could take time.

What also differentiates Duterte's platform from the others is his pledge to talk peace with the New People's Army (NPA), which has been waging an armed rebellion against the government for nearly five decades. Founding Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Chairman Jose Ma. Sison has even been quoted in news reports as saying he would consider returning to the country if Duterte becomes president and perhaps call a temporary cease-fire to resume the stalled peace talks.

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The prospect of a political solution to the communist rebellion is certainly welcome. But what could complicate things is Sison having raised the idea of a coalition government where presumably, the CPP/NPA/National Democratic Front would ask to be given a share of power under a Duterte administration.

Given the reality that NPA strength and political influence appear to have waned significantly since 1986, Sison's idea of a coalition government at this time seems rather far-fetched and unrealistic considering that the NPA has not reached the strategic stalemate stage where it has achieved parity in armed strength and can launch positional warfare against the Armed Forces of the Philippines instead of the hit-and-run guerrilla tactics it still uses since it began in 1969. It cannot demand concessions from the other side without giving something in return. A temporary cease-fire, while talks are under way, would be a sign of good faith on both sides.

But to go back to Duterte.

If Duterte wins by a wide margin over his nearest rival, that will not necessarily translate to a "peaceful" administration. The very fact that he is targeting criminals and the corrupt early on means that he will earn their enmity. The human-rights community, not only at home, but also abroad will be closely monitoring how the anticrime campaign proceeds, as it could very well open the floodgates to abuses and bring about, not law and order, but only the peace of the graveyard and genuine fear of repression of the freedoms guaranteed by our fundamental law.

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Reclamation at Scarborough Shoal?



Edgardo J. Angara

SINCE 2012, a steady rotation of two Chinese Coast Guard vessels has effectively blockaded the traditional fishing grounds of Filipino fishermen at the Scarborough Shoal to the west of Pangasinan. The patrol has intensified, as five more vessels were spotted there a few weeks ago, according to the Department of National Defense.

The *South China Morning Post* (SCMP)—a Hong Kong-based broadsheet just bought by Alibaba—recently quoted an anonymous source close to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy that Beijing plans to start reclamation work this year at the atoll. The move is reportedly a reaction to the increasing closeness of the United States and Philippine military and would most likely be accelerated once the Permanent Court of Arbitration makes a ruling on the ongoing disputes this June.

Reclaiming Scarborough Shoal—

known as Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc to Filipinos and Huangyan Island to the Chinese—is allegedly considered by Beijing a decisive step in China's endgame of gaining de facto control over the vital naval routes and immense natural resources of the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Beijing says the shoal falls within its nine-dash claim, asserting that Yuan Dynasty mariners were the first who discovered it in the 13th century and had exercised jurisdiction ever since.

That assertion has no basis at all. Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio and Dr. Jay Batongbacal of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, have pointed out that Chinese maps from the period do not even indicate the shoal and that the Chinese only started affixing a name to the geographic feature in 1983.

In truth, Bajo de Masinloc, later named Scarborough Shoal, has been historically associated with the Philippines, and has appeared in 17th-century European maps of Southeast Asia. Its precise location was determined during the 1792 Malaspinas Expedition, sponsored by the Spanish government. And by the 19th century, Spain already exercised jurisdiction over it and occupied it, conducting the first formal survey of the shoal in 1800.

That ownership was passed on to the Americans through the Treaty of Paris of 1898 and affirmed by the Treaty of Washington of 1900. Throughout the Commonwealth period, the US Coast Pilot Guides (US Coast and Geodetic Survey) reflected Scarborough Shoal in its navigation

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maps clearly within the Philippine sovereign domain and continued throughout since the Philippine regained independence in 1946. In 1963 the Philippine Navy even bombarded and dismantled a smuggler's base discovered on the shoal. Dr. Batongbacal argued strongly that no other government action could express sovereignty so completely and convincingly than said state action.

But in addition to the Philippines's historical title and actual possession, Scarborough Shoal clearly falls within our territory, it's being merely 124 nautical miles or 260 kilometers away from our shorelines. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea—of which China is a signatory—gives the riparian country the exclusive economic jurisdiction over 200 nautical miles from its baselines.

In the face of such incontrovertible facts, Beijing should exercise utmost restraint. Any reclamation would be a sharp stab at the hearts and stomachs of many Filipino fishermen and such brazen move could unleash widespread grassroots outrage.

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Nobody but Binay talks about national security



Cecilio T. Arillo
DATABASE

IT must be borne in mind that the paramount obligation of the government to draw up a cohesive national security strategy to ensure that the safety and security of the people and territory (air, land and sea) is of the highest priority in all circumstances.

Yet, none of the candidates seeking the highest office of the land is even talking about national security, a serious problem that has a correlation to the economic life of the nation, in particular, and its survival, in general, except Vice President Jejomar C. Binay and his running mate, Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan II, a highly decorated army colonel who played an important role in the 1986 Edsa uprising.

Consider the following:

1. The country today is riven by three types of continuing rebellions. First, the reformist rebel young officers in the armed services who are the most dangerous, having access to organic weaponry, other war materials, and who continue quietly to operate inside the government; Second, the Moro separatists in Mindanao; and third, the communist insurgents, who are separately and violently stalking the countryside and some urban centers, oftentimes manifesting themselves in terrorism, ambushes, political assassinations, banditry, kidnappings and revolutionary taxation.

2. Some government officials are loudly and shamelessly proclaiming in various local and international fora that they are fully committed to stifle insurgency and terrorism without realizing that the country is the only one today in Asia or probably throughout the Western World without a clearly-defined national security law of its own.

This is so because the Ramos administration on September 22, 1992, naively repealed the country's only national security law, Republic Act (RA) 1700, otherwise known as the Anti-subversion Law.

The repeal, in effect, decriminalized subversive organizations, created a security vacuum and saw the resurgence of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the expansion of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, the birth of the extremist Abu Sayyaf, and the intrusion of the dreaded Al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists.

What is left in our law books to suppress subversion and rebellion is the antiquated Revised Penal Code, which, in Article 147, penalizes subversive and rebellious acts for only six years in prison and imposes a fine not exceeding P1,000 (\$21) for founders, directors and presidents of associations totally or partially organized for the purpose of committing any of the crimes punishable under the Code.

The new Anti-Terrorism Law, or the Human Security Act (RA 9372), remains untested because of its serious flaw on the side of enforcement and prosecution of terrorist suspects.

3. The Philippines has now one of the highest number of armed rebels (the United States and the European Union classify them as terrorists): 15,000 Moro separatists in Mindanao (MILF, Abu Sayyaf and others) and 7,000 communist guerrillas operating elsewhere in the country.

They total 22,000 terrorists, making them one of the highest concentration of armed combatants in any part of the world, with their own flags, constitutions, territories, and armed forces, all in violation of the Constitution.

Their combined strength is the equivalent of 44 light infantry battalions or more than 50 percent of the Army's total strength of 81,000 officers and men.

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4. The police and military organizations are top heavy with identical multilayered command structures that are complex, confusing and expensive to maintain.

5. The government since 2001 had already spent more than P800 billion for these organizations with no end in sight to the deteriorating national security and public-safety situations.

6. An enormous foreign and domestic debt estimated at more than P5.9 trillion is a critical issue in national security and public safety because such a huge liability hinders economic growth, creates serious unemployment problems, worsens poverty and has the potential of triggering political and social upheavals.

It may be true that poverty does not turn poor people into instant terrorists, but a weak country, beset with lack of direction and unbridled corruption, is vulnerable to terrorism.

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7. The country is heavily dependent on Middle East oil. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), of which the Philippines is a founding member, commands strategic waterways, like the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, Lombok and Makassar, through which oil and trade to and from Japan and East Asian countries must move.

Philippine laws on combatting cybercrimes are inadequate. The E-Commerce Act has no equivalent for the protection of national security. The Data Privacy Act prohibits the government from eavesdropping on private electronic communications without a court order, yet private individuals can intrude into government web sites and invoke the right of information.

The National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), with the encouragement of Vice President Binay, is not idly and passively waiting for the situation to turn worse. After the demise of Executive Order 269 that created the Commission on Information and Communication Technology on June 23, 2011, persisted in its cybersecurity thrusts, by conducting the Forum on Cybersecurity Awareness and Collaboration (October 26, 2011); the Cybersecurity Forum (February 27, 2012); the Seminar Toward ICT Development and Cybersecurity Enhancement (June 6, 2012); and the Cybersecurity Enhancement Workshop (June 11, 2012). These are investments toward the establishment of the envisioned Cybersecurity Institute.

When the defunct CICT shut down, the NDCP's Cybersecurity Institute started to take off. With alumni who are well versed in cybersecurity, the NDCP has the potential to become, not just a national, but also a regional center of excellence in cybersecurity education, training and practice.

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

ONLINE NEWS

03 MAY 2016

BAYANIHAN IN BATANES II NOLCOM hoisted PH flag in Mavulis Island

03 May 2016 1 Comment #NLTROPA_Mavulisano.nolcom PHFlag



Camp Aquino, Tarlac City – The Northern Luzon Command in cooperation with Civil Society Organization Volunteers (CSOV) conducted a two (2) day Community Relation (COMREL) activity which started April 29-30 at Itbayat and Mavulis Island, Batanes.

The highlights of NOLCOM activity in Northern part is the placing of Philippine Flag pole followed with the Flag Raising Ceremony at the creek of Mavulis Island, Batanes which took place on the second day (April 30).

Mavulis Island is the farthest Island of Batanes located 40 nautical miles from (main island) Basco, Batanes, 20 nautical miles from Itbayat Island and 80 nautical miles from Taiwan.

In the message of Lieutenant General Romeo T Tanalgo AFP, Commander NOLCOM (CN) he expressed his advocacy in preserving our Maritime Territory.

"We placed and raised our Philippine Flag here Mavulis Island, the farthest island of Northern Luzon to mark our sovereignty over our maritime territory... this is our duty to protect and serve our nation".

The two (2) day Civic Action activity of NOLCOM formally started at Itbayat Central School (April 29) with a Medical and Dental mission, tree planting, gift giving of fishing equipments, dialogue to the populace on Maritime domain and awareness and distribution of school materials to the community of Itbayat Island.

Itbayat Island is one of the six municipalities of Batanes with almost 3000 population occupied in five (5) Barangays.

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The patriotic activity of NOLCOM and the stakeholder from Go Share and Black Pencil Project are one of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) IPSP Bayanihan program bridging the gap of peace and order and promoting the solidarity of the Filipino people for the National Maritime security.

Go Share and Black Pencil Project are non- political, non-sectarian organization that composed of doctors, lawyers and businessmen who has passion in helping the least fortunate in isolated places like Batanes.

Lieutenant General Tanalgo said, *"The people in Itbayat Island is worth dying for... you're been part of national security in protecting and preserving our maritime territory"*.

During the program for youths Patriotic Gifts were distributed to the Kids, Infants and Youths which includes Teaching Kits, 1000 pcs School bags & supplies for Day Care – High School, 1000 pcs Slippers, 1000 pcs Raincoats, 5 pcs Solar Panel Sets, 2 set Multimedia & Educational Set, 4 Computer Sets, and 500 pcs Soft Toys.

Meanwhile, Patriotic Gifts for the Elders were also distributed which includes 1000 pcs Raincoats, 1000 pcs Slippers, 1000 pcs Long Sleeves, 1000 pcs Flashlights with Batteries, Assorted Fishing Implement, Assorted Farming equipment, Life rings, Life jackets, Philippine Flags Generator Set and Solar Panels.

The Bayanihan activity was made possible thru the partnership of LGU Batanes, Go Share, Black Pencil Movement, Klasrum ng Pag-asa, Nautyloose Divers, 7th Marine Bde, CASH&1303DOD, 1CRG, SEG Batanes Det, NFNL, TOG2, 1AD, CHS and PCG.

PRE-BIDDING II DND sets Php38.5-M for Lot 2 of C-295M add'l integrated logistics project

By May 2, 2016 | Comment: AFP, and Headlines Prebidding



Camp Aguinaldo, Quezonn City– The Department of National Defense (DND) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have allocated Php38.5 million for Lot 2 of additional integrated logistics support project for its brand-new Airbus Military C-295M medium transport aircraft. Money will be sourced from the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

Lot 2 refers to the procurement of 74 line items of aircraft spares as additional integrated logistics support for the C-295M aircraft.

While Lot 1 involves the procurement of 47 line items of aircraft ground support equipment as additional integrated logistics support for the aircraft costing Php40.2 million.

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The guiding principles for this project shall be based on affordability and sustainability while conforming to the requirements of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) in furtherance of accomplishing its mission.

Bidders are required to deliver the items within 60 days from the contract effectivity.

They should also have completed within five years before the date of submission and receipt of bids, at least two contracts similar to the project.

Pre-bid conference is on May 4, 10 a.m. at the DND Special Bids and Awards Committee at DND Building, Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Contract for the three C-295M is worth Php5.3 billion.

PAF's Mactan-based 220th Airlift Wing is the unit tasked to operate and maintain the latter aircraft which is used for transport missions.

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