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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

29 November 2016

Tuesday

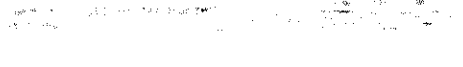
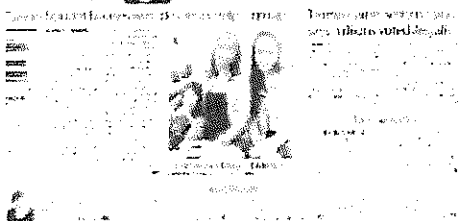
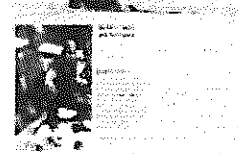
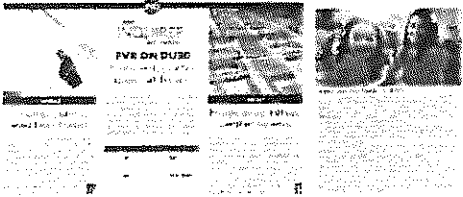


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Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.


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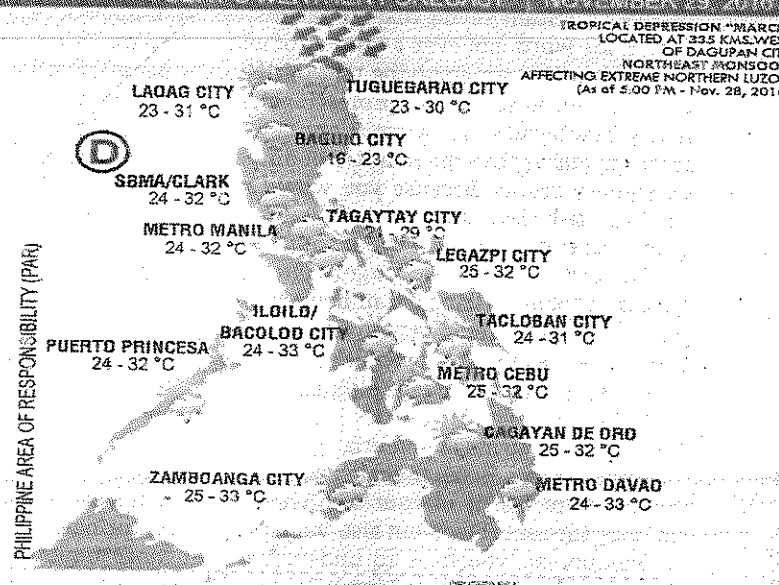




PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | NOVEMBER 29, 2016 | TUESDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

TROPICAL DEPRESSION "MARCE"
LOCATED AT 33.5 KMS WEST OF DAGUPAN CITY
NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING EXTREME NORTHERN LUZON
(As of 5:00 PM - Nov. 28, 2016)

Cities and Temperatures:

- LAOAG CITY: 23 - 31 °C
- TUGUEGARAO CITY: 23 - 30 °C
- BAGUIO CITY: 16 - 23 °C
- SBMA/CLARK: 24 - 32 °C
- METRO MANILA: 24 - 32 °C
- TAGAYTAY CITY: 25 - 32 °C
- LEGAZPI CITY: 25 - 32 °C
- ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY: 24 - 33 °C
- TACLOBAN CITY: 24 - 31 °C
- PUERTO PRINCESA: 24 - 32 °C
- METRO CEBU: 25 - 32 °C
- CAGAYAN DE ORO: 25 - 32 °C
- ZAMBOANGA CITY: 25 - 33 °C
- METRO DAVAO: 24 - 33 °C

SUNRISE
6:04 AM

SUNSET
5:25 PM

MOONRISE
5:37 AM

MOONSET
5:24 PM

NEW MOON
NOV 29 8:18 PM

FIRST QUARTER
DEC 7 5:03 PM

LOW TIDE
5:01 AM
-0.01 Meter

HIGH TIDE
9:46 PM
1.02 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers



Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Light rains

NOV 29		NOV 30		NOV 30		NOV 30	
METRO MANILA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	TAGAYTAY	20 - 30 °C	21 - 29 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 - 32 °C	24 - 30 °C	LEGAZPI	25 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C
LAOAG	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO	24 - 34 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 23 °C	16 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO CEBU	24 - 32 °C	25 - 31 °C		

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PILIPINAS HD  

29 November 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

19 Maute Group militants slain

Military sustains offensive to flush out bandits from Lanao del Sur town hall

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

At least 19 members of the Islamic militant Maute Group have been slain as government troops, backed by helicopter gunships, continued their offensive to flush out the bandits from an abandoned town hall in Lanao del Sur, the Armed Forces of the Philippines said yesterday.

Thirteen soldiers were also wound-

ed as a result of the clashes that started Thursday when the Maute Group bandits seized the old Butig town hall, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

"The wounded soldiers were evacuated to safer grounds and taken to treatment centers. Most of them were slightly wounded and their conditions are not life threatening," Padilla said during a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Padilla said as of 3 p.m. Monday, troops – backed by SF-260 and OV 10 attack planes from the Philippine Air Force (PAF) – are advancing as part of efforts to flush out the rebels.

Troops used 105-mm artillery to blast the positions of the Maute group in the nearly deserted town of Butig.

Mortar bombs could be heard from the distance as an MG-520 helicopter gunship flew overhead, a reporter in the town said.

►5

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19 Maute Group militants... ◀1

Most of the 17,000 residents of the largely Muslim town on Mindanao island fled to evacuation centers in neighboring towns or to relatives elsewhere after the Maute incursion on Saturday, said Mayor Dimnatang Pansar.

"We can't fight the Maute with only 20 policemen," he said, appealing for more

soldiers to be assigned there.

Only a few residents stayed in their homes as armored vehicles and military snipers fanned out through the town streets, slowly advancing on the Maute group's position.

"Operations by the AFP's 103rd Infantry Battalion under Col. Roseller

Murillo are continuing to flush out the terrorist group from Butig, Lanao del Sur," Padilla said.

He also did not discount the possibility that casualties on the Maute Group side would further go up as clashes continue in the area.

"We can say that the number of casualties could go up as fighting between troops and the Maute Group continues. We have been receiving reports that the clashes are spread out in different areas," Padilla said.

Padilla, in the same press briefing, said that the areas where the Maute Group members are hiding are mostly occupied by their relatives or followers.

"Most of the residents who are not followers of the group have already fled their homes and sought refuge to safer grounds," Padilla said.

He added that the bandits tried to capture the town hall last February but were foiled by government troops.

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House threatens De Lima with arrest

By DELON PORCALLA

The two chambers of Congress look headed for a showdown as Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez yesterday threatened to have Sen. Leila de Lima arrested if she continued to snub an inquiry being conducted by the House of Representatives on drug trafficking at the national penitentiary.

"I'll be forced to issue an arrest warrant," Alvarez told the ABS-CBN News Channel.

Alvarez was responding to a question about his next move should De Lima decide to ignore the show cause order for her to appear before the House committee on justice.

The order was issued after her former driver and lover Ronnie Dayan testified last week that she prevented him from attending the House inquiry on the drug trade in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

Dayan said he was willing to attend the hearing, but De Lima reportedly advised him to ignore it and remain in hiding.

Alvarez said they have been lenient with De Lima since the start of the probe. He said they had told her she could drop by if she wanted to, and that the House did not issue an official invitation for her to be present

Turn to Page 8

House From Page 1

during the entire duration of the hearing.

He said it was obvious the House accorded De Lima inter-parliamentary courtesy.

"We invited her, she declined, so parliamentary courtesy, that's OK. We subpoena a witness, Dayan, whose name was always mentioned in the hearing. She advised him not to attend and remain hiding. Is that parliamentary courtesy?" Alvarez asked.

"Who violated parliamentary courtesy? An offense has been committed against the institution. For our part, we respect the Senate," he

added.

Alvarez said a senator should not meddle with any legitimate proceeding of the House.

"It is an individual offense committed by Senator De Lima, not by the Senate," he said.

The Speaker said this was the first time he heard of a senator interfering with House proceedings.

"A senator, a high government official at that, telling a witness to hide? That's wrong under any standards," he said, noting De Lima's alleged lack of respect for their institution.

'Not above the law'

House leaders said they accorded De Lima more than her entitled

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courtesy, but she is not above the law, given the consistent testimonies on her alleged involvement in the illegal drug trade.

House Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas defended the House's issuance of a show cause order against the former justice secretary, especially in the light of her advice for Dayan to ignore the hearing.

"It covers everyone. No one is above the law. She's not exempted, even Cabinet secretaries, we can issue a warrant against them. Only the President enjoys immunity from suit," Fariñas said, referring to the show cause order.

Citing several jurisprudential cases, Fariñas said Congress, which includes the Senate and the House, could not be helpless.

"We are useless if we have no compulsory powers. We extended her inter-chamber courtesy, that's why we did not issue any invitation," he said.

Fariñas said lawmakers have been silent even as De Lima berated them for the supposed script they purportedly made to satisfy their objective to persecute her.

"Where is the respect of Senator De Lima to the House?" Fariñas asked. "In the first place, she was invited to the hearings. At the very least, she should have sent a lawyer."

If indeed they made a script out of Dayan's testimony, this should have matched with the sworn affidavit of self-confessed drug lord Kerwin Espinosa, particularly on the dates of his meetings with De Lima's former driver for the handover of payoffs.

Fariñas lamented that while congressmen have not meddled in the affairs of the Senate, senators have criticized the manner by which the House committee conducted the hearing

last week, describing it as sexually offensive.

He said among the options the House has against De Lima is to issue a show cause order or an arrest warrant, cite her in contempt, file a case in an ordinary court or a disbarment case with the Supreme Court (SC).

"Perhaps a last recourse would be to file a complaint before the Senate ethics committee."

Relevant to House probe

Alvarez defended the lawmakers' line of questioning for Dayan, saying these were relevant to the inquiry.

He took exception to criticisms that House members lost sight of the issue when they asked Dayan to detail his affair with De Lima.

"If you look at the whole picture, there is a connection because here is a woman pretending to be clean, righteous, graft-buster, crime buster. But here also are the allegations against her. How can you demolish her credibility?" Alvarez asked.

He said the hearing showed De Lima has a propensity for using her subordinates, such as Dayan and Presidential Security Group aide Joenel Sanchez – both of whom were romantically involved with her – to collect payoffs from drug lords.

"We want to prove that this person is lying. We need to present to the public her whole personality, her whole being or what kind of a person she is," Alvarez said.

He said the lawmakers' questions helped determine Dayan's credibility as a witness.

In aid of legislation

The affair De Lima-Dayan may become a basis for the possible amendment of the anti-nepotism law.

Fariñas said the illicit affair would have been fine if they were still in a private law firm, and not when De Lima joined public service.

He said De Lima hired Dayan when she was assigned at the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in 2008 and Department of Justice (DOJ) in 2010.

Fariñas said they would push for a prohibition in appointing a girlfriend

or boyfriend, or a live-in partner, if only to modify or update the anti-nepotism law.

"The Speaker and I are sure that a majority of the House members will support us when we file an amendment to nepotism law," Fariñas said.

He said the amendment would be just one of the results of the House inquiry on the NBP illegal drug trade being conducted "in aid of legislation."

The present law prohibits any government official from appointing his relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity to a public office.

Evidence on disbarment

The Supreme Court (SC) was again asked to disbar De Lima for her romantic liaison with Dayan.

In a supplemental complaint filed with the high court yesterday, the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) submitted documents showing De Lima and Dayan's admissions of their illicit affair.

The group said De Lima's public admission and Dayan's testimony at the House hearing were enough to prove that the senator committed gross immorality that should warrant the cancellation of her license as a lawyer.

Former National Bureau of Investigation deputy directors Ruel Lasala and Reynaldo Esmeralda joined the VACC in filing the supplemental complaint.

They submitted Dayan's admission that he had an affair with De Lima while he remained legally married to his wife.

The complaint also cited De Lima's message telling Dayan's daughter that he should snub the subpoena issued by the House panel.

"Senator De Lima's act of urging Dayan to snub the committee hearings suggests her disregard of the rule of law. What she initiated was obstruction of justice, a disrespect to a co-equal institution," VACC chairman Dante Jimenez said.

"She was making a mockery of our justice system, which is ironic considering her previous post as justice secretary," he added.

– With Edu Punay

5295

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INQUIRER

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AIR, GROUND ASSAULT

20 SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN CLASHES WITH MAUTE GROUP

ILIGAN CITY—At least 20 soldiers have been wounded in continuing clashes with members of a rebel group who had taken over Butig town in Lanao del Sur province, an Army official said.

Col. Roseller Murillo, chief of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade based in Marawi City, said government forces have pushed ground and air assaults against at least 300 members of the Maute group who occupied the abandoned town hall in Butig last week.

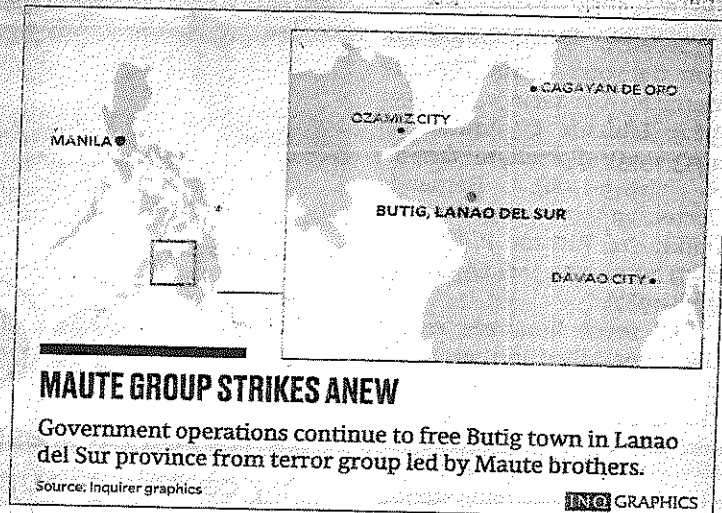
Murillo said the military continues to bomb known lairs of the group. No soldier had been reported as killed in clashes with the group since Thursday, he said.

Butig Mayor Dilangalen Pansar said at least 90 percent of the town's more than 16,000 residents had evacuated as clashes intensified. Most of them are living with their relatives in nearby towns and in Iligan City. Pansar said classes in the town had also been suspended.

The military, Murillo said, was verifying reports that 35 members of the group had been killed in aerial and ground attacks.

At noon Monday, three trucks loaded with Army soldiers were sent to Butig to augment those in combat.

The Maute group, composed of former Moro Islamic Liberation Front fighters, is led by brothers Omar and Abdullah Maute, who have reportedly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) that is aiming to set



up a similar state in Mindanao.

The group was also being eyed as behind the night market bombing in Davao City on Sept. 2 that left 15 people dead and 69 others wounded.

In Manila, Malacañang said President Duterte does not see the need to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in the wake of clashes between the military and the Maute group.

Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar said the President "trusts the capability and competence" of Director General Ronald dela Rosa, chief of the Philippine National Police, in addressing the security concerns of the public.

"President Duterte finds no compelling reason to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus at this point. As a strong advocate of the rule of law, he is fully aware of the lim-

its of presidential powers," Andanar said in a statement.

Given this, President Duterte believes any intervention at his level is unnecessary," he said.

The Maute group was previously unheard of until it started kidnapping and killing people in Lanao del Sur, including the beheading of two of its captives in April.

It also launched bomb attacks against military camps in the province.

In February, soldiers battled the Maute group for days in Butig, which led to the killing of several of its leaders.

However, the group launched a series of retaliatory attacks. On Aug. 27, its members assaulted the Lanao del Sur provincial jail and freed 23 inmates, including eight of its members earlier arrested at a military checkpoint. —RICHEL V. UMEL AND MARLON RAMOS INQ

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WHAT WENT BEFORE

Fighting between government forces and local terrorists known as the Maute group started in February when the rebels attacked a military detachment in Butig town, Lanao del Sur province.

The weeklong encounter left 24 rebels and two soldiers dead as well as some 20,000 people displaced.

It is being blamed for the bombings of transmission towers of National Grid Corp. of the Philippines and the abduction and beheading

of sawmill workers from Iligan City in Lanao del Norte province in April.

Two months later, another round of military operations led to the fall of Camp Darul Iman, the group's main camp in Butig.

In October, three members were arrested for the Sept. 2 bombing at a night market in Davao City, which killed 15 people and injured 70 others.

Seized from the suspects were materials for making impro-

vised explosive devices (IED), which was detonated through a cell phone. The military has said that the Maute group has an extensive stock of IEDs.

A month later, another suspect who claimed to be a member of Dawlah Islamiyah, an affiliate of Maute group, surrendered to authorities for his participation in the Davao City bombing.

—COMPILED BY INQUIRER RESEARCH
Sources: Inquirer Archives

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Gov't troops retake town hall from Maute group

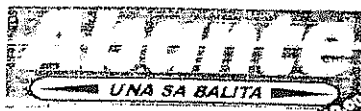
ZAMBOANGA CITY – Government forces have recaptured the town hall occupied by the Islamic State-inspired Maute group in Butig town, Lanao del Sur, military officials said yesterday.

The battle to retake the town left 35 members of the militant group dead and five others wounded, Western Mindanao Command spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan

Jr. said.

He revealed 13 soldiers were wounded in encounters with the armed group, which began on Saturday morning when 200 to 300 militants took over the town after disarming its policemen. The attack forced 16,000 residents to flee. – Roel Pareño, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Evelyn Macairan

29 November 2016



Pahina. 6

Lanao siege: Maute nagkula na sa Butig

Nina Betchai Julian at Al Jacinto

Sa patuloy na sa-
gupaang uniyat na sa
19 miyembro ng Maute
Group ang nasawi sa
Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Ito ang kinumpir-
ma kahapon ni Armed
Forces of the Philip-
pines (AFP) spokes-
man, Brig. Gen. Resti-
tuto Padilla, kung saan
base sa talaan, Lunes
ng umaga, 19 na kasa-
pi ng Maute group ang
nasawi habang anim
naman ang nasugatan
sa hanay ng mga sun-
dalo.

Pero uniyak naman
ni Padilla na nasa ma-
ayos nang kondisyon
ang mga sugatang sun-
dalo na pawang ginaga-
mot pa ngayon.

Ayon kay Padilla,
ang ginawang pagkub-
kob ng Maute Group sa
bahagi ng bayan ng Bu-
tig ay pagpapakita na
malakas ang kanilang
pwersa upang makaka-
lap ng suporta mula sa
mas malalaking iero-
nistang grupo.

Sa huling datos ng
AFP, nasa 100 lang ang

miyembro ng nasabing
grupo at mayroon si-
lang 70 armas pero ayon
kay Padilla, patuloy ang
pag-recruit ng grupo pa-
ra sa mga bagong mi-
yembro.

Patuloy pa ang open-
siba ng militar kaya ha-
los 90 porsyento na ng
mga residente sa bayan
ng Butig, Lanao del Sur
ang inilikas na sa takot
na madamay.

Kinumpirma na-
man ito ni Butig Ma-
yor Dimnatang Pansar
na nagsabing 15,000
residente na sa kanilang
bayan ang nailikas, ka-
tumbas ito ng 90 por-
syento ng populasyon
ng buong Butig.

Nakapirma nang
pansamantala sa Marawi
City ang mga inilikas na
residente na ngayon ay
patuloy na nirarasyunan
ng mga pangangailangan
gaya ng pagkain at mga
damit.

Samantala, ayon
kay Col. Roseller Mu-
nillo, commander ng
103rd Infantry Brigade
ng Philippine Army,

nasa 300 miyembro ng
Maute Group ang nasa
bahagi ng Butig na si-
nasabing karamihan sa
mga miyembro ng gru-
po ay residente rin sa
naturang bayan.

Sinabi ni Murillo na
noong Sabado, nagta-
as pa sila ng bandila ng
ISIS sa isang luma at
abandonadong munici-
pal building.

Hanggang kahapon
bigo pa rin ang mili-
tar na mabawi ang Bu-
tig na kinalalagyan ng
mga armadong grupo
sa ilalim ni Abdullah
Maute, ng Dawla Is-
lamia Fi Cotabato.

Dahil sa hirap ma-
pasok ang lugar pawa-
ng Air Force planes la-
mang ang ginagamit
ng military upang
bombahin ang mga
jihadist.

Samantala, kinum-
pirma ng PNP na ang
bombang narekober ay
katulad sa pampasabog
na ginamit sa Davao
bombling kaya't mala-
mang na kagagawan ito
ng Maute Group.

29 November 2016



Pahina. 2

PATAY SA AFP VS. MAUTE, 35 NA

TINATAYANG nasa 35 na ang patay sa panig ng Maute Group sa nagpapatuloy na opensiba ng militar laban sa teroristang grupo sa Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Ito ang kinumpirma ng pamunuan ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMin Com).

Ayon kay Col. Roseller G. Murillo, commander ng

103rd Infantry Brigade ng Philippine Army, tuluy-tuloy at mas pinalakas pa nila ang kanilang opensiba laban sa Maute Group.

Sa pagtaya ni Murillo, nasa 300 na armadong local terrorists ang umuokupa sa municipal town hall ng Butig. Ang mga terorista umano ay magkahalong Maguindanao at Tagalog-

speaking persons.

Una nang sinabi ni Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla na posibleng madagdagan pa ang 19 na namatay sa nag-

papatuloy na sagupaan.

Nasa 13 sundalo naman daw ang sugatan sa panig ng gobyerno pero karamihan sa mga sugat ay hindi naman malubha.

(Vyne Reyes)

21 November 2016



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Zamboanga peninsula's most wanted killed

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspect in the killing of an Army officer and wounding of two soldiers in Dinas, Zamboanga del Sur was killed in an alleged encounter with government troops on Saturday.

Norhan Ambol, with aliases of Nho and Bungi, and his men clashed with soldiers belonging to the 53rd Infantry Battalion and Regional Public Safety Battalion in Sitio Balaisan in Barangay East Migpulas, said Maj. Filemon Tan, Western Mindanao Command spokesman.

Tan said Ambol's group killed 2nd Lt. Joseph Cartagena and wounded two of his soldiers in an ambush on Nov. 21.

Superintendent Rogelio Alabat, Zamboanga peninsula police spokesman, said Ambol was ranked second on the list of most wanted persons in the region.

– Roel Pareño

28 November 2016



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Army sergeant niratrat sa harap ng pamilya

RAMOS, Tarlac – Pinagbabaril hanggang sa mapatay ang isang sarhento ng Philippine Army ng mga pinaniniwalaang naghiganti sa kanya, tatlong hindi nakilalang armado, sa Barangay Toledo sa bayang ito, nitong Linggo ng gabi.

Kinilala ni SPO1 Ritchel Lactaotao Antonio ang napatay na si S/Sgt. Nicamor Jay Gallardo, 38, nakatalaga sa Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, at residente ng Bgy. Maybubon, Guimba, Nueva Ecija.

Napaulat na pinagbabaril si Gallardo sa harap ng asawa niyang si Adora Gallardo, 35, at ng apat na taong gulang nilang anak.

Dakong 7:10 ng gabi at sakay sa tricycle ang pamilya ng biktima nang harangin sila ng mga suspek na pawang nakatakip ang mukha at pinagbabaril ang sarhento.

Leandro Alborote

29 November 2016

INQUIRER

Page: 15

'Attempted act of terror'

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABalagtasSeeINQ

An improvised explosive device (IED) which the police said was similar to the one used in the Sept. 2 Davao City night market bombing was discovered near the US Embassy in Manila on Monday morning.

Witnesses said someone from a moving taxi hurled a package into a trash bin on Roxas Boulevard, about 200 meters from the embassy, around 2 a.m.

A streetsweeper found the package and alerted the police around 6 a.m. A bomb squad detonated the IED two hours later.

In a press briefing at the Manila Police District, Philippine National Police chief Director General Roland dela Rosa said he considered what happened to be an "attempted act of terrorism."

But the PNP chief was quick to point out that "the government will not use an incident that will cause panic, fear and undue harm on its own people to declare martial law."

The public should also "not accuse the government of being the one behind this," Dela Rosa stressed.

Investigators said the IED

was made up of an 81-millimeter mortar round, a detonating cap, a cellular phone, and a 9-volt battery as power source.

Dela Rosa said it had a "signature" similar to the bombs used by the Maute terrorist group. The military began an operation on Thursday against the group, which staged a deadly bombing in September that killed 15 people in Davao, President Duterte's hometown.

Dela Rosa said whoever deployed the IED did it "not just to scare but to harm," saying its explosion could hurt people and damage structures within a 100-meter radius.

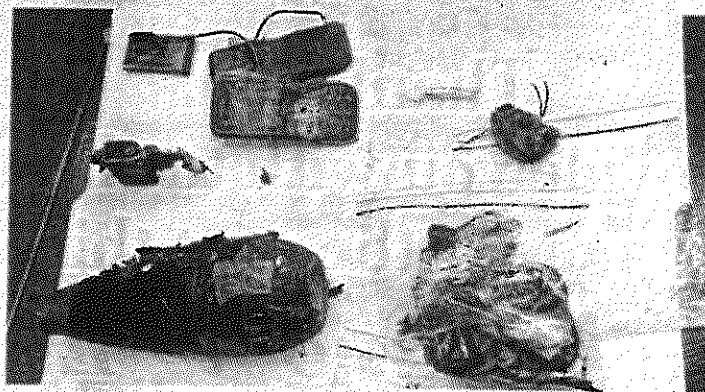
There was no damage from the controlled detonation, said MPD director Senior Supt.

Joel Coronel, although the incident created a traffic jam in the area.

Business at the US Embassy continued as normal, with dozens of Filipinos queuing outside for visa applications. There was no immediate comment about the incident from embassy officials.

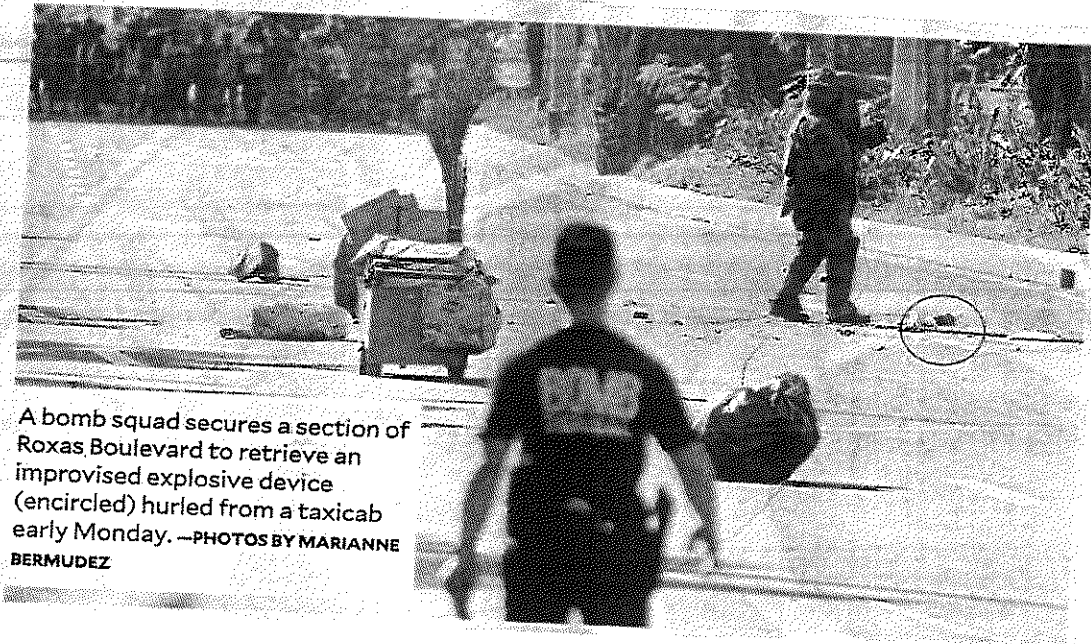
Dela Rosa said Islamic militants who have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group were probably behind the incident.

"Because of an ongoing police-military operation there, [the militants] have many casualties. We can theorize that this is a diversion to loosen our operations," he said. —WITH REUTERS, AFP INQ



The bomb components include an 81-mm mortar round.

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2A

November 2016



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IED found near US Embassy

By NON ALQUITRAN
and REY GALUPO

An improvised bomb was found yesterday in a trash can some 200 meters from the United States embassy on Roxas Boulevard in Manila.

The discovery came as government troops were chasing retreating members of the Maute group, which had taken over a town in Lanao del Sur.

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa dismissed a destabilization scenario and squelched insinuation that the bomb discovery was staged to justify a declaration of martial law.

"We will not use an incident to bring undue harm to the people so that the government can declare martial law. We will not recommend to the President to declare martial law," a visibly irked Dela Rosa said in response to a reporter's question.

Malacañang, through presidential communications

Turn to Page 13

IED From Page 1

secretary Martin Andanar, also assuaged the public's fear of more terror attacks.

"The PNP is on top of the situation and shall beef up security measures in public places, especially where there are big crowds," Andanar said in a statement. "We assure the public that this incident should not be cause for alarm. Business and work continue as normal."

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) director Chief Supt. Oscar Albayalde said street sweeper Ely Garcia found the explosive device at around 6:45 a.m.

Garcia immediately reported her find, which consisted of a cellular phone, with black and red wirings attached to

it and connected to a black circular object covered with electrical and packing tapes.

Albayalde said elements of the Explosive and Ordinance Division (EOD) of the Manila Police District (MPD) arrived at the scene 15 minutes later and sealed off the stretch of Roxas Boulevard between Kalaw Avenue and Pedro Gil street after a bomb sniffing dog sat by the object, confirming it was a bomb.

"The EOD conducted paneling and implemented the render safe procedure (RSP) and evacuated the area of people as they began defusing the bomb," Albayalde said.

The bomb disposal team doused the improvised explosive device (IED) with water,

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and made it disintegrate in 35 minutes, Albayalde said.

"An eyewitness said a taxi stopped several meters from the gate of the US embassy around 2 a.m., a man got out and dumped something in the pile of garbage before speeding down the southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard," said MPD director Senior Supt. Joel Napoleon Coronel.

Police declared the area safe at 7:45 a.m. and reopened the affected portion of Roxas Boulevard and Kalaw Avenue to traffic.

In a statement, US embassy press attaché Molly Koscina thanked Garcia for the discovery of the bomb. "We are thankful that the municipal employee and the PNP took quick and appropriate action to ensure the safety of all," Koscina said.

The IED – consisting of an 81mm mortar, cellphone battery and SIM card, blasting cap and nine-volt battery – is now in the safekeeping of the MPD EOD, the NCRPO chief said.

Albayalde doused speculation the bomb was intended for the US embassy.

"It has nothing to do with the US embassy. As far as we know, had the bomb exploded, it could not reach the embassy building because it has only a 100-meter radius," Albayalde said in an interview.

The NCRPO chief admitted the bomb components were similar to the ones used by the Maute group in the Davao City blast months ago, which killed 15 people and wounded several others.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla admitted

there were similarities but stressed they have no additional information to support such claim.

"You know the signature of the bomb may be similar to the bomb used by the Maute, so there is a possibility, but we don't have information to support that yet. The police is very much in charge of the metropolis for security and we defer to them to lead the investigation, so let's wait for their findings," Padilla said.

"So if the chief PNP says this, then he must have a basis to have said that but for us, we continue to monitor and we'll just assist," he added.

No destabilization plot

Malacañang also shrugged off notions that the discovery of the IED near the embassy

was meant to lay the predicate for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

"The reaction of opposition lawmakers that the discovery of IED near the US embassy along with the movement of the Maute group may be laying a foundation for the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus is reading too much into the situation," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

Andanar, for his part, maintained that the President does not find any compelling reason to suspend the writ of habeas corpus at this point.

"As a strong advocate of the rule of law, he is fully aware of the limits of presidential powers," he said.

– With Cecille Suerte Felipe, Alexis Romero, Pia Lee-Brago

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THE PHILIPPINE
INQUIRER

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10,000-BED CENTER IN FORT MAGSAYSAY

MEGACENTER FOR DRUG REHAB IN ECIJA OPENS TODAY

By Marlon Ramos
and Tina G. Santos
@Team_Inquirer

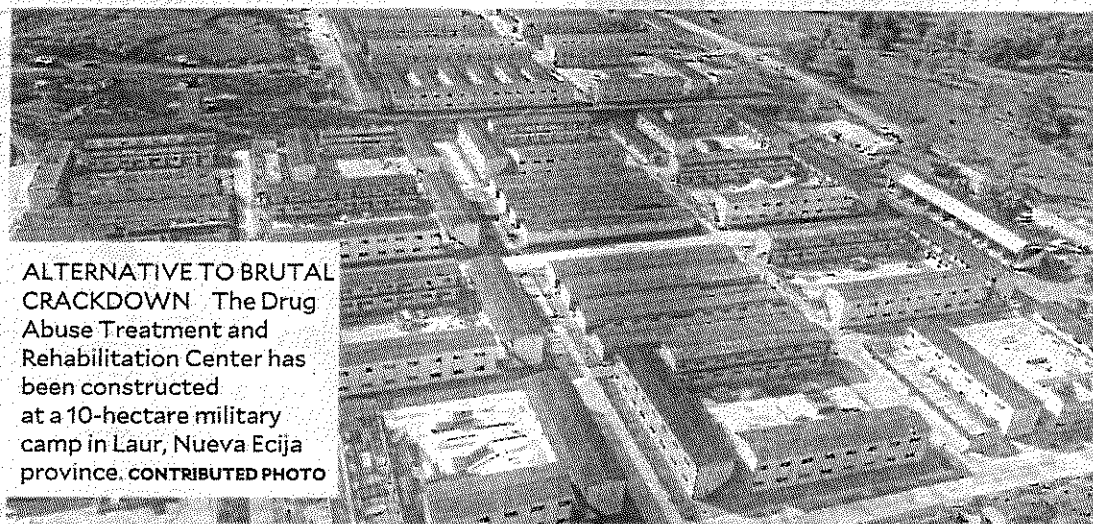
After threatening to kill drug users, President Duterte will witness the opening today of a 10,000-bed "megafacility" for rehabilitation at a military camp in Laur, Nueva Ecija province.

The launch of the sprawling Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (DATRC) in Fort Magsaysay could offer a new approach to Mr. Duterte's brutal strategy in dealing with the narcotics trade.

The 10-hectare camp was one of the sites identified by the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the construction of drug rehabilitation centers as ordered by the President.

"The DATRC is part of the effort to address the health component of the war on drugs even as the law enforcement aspect continues throughout the country to eliminate the drug menace," Malacañang said in a statement.

It said the center would be available to some 700,000 drug users who had turned them-



ALTERNATIVE TO BRUTAL CRACKDOWN The Drug Abuse Treatment and Rehabilitation Center has been constructed at a 10-hectare military camp in Laur, Nueva Ecija province. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTO**

selves in to authorities through "Oplan Tokhang" of the Philippine National Police.

"The government has responded to concerns about the availability and preparedness of facilities to accommodate those willing to submit to treatment by putting up the (DATRC)," the Palace added.

The President, who previously said individuals hooked on illegal substances were already "beyond redemption," would

lead the opening of one of the treatment center's four sections.

Each section could accommodate up to 2,500 patients, Malacañang said.

"We hope that it will really help the victims of the illegal drug trade. The patients are actually victims of the illegal drug trade so we want to ensure that they are provided adequate and compassionate services for rehabilitation," said Health Secretary Paulyn Ubial.

She said the first batch of patients would come from the "overcrowded" drug rehabilitation centers in Central Luzon and nearby areas.

She also said that the new center would be occupied by all-male patients.

The funds for the construction of the center were donated by a Chinese billionaire, real estate magnate Huang Rulun, who was once a trader in Manila's Chinatown district in the 1980s. **INQ**

29 November 2016



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Rody to inaugurate 'mega' drug rehab center in N. Ecija

By ALEXIS ROMERO and MAYEN JAYMALIN

President Duterte will inaugurate today the "mega" drug rehabilitation and treatment center in Nueva Ecija, in line with government efforts to solve the country's narcotics problem.

At the same time, the provincial government of Pangasinan is about to accept a donation of a two-hectare lot in Burgos town for the building of another drug rehabilitation center.

Department of Health (DOH) spokesman Eric Tayag said the 10,000-bed facility in Nueva Ecija would have some 2,000 drug dependents as its first batch of patients.

Tayag said the patients initially come from overcrowded drug rehabilitation facilities in Dagupan, Bataan, Tagaytay and Bicutan.

"The patients are actually victims of the illegal drug trade, so we want to ensure that they are provided adequate and compassionate services for rehabilitation," Health Secretary Paulya Ubial said.

Duterte is expected to inspect the 100,000-square-meter facility and acknowledge the donors during the inauguration, which is set to start at 2 p.m.

The drug facility, located at Fort Mag-saysay, the country's largest military camp, can accommodate about 10,000 patients.

Ubial said the center had initially hired about 1,000 personnel.

Huang Kulan, a Chinese real estate billionaire who traded in Binondo, Manila in 1986, funded the 100,000-square-meter rehabilitation center, whose construction started last July.

The government is planning to build three more drug treatment and reha-

bilitation facilities in various parts of the country.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) is providing a Medical Detoxification Package worth P10,000 for its drug dependent members.

PhilHealth said the package, a one-time benefit attainment, is the agency's contribution to the government's fight against the illegal drug menace.

In Pangasinan, the provincial board has authorized the governor to sign and accept a donation of a two-hectare lot for the building of a drug rehabilitation center in the province.

Fourth district board member Jeremy Agerico Rosario, who authored the approved resolution, said the lot donor, former Burgos town mayor Demetrio Cabiles, with consent of his wife Belen Cabiles, had duly signed the Deed of Donation in 1992.

An earlier provincial resolution approved on June 8, 1992, authorized the provincial governor to accept the donation of Cabiles.

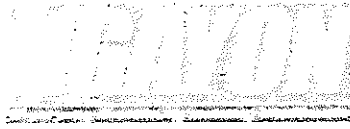
The lot is located in San Vicente, Burgos but the donation was not consummated until now, as the Deed of Donation was not yet signed by the then governor and the lot not yet accepted by the province.

The lot can be used primarily by the province as a venue for rehabilitation center in order to help drug users undergo treatment, the latest resolution said.

The provincial government's aim to build a rehabilitation center inside the sprawling Camp Fito Abat in Manaoag town was disapproved, Rosario said.

– With Eva Visperas

29 November 2016



Pahina. 2

Loyal pa din ang AFP, PNP kay Pangulo — solons

Malaki ang paniniwala ng mga kongresista na mananatili pa rin ang suporta ng militar at pulisya kay Pangulong Duterte sa kabila ng kontrobersyal niyang posisyon sa mga isyu kabilang na ang pagpapalibing sa Libingan ng mga Bayani kay dating pangulong Ferdinand Marcos.

Sinabi nina Deputy Speaker at Batangas Rep. Raneo Abu may mataas na standard at professionalism ang Armed Forces of the Philippine at Philippine National Police (AFP-PNP) kaya sigurado na walang mangyayari sa nais ng mga kritiko ni Duterte na pabagsakin siya dahil sa isyu ng pagpapalibing kay Marcos.

Ayon naman kay Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III at Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Rodel Batocabe na ang mandato ng AFP at PNP ay maglingkod at magprotekta sa konstitusyon at sa halal na pangulo kaya walang duda na ito ang siyang gagawin ng mga sundalo at kapulisan.

Para naman kay Batocabe, na walang duda ang suporta ng pulis at military kay Pangulong Duterte, kaya wala nang puwang sa bansa ang coup d'etat na naganap noong dekada 80.

Matatandaan na sa ilang buwan pa lamang sa kanyang administrasyon ay naharap na sa ibat ibang kontrobersiya si Pangulong Duterte kabilang na dito ang Marcos burial, extra-judicial killings, anti-United States (US) position, pagsusulong ng Independent foreign policy at pakikipagmabuthan sa Russia at China. Sa kabila nito, tiwala pa rin ang mga nabanggit na mambabatas na kapakanan lamang ng mga Filipino ang hangad ni Pangulong Duterte. (Gemma Garcia)

21 November 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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2 motions contest Marcos burial at LNMB

By **REY G. PANALIGAN**

Two motions were filed yesterday to reconsider the Supreme Court's (SC) November 8 decision that allowed the burial of the remains of the late former President

Ferdinand E. Marcos at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB).

The motions were filed by the so-called victims of enforced disappearances and human rights violations represented by Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman and former Bayan Muna Rep. Saturnino Ocampo, respectively.

The groups claimed that the burial of the Marcos remains at the LNMB last November 18 does not render their motions moot and academic.

Lagman's group pressed for the exhumation of the Marcos remains and the conduct of forensic examination to determine what was actually buried at the LNMB.

In a 9-5 vote with one abstention, the SC allowed Marcos burial at the LNMB. Ten days from the issuance of the SC decision that lifted the status quo ante order (SQAQO) against the burial, the remains of Marcos were interred at the LNMB.

Seven petitions against the burial, including those filed by the groups of Lagman and Ocampo, were dismissed by the SC.

Earlier, Lagman had sought the re-issuance of the SQAQO, while Ocampo had pleaded the SC to cite in contempt officials of the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for allowing the interment.

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No truce by December – CPP

By Ted Tuvera

What truce?

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) yesterday denied that it is about to enter into a bilateral ceasefire with the government by December 10.

In a strongly worded statement issued by the CPP Information Bureau, the communist group said that Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) chief negotiator to the National Democratic Front (NDF) and Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III is merely covering up the government's failure to give in to the insurgents' demands.

"To put it realistically, a bilateral ceasefire agreement is most likely not to be forged before or around December 10," the CPP said.

"Bello is conjuring the illusion that a bilateral ceasefire is

already in the works in the hope of drawing away attention from the fact that the GRP, so far, has failed to meet its obligation to release political prisoners en masse through a presidential amnesty proclamation," it added.

The CPP also assailed the GRP's state security forces for continuing offensives against them which violates their respective unilateral ceasefires.

"The GRP has yet to rein in the soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) which continue to conduct armed suppression operations in the countryside among the *barrios* in the guerrilla zones and revolutionary areas," said the CPP.

The communists said that they want President Duterte, as commander in chief, to order the ejection of military forces in areas where the New People's Army (NPA) operate as well as halting

the government's continued anti-insurgency program called "Oplan Bayanihan."

"If the Duterte regime will continue to turn a deaf ear to the clamor for it to end Oplan Bayanihan, it might just force the hand of the revolutionary forces to defend the rights and welfare of the broad masses within the guerrilla zones and defend the peace talks against its fascist saboteurs in the AFP," the CPP warned.

Bello, at a Palace briefing last week, appeared to optimistic about the potential bilateral ceasefire declaration between the GRP and the NDF by December 10.

Bello noted that the hurdles to the forging of a bilateral ceasefire accord were technical in nature, such as coming up with common definitions of "hostile acts" and "buffer zones."

28 November 2016

INQUIRER

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The principles of war at play in the war on drugs

Has the war on drugs being waged by the Duterte administration benefited from using the principles of war? Let us look at the conduct and the consequences.

War is always synonymous with struggle, strife, conflict, and sufferings. We have seen it in many forms: War on terror, insurgency war, wars of national liberation, and lately the utmost priority of this administration, the war on drugs.

Most wars that resulted in success and victory were achieved by adherence to the Principles of War. The purpose of this paper is not to justify the conduct of the war on drugs, but to evaluate its present and potential operational results based on these principles.

According to Carl Von Clausewitz, a noted military strategist, "No one starts a war or rather no one in his senses ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war."

President Duterte declared a war on drugs, a campaign promise he made haste to put into action from the get-go. When he made this declaration, it was very clear in his mind that the cause was noble and urgent: To dismantle the infrastructure and all the apparatuses of narcotics, and end the suffering that the trade and distribution of illegal drugs has brought to many Filipinos.

Judging by his performance as Davao Mayor, the platform that he presented during the election campaign, he prepared for this war a long time ago, not on a whim nor click of a finger, nor an election propaganda. It was all for real, clear-cut, serious, and calculated. And regardless of all its negative feedback, he remains unfazed, with no in-

tention to withdraw or slow down. He has emerged more of a warrior rather than a politician, true to his consistent record as a public servant.

Given the magnitude of information made available to him, he was able to conclude the severity of the problem. That defined his explicit objective.

When you go to war, you develop a plan, a template as a guidepost based on facts, assumptions, physical reconnaissance, and even gut feel. In military parlance, this is called intelligence preparation of the battlefield. In business, it is environmental scan.

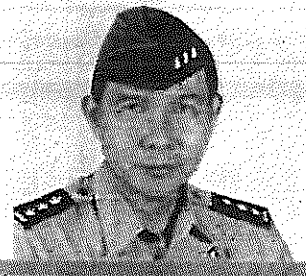
Duterte did not mind who would be affected: The powerful politicians, oligarchs, celebrities, drug lords and the masses as well. He knew the real enemy. This translates to the principle of objective. The basic purpose of war is to destroy the enemy and their will to fight.

Objective determines the end-state that goes down the line in the chain of command, and the levels of governance, clearly understood by the officers, rank and file so that the mission is undertaken in sync. If there is a gap in the chain, the commitment will not be total, and this could result in operational lapses.

So far, so good, except the sensationalized treatment and frenzied reaction to the killings. War has its own direct and collateral damages; even peace operations are not exempt.

In this campaign, the Commander in Chief moved his forces, assets and wherewithal directly to bear on the enemy without letup, decisively in pursuit of a clearly defined objective. This follows the principle of offensive.

You conduct offensive oper-



MAPPING THE FUTURE

JAIME S. DE LOS SANTOS



When you go to war, you develop a plan, a template as a guidepost based on facts, assumptions, physical reconnaissance, and even gut feel

ations to seize the initiative, giving little space to your enemy to maneuver, consolidate and retaliate. The full force of the law enforcement agencies with military support initiated simultaneous and relentless offensive actions in all fronts that sent the narco forces in disarray and confusion.

When you are on the offensive, the momentum must be

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maintained. You do not divide your forces. Concentrate your strength on the most vulnerable spot that will weaken and decimate their resolve and fighting spirit.

Having identified the National Bureau of Prison as the center of gravity, all elements possessing "combat power" were massed to bear on the facility and its personalities. Other secondary objectives located in different parts of the country were likewise subdued before they can even reorganize. The principle of mass was applied.

In the employment of forces, it is essential to coordinate and allocate forces and assets at the most decisive point to achieve maximum results. Thus by employing government forces and agencies at selective targets, calibrating actions depending on the need and severity of threat, the principle of economy of force was achieved.

As it happened, the campaign against illegal drug syndicates, supporters and users was launched beyond unexpected proportions. The whole nation was surprised. Never in the history under any President has there been a serious campaign to fight the illegal drugs problem. Either some leaders were sleeping with the enemy, or had depended on the goods to preserve and perpetuate political power, or there were just too many who depended on the drug trade for their livelihood. In truth, many simply could not care less.

It was thus a big surprise when the full pressure was unleashed by Mr. Duterte. Living up to his promise, he let the dogs out, and how. The affected sectors had very little time to recover and recapitulate. The extensive inventory of intelli-

gence information facilitated the application of the principle of surprise.

In the same mode, he made moves and actions unpredictable, always keeping the enemy off balance. This principle of maneuver is slowly decimating the ranks of active narco personalities. The conduct of all operations were clear and understood in simple but comprehensive operational plan and concomitantly, the principle of security was never compromised, or at least minimized.

The planning, execution and the follow through appear to be seamless, uncomplicated, fully understood by all the actors and participants in the war operations. It conformed to the principle of simplicity.

The principle of the unity of command was very distinct and pronounced. The Commander in Chief has explicitly and unequivocally stated that he is responsible for the success or failure in this campaign. He has projected the personality of a combat commander: Strong, decisive, fearless, and uncompromising leadership. He has stated time and again the he will see this through, regardless of the cost, even offering his life for this worthy cause if it need be. This quality of leadership extracts unquestioned obedience to command, generates high morale and boosts esprit d' corps to achieve the avowed mission.

Mr. Duterte's war on drugs portrays a design crafted using the principles of war. The war has been transformed into a crusade whose success or failure will dictate the values and quality of life of our people in the succeeding generations.

While this war has been explosive and controversial, it

cannot be otherwise. War has high risks and trade-offs. The effects can only be mitigated but it can never be discounted. This war will be long and protracted. The effects on the other sectors might take a toll in the short-run but its strategic value in the medium- and long-term will reap satisfactory benefits for the nation.

It must be pointed out that the setbacks that are effecting the nation at least temporarily in the field of international relations and economy is not a by-product of the war on drugs but media bias and exploitation on an international scale. There is too the impact of the uncalibrated, impulsive and unpredictable statements made by the President on various issues.

In due time, the right mix of intent, expression and action will be achieved. But what is essential and important is that all must be involved, as this war on drugs goes full steam ahead toward victory. This war is not his war alone, it is our war, it is our future. INQ



The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines or MAP. The author is a member of the M.A.P. National Issues Committee, the 42nd Commanding General of the Philippine Army, the 1ST Force Commander of the UN Peacekeeping Force in East Timor, presently part-time Professorial Lecturer at UP Diliman, and Director, Graduate Studies at the Manuel L. Quezon University. Feedback at map@map.org.ph and jaimedlsantos@yahoo.com; jimmydlsantos@gmail.com
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Postscript

By FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Is Du30 confused, or confusing ASG?

IS PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte just trying to confuse the enemy – or is he himself now confused on how to deal with the Abu Sayyaf group that is sowing terror in the South while claiming allegiance to the Islamic State advancing across Muslim areas?

Before he assumed office last June 30, Duterte was saying he did not consider the Abu Sayyaf an enemy, that it is a link to achieving peace in Mindanao. He offered it the choice of talking or fighting.

But four months ago, he ruled out talks with the terrorist group, telling a crowd at Malacañang: "I will not deal with persons with extreme brutality, there is no redeeming factor or reason for me to sit down and talk with criminals." (We agree – fdp)

To magnify its being a force to contend with, the Abu Sayyaf is now claiming links to the Islamic State, the self-proclaimed caliphate attempting to establish by force its political and theological authority over the world's Muslims starting with those in Iraq and Syria.

Displaying violence to catch the eye of IS, the Abu Sayyaf has made a big show of displaying IS flags and beheading kidnap victims (another hostage was executed IS-style last August) that they originally abducted just to collect ransom.

The well-known Duterte "kill 'em" approach apparently having failed to scare the Abu Sayyaf, the President seems to have decided to shift to being more conciliatory, announcing last Friday that he was now open to start peace talks with the terrorists.

He explained to the press in Zamboanga City the shift: "I can be nasty and I can be a bad boy, but I am talking about a nation. *Kung mag-full blast ako diyan invasion, ipadala ko talaga mga sundalo pati bomba na.*

"But I cannot do that because there will be huge losses *pati* civilians which is really what matters most. If you can really stop it for a while, while we talk *pati* Abu Sayyaf, I'm ready to talk to them."

The Commander-in-Chief said he was willing to open the talks himself: "*Wala man rin silang makukuha kung patayin nila ako.*"

We have not heard of any Abu Sayyaf response to the President's invitation to dialogue – we think not because his *wrong-sulong* antics are confusing the terrorists.



• IS flag flew over Lanao town hall!

IT IS disconcerting to see on TV the Islamic State flag, instead of the national colors, flying even for a short while at the old town hall of Butig, Lanao del Sur, where members of the Maute jihadist group hid Saturday morning when pursued by government troops.

The soldiers were chasing the heavily armed group of about 200 led by Abdullah Maute, a Jordanian-trained terrorist who had organized the jihadist Dawlah Islamiya.

While it was reassuring that the municipal building and other structures were recovered, with at least 11 Maute fighters reportedly killed, the fragile security situation in the area where the terrorists have relatives is cause for concern. A reassessment is obviously needed.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesman, said in a radio interview: "We launched the operation with the aim of capturing the leader of the group sowing chaos in parts of Lanao, Maguindanao and Cotabato. They are also responsible for the recent bombing in Davao City."

The fight in Butig flared up after the military captured in June the group's Darul Iman stronghold. The Maute band fled to Butig as the military pounded their old lairs with artillery and air strikes.

Fighting began around 10 a.m. Saturday when troops from the 49th Infantry Battalion engaged Maute members for some 45 minutes at barangay Bayabao Poblacion, after which the terrorists withdrew.

As they escaped, the terrorists took time to hoist what looked like an IS flag at the abandoned town hall and positioned themselves in the nearby national high school and mosque. The flag was taken down shortly after by government troops.

TV viewers also noted the risks being taken by the media, especially TV crews who had to be on-the-spot to capture and report the fast-moving scenes. In such situations, bombs and bullets would not discriminate between combatants and news reporters.

One wonders if media owners have provisions for ensuring the safety and care (in case anything untoward happens) of their personnel.

Major Filemon Tan, Western Mindanao Command spokesman, said Maute had renamed his group Dawlah Islamiya to impress foreign terrorists and get funding. He blamed the group for the Davao bombing last September that left 14 people dead and wounded 70 others.

He said many Maute members are also with the Alkhobar kidnapping syndicate which used to be led by former lieutenants of Moro Islamic Liberation Front chieftain Hashim Salamat who broke away from the MILF after he died.

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Lanao del Sur officials reported yesterday that they were providing relief to some 2,000 displaced villagers. They said food rations were distributed last Sunday, with promises of more to come.

Local officials and barangay leaders said no fewer than 17 members of the Maute group had been killed and that the rest had been driven away. It was not clear who did the body count and gathered the corpses.

They said retreating terrorists took farm animals with them, although it seemed difficult for fleeing fighters to be pulling slow-moving livestock.

One problem of media in situations like that one in far-away Butig is their usual inability to secure timely first-hand information and their usually having to rely on reports of authorities and local folk.

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21 November 2016

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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BASKETBALL

AFP snaps 2-game skid in UNTV Cup

Games Sunday

(S.T.R.I.K.E. gym, Bacoor, Cavite)

2 p.m. – Senate vs MMDA

3:30 p.m. – Ombudsman vs BFP

5 p.m. – AFP vs Malacañang

Standings:

Group A: Malacañang (5-0), BFP (3-2), AFP (3-2), Ombudsman (2-3), MMDA (2-3), Senate (0-5)

Group B: Customs (6-0), Judiciary (5-1), PNP (4-2), NHA (3-3), HOR (2-4), GSIS (1-5), DOJ (0-6)

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) rediscovered its deadly form in time and clobbered Ombudsman, 103-85, to revive its faltering second round bid in the 5th UNTV Cup held recently at the Pasig City Sports Center.

The reigning titlists got 25 points from Boyet Bautista to snap a two-game skid and improve to 3-2 in the 6-team Group A elims, tying idle Bureau of Fire Protection for second to third places.

The AFP Cavaliers, however, need to beat the Malacañang Kamao on Sunday to assure themselves a smooth passage

into the second round – same thing for Bureau of Fire Protection which faces Ombudsman in an all-important match.

The MMDA Black Wolves, who are tied with Ombudsman at 2-3, collide with the Senate Defenders.

Meantime, former champion Judiciary closed out its elimination campaign on a high note by blasting the House of Representatives Solons, 114-94, in the 7-team Group B elims.

With the win, the Judiciary Magis finished second with a 5-1 card while PNP took the No. 3 slot following a 98-80 drubbing of GSIS.

Newcomer Bureau of Customs lorded over the group with an immaculate 6-0 mark. National Housing Authority took the No. 4 spot with an even 3-3 card.

The top four teams in each group will play another single round carrying their win-loss records in their group elims.

ONLINE NEWS

29 NOVEMBER 2016

STAKEHOLDERS RECOGNITION | AFP honors colleges, universities in Mindanao

Posted by Lui Claudio on November 28, 2016 at 3:50 AM

CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) recognized 22 colleges and universities in Mindanao for providing educational support to dependents of soldiers killed in action, Friday, 25 November 2016 in Davao City, AFP Public Affairs Office Chief Marine Colonel Edgard A Arevalo said. "The awardees are among the academic institutions that provide free education or tuition fee discounts to dependents of our soldiers, particularly those battle casualties or died in line of duty," Arevalo disclosed.

The schools which include four state universities in Mindanao were recognized during the Stakeholders Recognition Ceremony at the Royal Mandaya Hotel in Davao City.

The AFP Educational Benefit System Office (EBSO) headed by Cdr Dwight Steven M Dulnoan, Chief/General Manager spearheaded the activity.

Lieutenant General Reynaldo B Guerrero, Commander, AFP Eastern Mindanao Command attended as the Guest of Honor and Speaker

The AFP EESO also awarded 14 of its scholars for their outstanding academic and extra-curricular achievements in the past school year. The student awardees came from Zamboanga, Bukidnon, Butuan, and Davao.

"Most of our scholars in EBSO are dependents of soldiers who were killed during military operations. Helping them through educational support is the least we can do to repay the ultimate sacrifice their fathers did to protect our country," Cdr Dulnoan said.

Currently, there are 1,282 EBSO Scholars in Mindanao. This is 33% of the 3,999 total grantees nationwide, as of November 2016.

The EBSO has been providing educational assistance to dependents of military personnel, mostly battle casualties for over 16 years now. It is presently under the supervision of the AFP Deputy Chief of Staff, LtGen Salvador Melchor B Mison Jr.

Educational programs in EBSO include law-mandated programs, and those by virtue of partnerships with educational, government, socio-civic and financial institutions.

Prior to the event on Friday, EBSO visited major schools and institutions around Mindanao to encourage them to join in their mission.

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"The AFP is grateful for its partners in the academe for supporting our advocacy to help our soldiers' families secure a brighter future. This is essential in uplifting the morale and welfare of our troops, especially those in the front lines," General Ricardo R Visaya, AFP Chief of Staff said.

"The AFP is optimistic that an increase in the soldiers' morale will amplify their resolve to better perform our mandate to secure the sovereignty of our nation," General Visaya added.

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AFP mum on Maute Group involvement on foiled IED attack near US Embassy

From the Philippine News Agency (Nov 28): AFP mum on Maute Group involvement on foiled IED attack near US Embassy

While the disarmed improvised explosive device (IED) found near the United States Embassy in Manila may be similar to the bombs being made by the Maute Group, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has declined to comment on the involvement of the bandits on the foiled bombing attack.

"You know the signature of the bomb may be similar to the bomb used by the Maute (Group), so there is (that) possibility but we don't have information to support than yet," AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said Monday.

The IED disarmed near the US Embassy is composed of an 81mm mortar and a cellphone triggering device.

Earlier Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald Dela Roca said the IED is similar to the one detonated in the Sept. 2 Davao City blast which killed 15 people and wounded 70 others.

"The police is very much in charge of the metropolis for security and we defer to them to lead the investigation so let's wait for their findings, so if the Chief, PNP says this, then he must have a basis to have said that, but for us we continue to monitor and we'll just assist," Padilla added.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=943932>

2 more troops wounded in latest encounter with Maute Group

From the Philippine News Agency (Nov 28): 2 more troops wounded in latest encounter with Maute Group

Two more troopers conducting clearing operations in Maute-infested Butig town, Lanao Del Sur were wounded in a clash early Monday morning, bringing the total of government troops wounded in the ongoing dislodgement operations to six.

This was disclosed by 1st Infantry Division public affairs office chief Lt. Col. Benedicto Maniquis in a message to the Philippine News Agency.

The clash took place around 6:30 a.m. at the vicinity of Barangay Sundig in Butig, he added.

Troops from the 51st Infantry Battalion, 15th Infantry Battalion, 11th and 15th Division Reconnaissance Companies were conducting clearing operations in Barangay Sundig when they encountered an estimated 30 armed men, triggering a firefight that wounded two members of the 51st Infantry Battalion.

An undetermined number of the bandits were believed killed and wounded in this latest encounter, Maniquis said.

Since the start of military operations against the Maute Group Saturday, a total of 11 bandits were killed and five wounded.

Dislodgement operations are now ongoing against the terrorists who are holed-up in the abandoned Butig town hall.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=1&sid=&nid=1&rid=943871>

Police, Army hunt down armed men in attempted burning of passenger bus in South Cotabato town

From the Philippine News Agency (Nov 28): Police, Army hunt down armed (men) in attempted burning of passenger bus in South Cotabato town

Police and Army personnel launched pursuit operations against a group of armed men who attempted to burn another passenger bus in the outskirts of Tantanagan town in South Cotabato on Sunday night.

Sr. Supt. Franklin Alvero, South Cotabato police director, said Monday armed men claiming to be members of the New People's Army (NPA) tried but failed to set afire a Husky Bus Line unit with license plate 658-756 at a portion of Barangay Maibo in Tantanagan town at past 7 p.m.

He said no one was reported hurt from among the six passengers, driver and conductor of the bus, which originated from Tacurong City and was en route to Koronadal City when the incident happened.

Citing accounts from witnesses, the police official said one of the still unidentified suspects initially boarded the airconditioned bus in front of the Fit Mart department department store in Tacurong City.

He said the suspect then asked to get off along the national highway in Barangay Maibo in Tantanagan.

Upon stopping, Alvero said several armed men boarded the bus, directed the passengers to disembark and commandeered it towards a portion of the nearby Lagos farm located about 50 meters away from the highway.

"They poured five gallons of gasoline on the bus and tried to set it on fire but did not ignite as they were reportedly rushing to leave the area," he said.

Alvero said the circumstances of the incident was similar to the burning in the last two weeks of three passenger bus units of the Yellow Bus Line Inc. (YBL) and heavy equipment of four companies working on government projects in parts of region and the neighboring areas.

A YBL bus unit bus was burned last Saturday in Magsaysay town in Davao del Sur. Two other bus units of the company were torched in Tupi, South Cotabato and Kiamba, Sarangani on Nov. 14 and 24.

Four heavy equipment were burned at government project sites in Barangay Alegria in Alabel, Sarangani, Barangay San Jose in this city, Bagumbayan in Sultan Kudarat and Matanao in Davao del Sur.

The suspects declared during the attacks that the owners of the concerned companies had failed to pay revolutionary taxes to their group.

"The modus was the same as in all these previous attacks," Alvero said.

Husky Bus Line, which services routes in parts of South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao, is owned and operated by the Biocoop Husky Transport Services Inc. based in this city.

Alvero said officials of the bus company did report threats from any group prior to the incident.

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He said they could not yet conclude whether the attacks were carried out by the NPA, which has not yet issued any statement or declaration regarding them.

"Our investigation has been continuing and there are ongoing operations against the possible suspects," he said.

He said the operations are backed by troops from the Army's 1002nd and 601st Brigades.

But he assured that they strictly abide by the government's declared ceasefire with the NPA in line with the ongoing peace process.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=943825>

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Army's 4th ID chief optimistic that government, rebels forge joint ceasefire

From the Philippine News Agency (Nov 28): **Army's 4th ID chief optimistic that government, rebels forge joint ceasefire**

A top military official here expressed optimism on Monday that the government and communist rebels would agree to a bilateral ceasefire as the Christmas holidays near.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal, Jr., Army's 4th Infantry Division (4ID) commander, said that at present both government and rebels had separately declared a unilateral ceasefire as both parties observe a "defensive mode."

Madrigal said that an official declaration of a joint unilateral ceasefire by the government and communist rebels would ensure the total suspension of combat operations by both sides during the holiday season.

He said the bilateral ceasefire comes with an effective mechanism like the creation of a monitoring committee to ensure that no armed violation would be committed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and New Peoples' Army during the observance of the cessation of hostilities.

"So far, peace is holding," Madrigal said, as he hoped that the situation would sustain until Christmas time and even after December.

He said that everybody has benefited from the ongoing ceasefire as formal peace talks between the negotiators from both parties had been conducted in the past few weeks in Oslo, Norway.

Madrigal said he personally supports the peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF, the umbrella organization of the leftists).

Madrigal also assured the rebels that the continued presence of soldiers in rural communities was only to implement the peace and development program of the military and the local governments.

The military top brass issued the statement in response to the rebel accusations that the Phil. Army was conducting surveillance and questioning residents in remote villages in Northern Mindanao.

Earlier, Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, Army's 4ID spokesperson, said that soldiers would only enter a community upon the invitation of the local officials.

Besides, the Army soldiers would only go to the communities in order to extend assistance in the form of infrastructure development and medical missions.

Martinez said that the AFP is ready to lend a helping hand because the military has the equipment and the expertise in implementing infrastructure projects.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=944038>

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