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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

06 May 2016

Friday

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

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BusinessMirror

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BusinessMirror

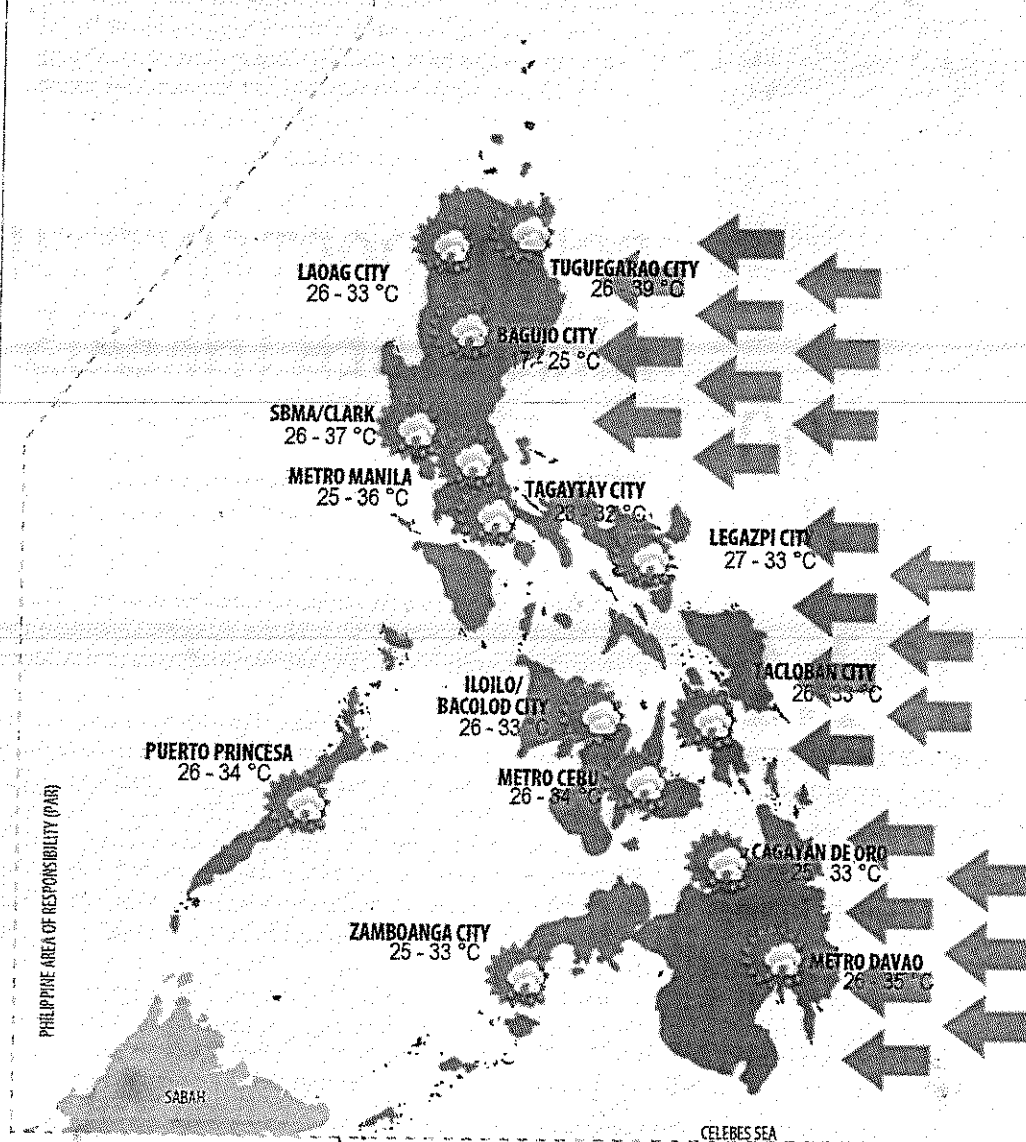
A broader look at today's business



TODAY'S WEATHER

MAY 06, 2016 | FRIDAY

EASTERLIES
AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION
OF THE COUNTRY
(MAY 3, 5:00 PM)



06 May 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Plunder raps vs Duterte

Trillanes: Smoking gun is COA report on 11,000 ghost workers

By Erika Sauler

DAVAO City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte kept 11,000 ghost employees in the city notorious for extrajudicial killings and summary executions, according to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

Four days before Election Day, Trillanes filed a plunder complaint in the Office of the Ombudsman against Duterte, a presidential candidate, over the alleged ghost employees who were allotted a budget of P708 million in 2014 for their salaries.

"I've unmasked him for who he really is," Trillanes, a vice presidential candidate, said in a press briefing at the Magdalo headquarters in Quezon City.

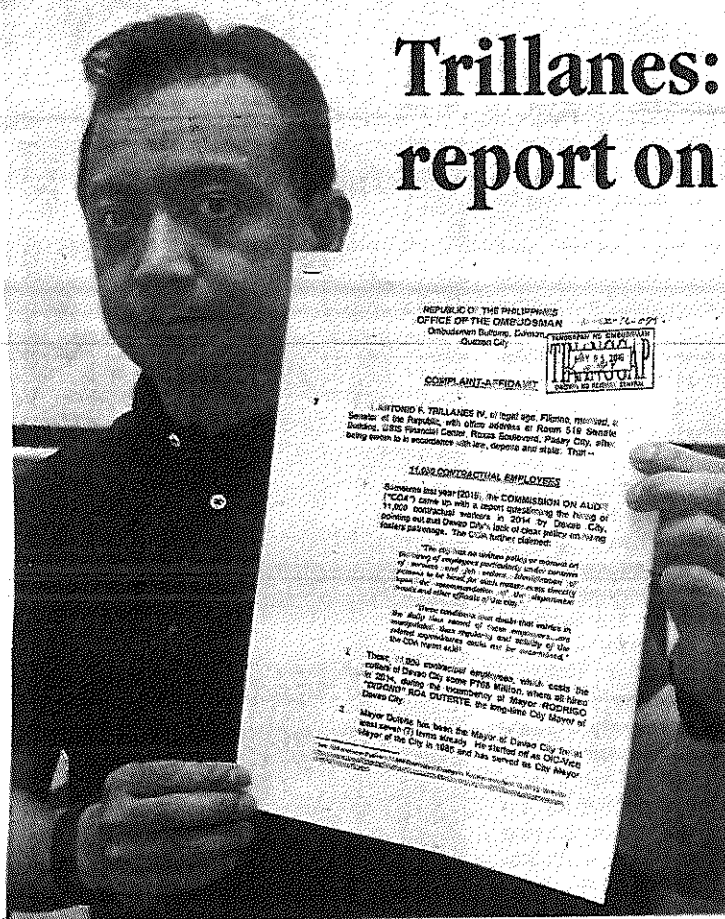
"This is the smoking gun. This will open the floodgates for other

pieces of evidence. Mayor Duterte is a fraud and his corruption has been caught. I hope this will enlighten our countrymen who have been fooled," the senator said.

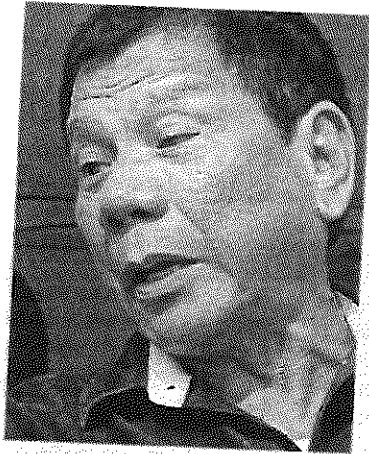
The basis for the complaint was a 2015 Commission on Audit (COA) report questioning the Davao City government's hiring of 11,000 contractual employees without a written policy.

The COA report said that with the identification of persons to be hired resting on the

PLUNDER/A20



NO LETUP Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV files a plunder and malversation complaint against Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte over the alleged hiring of 11,000 ghost employees by the city government. RAFFY LERMA



DUTERTE

REUTERS

modus [operandi] as that of Vice President Jejomar Binay," Trillanes said. "You believed me when I investigated Vice President Binay. So why doubt me now? I have not released any unfounded information."

"If you will still vote for Duterte despite him being rude and corrupt, it's up to you. I have not been remiss in exposing who he is," Trillanes said.

Old news

That Duterte hired thousands of contractuels is old news.

The *INQUIRER* ran on June 22, 2015, a story about the hiring of

contractuels and the COA report questioning the practice as it would open the possibility of patronage politics because of the alleged lack of a hiring manual.

Duterte said at the time that he would hire three times as many contractual employees as the existing 11,246 if only to keep the city clean, safe and orderly.

"In the government, we don't add plantilla positions every year and Davao City is one of the biggest cities in the country, so, we hire contractuels," he said then in reply to the COA report.

Garbage collectors

"The P708 million (that the COA questioned) is part of the city's operational expense. I'm spending it on contractual workers from garbage collectors to drivers, to intelligence operatives roaming around the city," the mayor said on his television program "Gikan sa Masa, Para sa Masa."

"You don't expect plantilla workers to collect garbage, do you?" he asked. "And garbage collectors are working in the city on three shifts."

"I am the mayor, I decide how much I spend and how many will work for the interest of the city," he added.

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Miriam: CIA won't let Du30, NPA bet, win

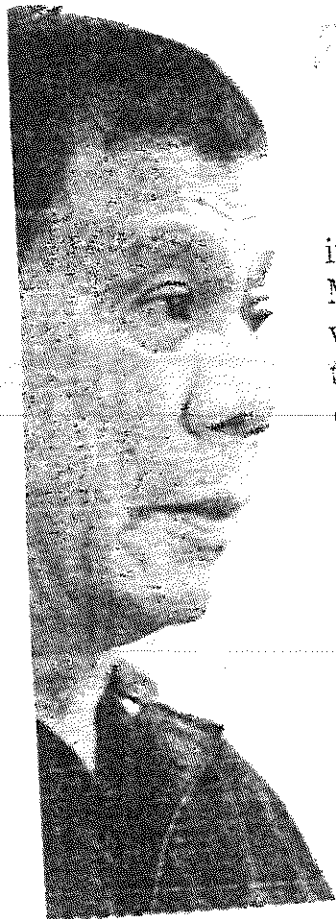
*Fears of revolutionary govt
and failure of polls re...*

The feisty Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago was back in form and hitting at the survey frontrunner Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte while expressing real fear of widespread election cheating and the involvement of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in the electoral fray to ensure that the presidential candidate the US wants, will make sure that the survey frontrunner will not see victory.

The American government has a lot to lose should an anti-American, pro China in the matter of the disputed South Sea Filipino presidential bet who moreover has as his allies the communist rebels, not to mention the Philippine-American bases agreement or the EDCA, since the Philippines is the chosen site of the US government for its Asian military bases.

There are also real fears being expressed by many, saying that due to massive cheating, there may just be a failure of elections, which may lead to a revolutionary government and the establishment of a dictatorship.

Turn to page 7



From page 1

Hitting at Duterte, without mentioning him by name, Santiago pointed out that the Davao Mayor not only has close links with the Communist Party of the Philippines, whose leader is Jose Maria Sison and the CPP's armed Left, the New People's Army (NPA) but that he has also stated that under a Duterte administration, he will give Joma Sison a Cabinet portfolio.

Santiago spoke of the possibility of the CIA meddling in the elections, with the intent of getting a Philippine president who will do the US bidding, as it appears to be well-pleased with President Aquino, who, it is believed was supported by the US during the 2010 presidential polls.

It will be recalled that even before the vote count was unfinished, the US ambassador then rushed over to then presidential candidate Aquino to congratulate him on his victory. The 2010 polls were a tight contest between Erap Estrada and Aquino.

Miriam fears widescale cheating

"I fear very much that there would be wide scale cheating during the elections," Santiago said after her speech before students of the University of Santo Tomas.

She pointed to the links of presidential frontrunner Duterte to the CPP and the NPA, adding the United States' CIA may have a hand in what may happen.

"We have an NPA candidate. Will the CIA allow to have the US Filipino candidate, that this candidate of the communists will win?" Santiago said.

She also gave Poe a broadside, saying that Sen. Grace Poe's husband is with the CIA.

Poe's husband Neil Llamanzares is still an American citizen, as he is a natural born American, having been born in that country. He also served in the US Air Force. There

was also an online report that Llamanzares worked in a spy organization linked with the CIA.

Joma 'favorite friend' of Duterte

"It appears he is a favorite friend of JoMa Sison. We all know that here in Manila, the NPA is divided into pro-JoMa and anti-JoMa," Santiago said.

"If he has a pro-Joma approach, that might explain why he has the support of leftist groups," she added.

The NPA is resorting to intimidation and threat in Samar to push for the candidacy of Duterte and senatorial bet Neri Colmenares.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) confirmed the incident of intimidations and threat in two municipalities in Samar but did not name the politicians.

At a press briefing, Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., AFP spokesman, said that the military reported two separate incidents involving communist rebels in Motiong and Matuguinao towns.

Padilla did not name the national candidate being pushed by the NPAs.

"In the spirit of our non-partisanship, we will not mention the names of the candidates," said Padilla.

Sources, however, said that the NPAs were campaigning for Duterte and senatorial candidate Neri Colmenares.

Duterte is known to have close ties with the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). In fact, exiled CPP founding Chairman Sison has expressed interest to return to Manila if Duterte wins the presidency.

Padilla said that more or less 20 NPAs hauled around 30 residents of Barangay De-it in Matuguinao, Samar, all of whom were political leaders of a mayoralty candidate.

Around 15 fully-armed NPAs

were also seen in Barangay Candomacol, Motiong Samar campaigning for the candidacy of a presidential candidate and a senatorial candidate.

"The group of rebels threatened to execute barangay officials if their endorsed candidates lose in their respective areas," said Padilla.

Padilla said that such incidents prompted residents of barangays Calapi, Bunga, and Malobago in Motiong, Samar requested additional AFP.

"The AFP has responded to these reports and continues to monitor threat groups including the NPA that terrorizes our communities in the ground," said Padilla.

'Dictator' Duterte facing coup rumors in Philippines

Anti-establishment Duterte's rollicking ride to presidential favoritism has triggered warnings of a coup should he win next week's election, with opponents branding him a dictator in the making.

The Philippines has endured a tumultuous democracy since millions of people took to the streets to overthrow Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, with a succession of leaders having to quell military unrest and one president ousted in another uprising.

Duterte is enjoying a double-digit lead over his rivals ahead of Monday's presidential election, but he has created enemies with vows to embrace communist rebels and threats to abolish Congress or create a revolutionary government that could rewrite the constitution.

"The moment he tries to declare a revolutionary government, that is also going to be the day he will be removed from office," Sen. Antonio Trillanes, a former navy officer famous for leading failed military uprisings in 2003 and 2007, told *Agence France Presse (AFP)* on Wednesday.

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"This guy has no respect for democratic institutions."

Trillanes said some in the military were "strongly averse" to Duterte's long-standing ties with communists, and that the reaction "could be violent."

Communists in the Philippines are waging one of Asia's longest-running insurgencies, with tens of thousands killed since the rebellion began in 1969. Dozens still die each year as the communists retain support among the poor.

Duterte has ruled the major southern city of Davao, which was one of the communist hot spots, as mayor for most of the past two decades, ending violence there by forging close ties with the rebels.

He has vowed to offer communist leaders posts in his government.

He has also raised deep fears about the rule of law under his presidency, promising to kill tens of thousands of criminals and pardon himself for mass murder.

On some occasions while campaigning Duterte has boasted about wanting to set up a dictatorship, and praised Marcos, but other times said the opposite.

Dictatorship fears

President Aquino, who is limited by the constitution to a single term of six years, has spoken out repeatedly in recent weeks about his concerns that Duterte could turn into a dictator.

"Now that we are free, people who act like dictators are the ones in the lead," Aquino said on Wednesday, as he warned the gains of democracy were in jeopardy.

Senator Poe, tied in second place with administration candidate Mar Roxas is about 10 percentage points behind Duterte, on Thursday joined the growing chorus.

"His own words are a preview of what will happen to our country.

If you visit a dictatorship like North Korea, everything looks well. But many are hungry and too terrified to complain," Poe told reporters.

Ashley Acedillo, another coup plotter-turned-lawmaker, told AFP that a "military intervention" was likely under a Duterte presidency.

"The armed forces will stand true to its constitutional duty to protect the people and the state," he said.

The ex-coup plotter's warnings are not bluster, according to Manila-based security analyst Rommel Banlaoi.

"We will face a Duterte government that is very unstable," Banlaoi told AFP.

Duterte has gained support across all sectors of society by fashioning himself as an anti-establishment politician who can achieve quick fixes to deep-rooted problems, such as crime and poverty, according to analysts.

He has promised to end crime within six months of his presidency by ordering security forces to go on a killing spree, as well as increasing the salaries of soldiers and troops.

He has been accused of running vigilante squads in Davao that have killed more than 1,000 suspected criminals. At times he has boasted about his involvement but on other occasions denied any links to the death squads.

Iglesia Ni Cristo endorses

Duterte, Bongbong

The Iglesia Ni Cristo has endorsed the candidacies Duterte and Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for president and vice president, respectively, for the May 9 elections.

According to a report on Eagle News, the official online news site of the Iglesia Ni Cristo, on Thursday, Duterte and Marcos' names were contained in sample ballots that were distributed to all Iglesia Ni

Cristo members.

Iglesia Ni Cristo, with its membership of close to two million, is known to practice bloc voting during elections.

With endorsements in support of national candidates coming from various political entities, partylists, and even faith-based groups in a matter of days before elections, facts and figures from previous elections prove all these have had minimal effects on voters' actual choice.

Social Weather Station's Leo Rando S. Laroza claims to have data files to prove that different groups' endorsements only served candidates for local positions.

"Voters vote according to their personal choice and conscience," Laroza said in an interview at his office in suburban Quezon City.

He said voters are less likely to be convinced by survey results. He said only 2 percent of the voters who took part in previous surveys admitted being convinced by trends in surveys made by agencies like SWS.

There is no bandwagon effect to speak of while voters who support underdogs or those who fare poorly in surveys are also minimal.

"They cross out each other," Laroza said. Their data also conclude that voters decisions are based on what they learn from political advertisements, news reports, family members, and neighbors.

Asked how he looks at the coming May 9 national elections as of Tuesday afternoon, Laroza said it is still anybody's ballgame.

It will be recalled presidential candidates have reportedly paid visits to leaders of faith-based groups hoping to get the needed endorsements usually announced a couple of days before the actual voting. **With Mario Mallari, Charlie V. Manalo and AFP**

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Army task force to secure polls in C. Mindanao

By JOHN UNSON

who will augment the police force in the ARMM.

These police officers will

stay in the ARMM until a few days after the elections.

In Pangasinan, an additional 293 personnel from the regional

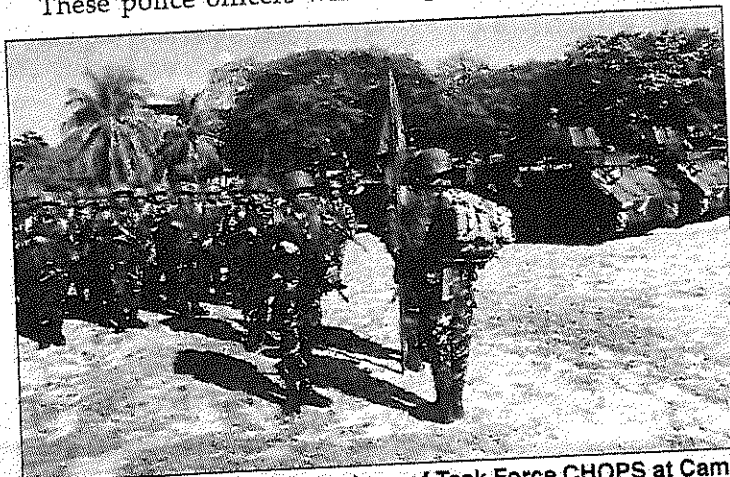
Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The MILF earlier said it would reposition its forces to ensure that Comelec personnel and teachers could perform their duties without security concerns.

Off to ARMM

Meanwhile, a send-off ceremony was held yesterday for over 100 Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) police officers to be deployed to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) for the elections.

Superintendent Chitadel Gaoiran, spokesperson for the Calabarzon police, said the police officers would join their colleagues from Central Luzon, Bicol and Ilocos regions



A military official briefs members of Task Force CHOPS at Camp Siongco in Maguindanao yesterday.

JOHN UNSON

office arrived yesterday to augment the 2,041 police force.

Superintendent Jackie Candelario, deputy provincial director for operations, said an additional 493 police officers from the national headquarters were expected to arrive in the province this week.

Meanwhile, the Central Luzon police has been placed on full alert since Wednesday for the elections.

Chief Superintendent Rudy Lacadin, Police Regional Office-3 director, said police personnel doing desk work at the regional headquarters would be deployed to various polling precincts to maximize police visibility on election day. — With Ed Amoroso, Cesar Ramirez, Ric Sapnu

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NPA leader, 6 others collared in Agusan Sur

GOVERNMENT forces arrested a high-ranking official of the New People's Army (NPA) and six of his companions at a checkpoint the other day in Agusan del Sur.

Capt. Joe Patrick A. Martinez, spokesman of the Army's 4th Infantry Division, identified the NPA leader as Ricardo Manili, alias Ka Joker.

The rebels were arrested at a police and military checkpoint in Bgy. Remedios, Esperanza town.

The NPA leader will be facing multiple charges – murder, arson, robbery and homicide – he committed in Caraga region in his more than 40 years of senseless armed struggle with the rebels.

Ka Joker gained notoriety for always evading government troops and had attacked the Carmen Town Hall twice in the past, killing policemen and wounding other authorities.

Manili is the present commander of the Sub-Regional Committee 3 of the North Central Mindanao Regional Committee (NCMRC) and concurrent secretary of Guerilla Front 4A of the NPA.

The report said the rebels were on board an unregistered Starex van when they were flagged down by the military and police.

They were searched by the authorities and immediately Manili was identified by one of the soldiers.

Recovered from NPA rebels were three handguns, a hand grenade, blasting caps, holsters and items with high intelligence value which are grave violation of election gun ban.

Zaida delos Reyes-Palanca

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Coup talk hounds presidential front-runner

RODRIGO Duterte's rollicking ride to presidential favoritism as an antiestablishment politician has triggered warnings of a coup should he win next week's election, with opponents branding him a dictator in the making.

The country has endured a tumultuous democracy since millions of people took to the streets to overthrow dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, with a succession of leaders having to quell military unrest and one President ousted in another uprising.

Duterte is enjoying a double-digit lead over his rivals ahead of Monday's presidential election, but he has created enemies with vows to embrace communist rebels and threats to abolish Congress or create a revolutionary government that could rewrite the Constitution.

"The moment he tries to declare a revolutionary government, that is also going to be the day he will be removed from office," Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy officer famous for leading failed military uprisings in 2003 and 2007, said on Wednesday. "This guy has no respect for democratic institutions."

Trillanes said some in the military were "strongly averse" to Duterte's long-standing ties with communists, and that the reaction "could be violent."

Communists in the Philippines are waging one of Asia's longest-running insurgencies, with tens of thousands killed since

the rebellion began in 1969. Dozens still die each year as the communists retain support among the poor.

Duterte has ruled Davao City, which was one of the communist hot spots, as mayor for most of the past two decades, ending violence there by forging close ties with the rebels.

He has vowed to offer communist leaders posts in his government.

He has also raised deep fears about the rule of law under his presidency, promising to kill tens of thousands of criminals and pardon himself for mass murder.

On some occasions while campaigning Duterte has boasted about wanting to set up a dictatorship, and praised Marcos, but other times said the opposite.

'Dictators in the lead'

President Aquino has spoken out repeatedly in recent weeks about his concerns that Duterte could turn into a dictator.

"Now that we are free, people who act like dictators are the ones in the lead," the President said on Wednesday, warning that the gains of democracy were in jeopardy.

Ashley Acedillo, another coup plotter-turned-lawmaker, said that a "military intervention" was likely under a Duterte presidency. "The Armed Forces will stand true to its constitutional duty to protect the people and the state," he said.

The warnings are not bluster, according to

security analyst Rommel Banlaoi. "We will face a Duterte government that is very unstable," he said.

Duterte has gained support across all sectors of society by fashioning himself as an antiestablishment politician who can achieve quick fixes to deep-rooted prob-

lems, such as crime and poverty, according to analysts.

End crime in 6 months

He has promised to end crime within six months of his presidency by ordering security forces to go on a killing spree, as well as increasing

the salaries of soldiers and troops.

He has been accused of running vigilante squads in Davao that have killed more than 1,000 suspected criminals. At times he has boasted about his involvement but on other occasions denied any links to the death squads.

AFP

06 May 2016

The Manila Times

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MILITARY: REDS START HARASSING VOTERS

FOUR days before the local and national elections, communist New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Samar province in the Visayas have started harassing people and threatening to harm them if they will not vote for a presidential and a senatorial candidate whom the rebel group is supporting, the military reported on Thursday.

Reports reaching the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, said two separate incidents of intimidation involving the NPA were recorded since Wednesday.

According to the reports, about 20 heavily-armed rebels hauled around 30 residents of Barangay De-it in Matuguinao, Samar, all of whom were political leaders of a mayoralty candidate.

In Barangay Candomacol, Motiong, Samar, around 15 fully-armed guerrillas were also monitored campaigning for a presidential candidate and a senatorial candidate.

"The group of rebels threatened to execute *barangay* [village] officials if their endorsed candidates lose in their respective areas. Further reports said the residents in Barangay Calapi, Bunga and Malobago in Motiong requested additional AFP presence due to the NPA members in the area," Col.

Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office, said.

He added that the AFP has responded to these reports and continues to monitor threat groups including the NPA that terrorizes the communities.

Meanwhile, Detoyato said that as part of the AFP's mission to provide security support and assistance to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in the implementation of election laws, rules and regulations, various military units are at present active in providing convoy escort, patrols, clearing and security operations and joint checkpoint operations with the Philippine National Police.

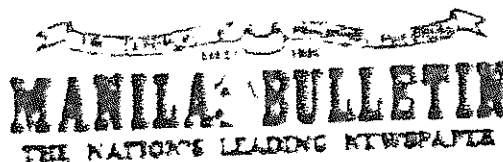
"This is primarily to ensure the safe delivery of election equipment in different voting areas across the country," he explained.

Meanwhile, security forces from the 47th Infantry Battalion successfully delivered to San Francisco, Puro, Tudela and Pilar towns of Cebu 97 Vote Counting Machines or VCMs, ballot box body and top cover, battery kits and four Consolidation and Canvassing System (CCS) kits.

"No untoward incidents were reported in all the operations that we have conducted to secure the delivery of election equipment," Detoyato said.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

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ASG releases Chinese captive since 2014

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Mindanao Command (WESMINCOM) Thursday said a Chinese national held by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) for two years has been freed in Sulu.

Major Felimon Tan, AFP WESMINCOM spokesman, said Chinese national Yehong Chen Lim was freed Tuesday morning in Patikul, Sulu.

Lim, who is a daughter of a videoke bar owner in Basilan, was released by the group of ASG sub-leader Hairula Asbang to her mother in Barangay

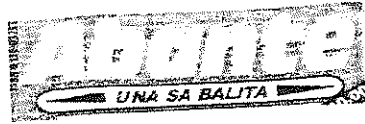
Danag, Patikul, Sulu.

Tan said the victim, who was reportedly in good condition, and her mother boarded a fastcraft enroute to Zamboanga City.

It was recalled Yehong Chen and her mother, Diana, were abducted on May 22, 2014 by 10 armed men clad in Philippine National Police (PNP) uniform inside the Dalby Video Bar owned by the victims located in Isabelan, Basilan.

Tan said focused military operations continue in Sulu to pressure the bandit group to release the remaining kidnap victims they still hold.

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Dinukot na mag-ina sa Basilan, pinalaya ng Sayyaf

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Pinakawalan ng Abu Sayyaf ang dalawang bihag nito matapos ng halos 2 taong pagkakabihag sa kabundukan ng Sulu province sa magulong Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Nabatid na pinalaya ng grupo ni Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Hairula Asbang ang mag-inang sina Dina Ibrahim at anak na si Yahong sa Barangay Danag sa bayan ng Patikul kamakalawa lamang.

Nagbayad ng P300,000 ang mga biktima kapalit ng kaniyang paglaya. Nabatid na noong Mayo ng nakaraang taon sila dinukot sa Basilan at dinala sa Sulu kung saan sila itinago.

Sumakay ang mag-ina sa isang ferry sa bayan ng Jolo at nagtungo sa Zamboanga nang walang kaalam-alam ang Western Mindanao Command. Ngunit kinumpirma naman ito ng pulisya sa Sulu, subalit hindi naman masabi ng mga opisyal kung bakit hindi nila agad natunugan ang paglaya ng mga biktima.

Kamakailan lamang ay pinakawalan rin ng Abu Sayyaf ang 10 Indonesian crew members ng tugboat Brahma 12 na dinukot ng mga rebelde sa karagatan ng Tawi-Tawi na kabilang sa mga lalawigan ng ARMM.

(Al Jacinto)

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AFP condemns ASG for releasing video of Ridsdel's beheading on social media

By **ZAIDA DELOS REYES-PALANCA**

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday condemned the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in releasing the video of the beheading of Canadian national John Ridsdel on social media as it assured the public that its doing its best to let the bandits accountable for what they've done.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said they will continue to work to secure the safety of the hostages who are still in the hands of the bandits.

"We are aware though that this have come out and we condemn them to the highest extremes and your Armed Forces will continue to work to secure the safety of the hostages who still remain in the hands of these bandits," Padilla said.

He assured the public that the AFP have not stopped its operation against the bandits until the bandits are held accountable

for their action.

In line with this, Padilla appealed to the public not to dignify the propagation of the video materials.

The statement was made in reaction to the 51 seconds video of Ridsdel's beheading that was uploaded on the Internet.

Meanwhile, the Palace reiterated its commitment to rescue the remaining hostages being held by the ASG.

Presidential Communication Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said President Aquino, in a statement last week, vowed that the "full resources of the State are being brought down on the ASG".

"Our primary objective is to rescue the hostages and ensure the safety of our civilian population," Coloma quoted the President as saying.

The ASG is still holding Canadian Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipina Maritess Flor, who along with Ridsdel were kidnapped from a resort in Samal Island last September. **With Efrén Montano**

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JTF-NCR to secure May 9 polls

By JEFFREY C. TIANGCO

DIRECTOR Gen. Joel Pagdilao disclosed the deployment of Joint Task Force-National Capital Region (JTF-NCR) composed of policemen from National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), Special Action Force (SAF) and soldiers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to ensure secure, safe and fair conduct of Monday's elections.

Pagdilao, who led the send-off ceremony, said

the JTF-NCR will be deployed to five police districts and perform election duties.

He assured that the deployed personnel are all ready and have enough training to secure the conduct of the scheduled May 9 polls wherein the public will vote and elect both national and local leaders of the country.

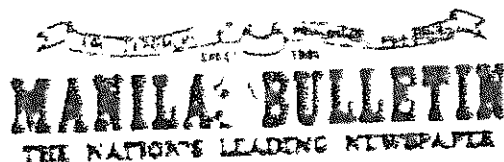
He added that the joint task force is also one way of government's desire to promote public engagement and a chance to draw the police and military closer to the people.

The forthcoming elec-

tion is another challenge for us considering the expected increase in the number of voters. However, what is vital is we are prepared as early as now to make sure that our voters will be confident of their safety when they cast the votes comes May 9," Pagdilao said.

During the send-off, Pagdilao also challenged the deployed personnel to let the public feel that they are safe from any election-related incident of violence and their votes are secured and protected by making their presence felt.

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New soldiers take oaths and arms to protect PH in Bicol

By RUEL Saldico

CAMP ELIAS ANGELES, Pili, Camarines Sur — After the six months of rigorous training, 90 new recruits took their oaths as soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, here, last Wednesday.

During the oath-taking ceremony, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Region 5 (BFAR-5) Director Dennis Del Socorro led the entrustment of firearms rites to the new soldiers, who pledged only to use them in maintaining the security of the country.

Del Socorro encouraged the neophyte soldiers to love their service firearms as well as their jobs as public servants.

The No. 1 finisher in the Candidate Soldier Course Class 396-15 was Private Cristian Jay V. Gabuya, a graduate of Criminology and son of a retired Master Sergeant.

The batch's No. 2 is former carwash boy from Pilar, Sorsogon - Pvt. Clifford Emelbert B. Estreza; while the No. 3 is a licensed teacher - Pvt. Cesar Ramirez Bobis, II.

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Police, Marines seize guns, grenades in Maguindanao raid

COTABATO CITY – Joint police and military forces implementing “Oplan Paglalansag” yesterday seized firearms and grenades at the house of a wanted man in Upi, Maguindanao.

Armed with arrest warrants, the raiding team composed of elements of Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (CIDG-ARMM) and 5th Marine Battalion Landing Team, went to Purok Pagasa, Barangay Bugabungan, to arrest a certain Roque Diaz.

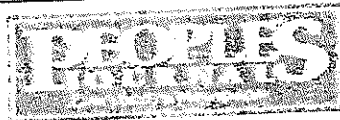
Based on the arrest warrant

issued by Regional Trial Court Judge Bansawan Ibrahim, Roque was in possession of high-powered guns and explosives.

Roque managed to elude arrest but a search on his house resulted in the recovery of one 12 shot gun, a cal. 45 pistol, ammunition and two MK-2 fragmentation grenades.

Charges for violating Republic Act 10591 or the Comprehensive Law on Firearms and Ammunition Regulation Act and RA 9516 or Illegal Possession of Explosive are now being prepared against Diaz, who is believed to be a gun for hire. **PNA**

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DA, DND ink deal for cloud seeding operations

THE Department of Agriculture and the Department of National Defense forged an agreement that will ensure the assistance of cloud seeding experts and the use of Philippine Armed Forces aircrafts in the cloud seeding operations.

The move aims to further strengthen the cloud seeding operations in the country, particularly in the provinces suffering from drought.

DA Secretary Proceso Alcala and DND Secretary Voltaire Gazmin signed the memorandum of agreement.

Agriculture Undersecretary Emerson Palad said the DA has also fully utilized its Quick Response Fund worth P370.08 million, which has been allocated to the affected regions.

Prior to the MoA, The DA's Bureau of Soils and Water Management has deployed aircrafts to seed clouds for rain in identified vulnerable agricultural areas and watersheds to minimize the impact of El Niño to crop production.

Cory Martinez

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3 countries ready patrols

YOGYAKARTA, Indonesia—Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines are to launch a joint patrol in their waters after a recent surge of kidnappings by a radical Islamic group, according to an agreement struck Thursday.

The decision to patrol the Sulu and Celebes seas, which together form a key waterway between the three countries, comes just over a week after the southern Philippines-based Abu Sayyaf beheaded a Canadian captive.

Abu Sayyaf gangs have earned many millions of dollars from kidnapping foreigners and locals in the region since the early 1990s.

Ten Indonesian sailors were abducted off the southern Philippines by Abu Sayyaf in March, but returned home last week after being freed.

"We will undertake coordinated patrol in the maritime areas of our common concern," Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said after a meeting initiated by

Indonesia, and attended by foreign ministers and military commanders.

The Sulu and Celebes seas are used as passage of 55 million metric tonnes of goods and over 18 million people per year.

The three countries also agreed to set up a hotline to communicate faster during emergency situations, improve coordination when giving assistance to people and ships in distress as well as intensifying information and intelligence sharing.

"We recognized that threats from armed robberies against ships, kidnapping and other transnational crimes if not addressed appropriately can undermine the confidence in trade and commerce in our region," Marsudi added.

Authorities say the Abu Sayyaf 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 bird-watcher.

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Phl, Indonesia to launch joint sea water patrol

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ABU SAYYAF

After hostage beheading, is Philippines facing IS threat?



By JIM GOMEZ

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Months before Abu Sayyaf militants beheaded retired Canadian mining executive John Ridsdel in the tropical jungles of the southern Philippines, they showed him pleading for life in a video with three other hostages that demanded a record-high ransom.

The scene was all too familiar in a Southeast Asian nation that has struggled with ransom kidnappings by the Islamic militants for years, except for two things.

In the video that appeared in November, two black flags with Islamic State group symbols were displayed by the heavily armed Abu Sayyaf fighters in the backdrop of lush foliage. Then after a deadline for ransom lapsed on Monday, they killed the 68-year-old Ridsdel — instead of waiting patiently for the money as the mostly impoverished rural fighters have done in the past.

Shocked by the outcome, many in the largest Roman Catholic nation in Asia are asking if this is same band of militants the government has long dismissed as ransom-seeking bandits. Or, has the Philippines fallen into a growing list of countries that are now grappling with the spread of the Islamic

State group from Syria and Iraq?

The Philippine government has insisted the IS still has no presence in the country's south, homeland of minority Muslims who rose up to seek a separate state in the early 1970s.

In his first remarks following Ridsdel's killing, President Benigno Aquino III, who is left with two more months in office, ran a history of the Abu Sayyaf's brutal attacks, describing it as a group of outlaws and vowing "to devote all my energies toward ensuring that, at the very least, this will be a very seriously degraded problem."

"Even as it poses as a group of Islamic freedom fighters, the Abu Sayyaf has behaved as criminals focused on enriching themselves by taking hostages for ransom," he said, describing them as opportunists who want to "align themselves with ISIS to gain access to the funds and resources of ISIS."

Terrorism experts, however, believe that a key Abu Sayyaf faction and at least two other small armed groups have gone beyond pledging allegiance to the Middle East-based jihadis on video and have struck a new alliance under the IS flag.

Some foreign militants from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Middle East helped forge the union under an over-all leader, Isnilon Hapilon, a veteran

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Filipino militant who was among those who founded the Abu Sayyaf on southern Basilan Island in early 1990s, said Rodolfo Mendoza, a retired police general who helped lead counterterrorism efforts.

It's not yet clear if the foreign militants, three of whom were killed in military offensives last year and this year, were IS fighters or sympathizers who wanted to recruit Filipinos into the IS fold, according to the Philippine military.

In November, Abu Sayyaf gunmen beheaded a Malaysian hostage despite ongoing ransom negotiations. It happened while Manila was hosting an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit attended by world leaders, including President

Barack Obama and Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak.

Another armed group, which has brandished the IS group's black flag in southern Butig town but is not yet known to have joined Hapilon's alliance, recently posted a picture online of two kidnapped villagers in orange garb before they were beheaded as suspected military spies. It's the first known instance local militants dressed their captives in orange, as IS extremists do.

An unusual surge in kidnappings, including daring attacks on three tugboats in and around the Sulu Sea that captured 18 Indonesian and Malaysian crewmen starting last

month, along with recent beheadings, may be a way by the emerging bloc of militants to dramatize their capability and brutality and convince the IS group to fully recognize them as an affiliate entitled to funds and training support, Mendoza told the Associated Press.

Earlier this month, an Abu Sayyaf ambush in Basilan killed 18 soldiers in the military's largest single-day combat loss so far this year.

"They're now able to project internationally that they deserve the serious recognition of mother ISIS," Mendoza said. "The kidnappings that they do shouldn't only be seen as plain banditry."

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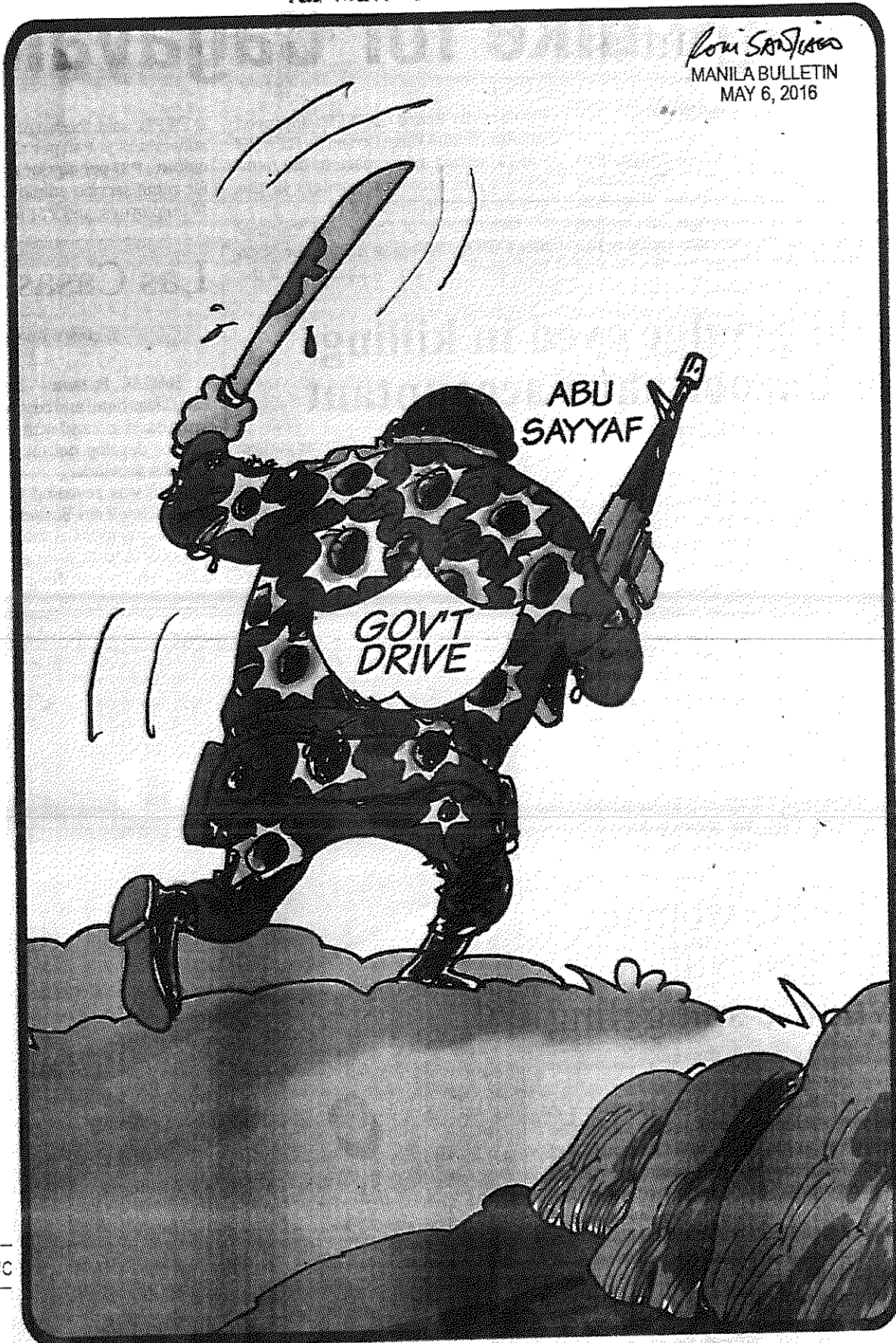
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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Roni Sanjaya
MANILA BULLETIN
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Gov't again vows no let-up in drive on Abu Sayyaf

A WEEK after the beheading of a Canadian kidnap victim by the Abu Sayyaf in Mindanao for alleged failure to pay ransom, the Abu Sayyaf was in the news again. It released 10 Indonesian seamen it had seized aboard a tugboat off Sabah last March 26. The Jolo police director said he did not know if ransom had been paid for the Indonesians, but said the Abu Sayyaf had earlier demanded P50 million for the sailors.

President Aquino had vowed there would be no let-up in the government pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf after the beheading of Canadian John Ridsdel. He vowed to devote all his energy to crush the group before he steps down from office on June 30.

Judging from the record, however, it does not look like the government is close to crushing the Abu Sayyaf which has been operating since the 1970s in the mountains of Sulu and in Basilan and other nearby islands. In the 1990s, Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law reportedly funnelled money to the Abu Sayyaf which had split from the Moro National Liberation Front to continue fighting for increased autonomy for Muslims in the South.

In 1994, the Abu Sayyaf was blamed by the Philippine Army for bombings in Zamboanga City that killed 71. The next year, it raided Ipil, Sulu, killing 53. After its leader was killed in 1998, the militant group reportedly began kidnapping rich foreigners for ransom money to fund its operations. Around 2003, it appeared to have renewed

its ideological fervor and took responsibility for the 2004 bombing of a ferry in Manila Bay that killed 116 people.

In 2006, the military launched a major offensive and three high-ranking leaders were killed. Running low on funds, the militant group is believed to have turned once again to kidnapping for ransom. Last September, 2015, the Abu Sayyaf kidnapped Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian Khartan Sekkingstad, and Filipina Marites Flor from a resort on Samal island in Davao Gulf. It beheaded Ridsdel seven months later.

Aside from the three remaining Samal hostages, the Abu Sayyaf reportedly holds today a Dutch national, four Malaysians, a Chinese national, and six Filipinos. Foreign ministers of the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia are due to meet in Jakarta this week to seek ways to secure key shipping routes between the three countries. As for the kidnap victims, President Aquino has declared that the Abu Sayyaf has caused trouble in the country long enough and must now face the full force of the law.

It has been over four decades since Philippine military forces – at one time with the help of American Special Forces – sought to stop the Abu Sayyaf. They have not had much success, as seen in the continued reports of kidnappings, but we continue to hope that new government efforts, perhaps in coordination with our neighboring countries, will find the solution that will end the kidnappings, beheadings, and other atrocities.

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Gonzaga heads beach volley cast

The country's most decorated beach volleyball player, Jovelyn Gonzaga, will see action in the 2016 Philippine Superliga (PSL) Challenge Cup beach volleyball tournament starting Saturday at Sands at SM By the Bay in Mall of Asia.

A former national team member who has yet to lose in a major beach volley tournament, Gonzaga will team up with another grizzled veteran in Nerissa Bautista for RC Cola-Army in this competitive battle bankrolled by SM By the Bay, Petron, Foton, Accel, Mikasa, Senoh and Island Rose with TV5 as official broadcast partner.

Despite coming off a two-week break, the comely Gonzaga vowed to bring her fighting form, especially since she will be pitted against a field overflowing with talent and experience.

"It will be a very tough battle," said Gonzaga, who started collecting beach volley crowns as early as 2009 in some commercial tournaments in Boracay.

"Nakikita natin na hindi basta-basta ang mga teams. And we need to work double-time because we just came from a two-week break, so hindi talaga sya madali. All teams are very strong."

She said the biggest blocks on their path could be Foton and F2 Logistics.

The Toplander will parade sand specialists Cherry Rondina and Patty Orendain while the Cargo

Movers will be bannered by reigning champion Danika Gendrauli with a new partner in Aby Marano, who is already feeling the pressure in what she billed as the most competitive and most serious battle in her young beach volley career.

"Ang laki ng pressure, especially since most of them are beach volleyball players talaga," Marano said. "But since I'm teaming up with Danika, nandun ang confidence ko na kaya nya akong madala as a teammate."

Gendrauli's partner when she won last year's crown, Norie Jane Diaz, will be campaigning for Philippine Navy together with Pau Soriano while Petron XCS will be bringing in the veteran tandem of Bang Pineda and Aiza Maizo-Pontillas, making this four-week tourney a wide-open race with no clear-cut favorite.

Other players seeing action are Florence Madulid and Pauline Genido for Philippine Navy-B; Maica Morada and Ces Molina for Petron Sprint 4T; Vhima Condada and Mary Grace Berte for Signal Team Awesome; Jeannie Delos Reyes and Genie Sabas for RC Cola-Army-B; Aileen Abuel and Princess Listana for Accel Quantum Plus; Jasmine Alcayde and Angelica Dacaymat for UE-Manila; Shaira Hermano and Niella Ramilo for Mapua; Bernadette Pons and Kyla Atienza for FEU-Petron and April Ross Hingpit and Jonafer San Pedro for Meralco.

ONLINE NEWS

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SAFE 2016 II EMC now ready to ensure safe conduct of May 9 elections

MANILA — The Davao City-based Eastern Mindanao Command (EMC) announced that all its units are now ready to ensure the safe conduct of the coming May 9 elections.

Major Ezra Balagtey, EMC spokesperson, said they will be doing this in coordination with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The EMC is tasked to secure Region 10, 11, and 13 and parts of Region 10 and 12.

"On several occasions, inter-agency meetings were conducted between the Armed Forces of the Philippines, PNP and the COMELEC to fine tune election security plans and preparations that will create an environment allowing the people in the mentioned regions to cast their votes," Balagtey added.

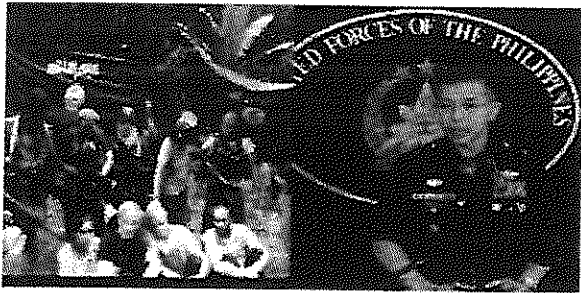
Aside from the synchronized troop deployment between the EMC forces and PNP, the readiness requirement includes the activation of election monitoring action centers and quick reaction teams at all levels.

EMC facilities and equipment were also readied for utilization if the COMELEC so requires.

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RESPECT THE DIGNITY OF LIFE | AFP ask Citizenry Not to Spread ASG Video

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City – The leadership of the Armed Forces of the Philippines has asked the help of the citizenry not to help in the propagation of video materials from the bandit group Abu Sayyaf.



According to BGen Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesperson, "We respect the dignity of life, we respect the privacy of families," and the spreading of this video materials will only dignify the cause of the bandit group and their kidnapping and terror activities.

Padilla stressed that the AFP continues operate to secure the safety of the hostages who still remains in the hands of these bandits in the southern part of the Philippines.

Last April 25, the ASG continued with its threat of killing Canadian John Ridsdel after their ransom deadline lapsed.

Just last May 3, the bandit group released a new video containing renewed threats of beheading on their remaining three hostages taken last year from the Island Garden City of Samal in Davao Del Norte.

In the video, the remaining Samal hostages, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, Canadian Robert Hall and Marites Flor, Hall's Filipina girlfriend, are shown sitting on the ground on what seems to be a coconut plantation, with six gunmen standing behind them.

"We have not stopped, we have not let up with their on-going operations, and we will not cease doing this until we have been able to make these personalities, bandits, criminals accountable for their actions" Padilla added. AES / MCAG

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NEW THREATS | Abu Sayyaf Bandits to Behead Hostages Anew

MANILA (DWDD) – The bandit group Abu Sayyaf has renewed threats of beheading another of their three remaining hostages taken from the Island Garden City of Samal in Davao Del Norte last year, just over a week after they beheaded a captive.



This was the message contained in a new video uploaded on YouTube Tuesday, where Canadian Robert Hall pleaded “To the Philippine government: Please stop shooting at us and trying to kill us. These guys are going to do a good job of that.”

Meanwhile, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad said that “if the demand is not met we will be executed like our friend John [Ridsde] was a few days ago”.

One of the abductors reminded of the “lesson” of Ridsdel’s killing and avoid delays in negotiations.”

The Philippine government has intensified operations in Jolo, Sulu to “neutralize” the ASG and has reaffirmed its stand that they will not negotiate with a group it considers a terrorist organization.

This was the stand stated by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who said that his government would not negotiate with the kidnappers.

Aside from the Samal hostages, the bandit group is still holding four Malaysian and four other Indonesian sailors, as well as a Dutch birdwatcher abducted in 2012. **AES / MCAG**

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