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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

02 October 2016

Sunday

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

NEWS HEADLINES

02 OCTOBER 2016



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

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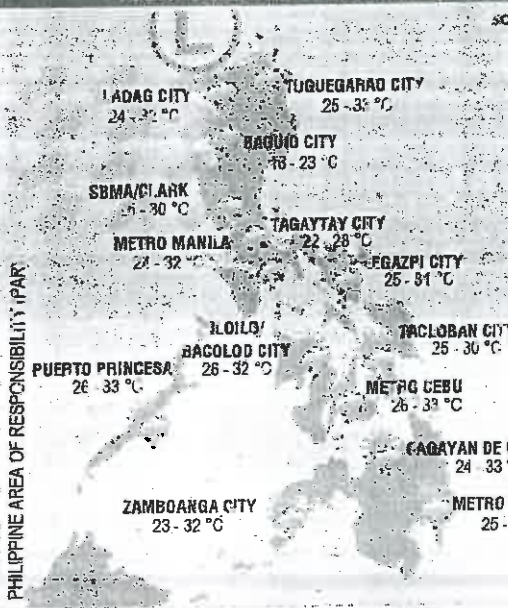


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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | OCTOBER 2, 2016 | SUNDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SOUTHWEST MONSOON AFFECTING WESTERN SECTION OF LUZON
LOW PRESSURE AREA
276 KM WEST OF
BASCO, SAKINES
(October 1:50 AM)

SUNRISE 5:46 AM

SUNSET 5:45 PM

MOONRISE 7:41 AM

MOONSET 7:26 PM

NEW MOON OCT 1 8:11 AM

FIRST QUARTER OCT 9 12:34 PM

LOW TIDE 4:57 PM
0.85 Meter

HIGH TIDE 1:34 PM
0.94 Meter


MANILA SOUTH HARBOR

Partly cloudy with times cloud - when rain - hail and/or thunder storm.

Cloudy clear with times drizzle and/or thunder storm.

OCT 2		OCT 3		OCT 4		OCT 5		OCT 6		OCT 7	
METRO MANILA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 31 °C	TAGAYTAY	22 - 27 °C	23 - 27 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C			
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C			
LADAG	24 - 31 °C	25 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C			
BAGUIO	16 - 23 °C	16 - 23 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 31 °C	25 - 30 °C	ZAMBOANGA	23 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C			
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C	METRO CEBU	26 - 32 °C	25 - 27 °C						

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INGULIER

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Rody 'Hitler' talk reaps int'l censure

Israel seeks clarification of PH leader's words

By Jaymee T. Gamil

PRESIDENT Duterte yesterday faced a barrage of criticism from the United Nations, Israel, Western governments and international rights groups for drawing parallels with his brutal war on drugs and Adolf Hitler's extermination of Jews before and during World War II.

Even longtime ally the United States has hinted at impatience with Mr. Duterte over his latest inflammatory comments, with Pentagon chief Ashton Carter and the US Embassy in

Manila both saying the Philippine leader's remark about being "happy to slaughter" 3 million drug addicts is "deeply troubling."

Early on Friday, Mr. Duterte, speaking to reporters at Davao International Airport after arriving from a two-day official visit to Vietnam, said his critics were threatening to bring him before an international court for the killing of thousands of people in his bloody war on

drugs and complained that they were picturing him as "a cousin of Hitler" even if nothing had been proven against him.

Noting that Hitler had murdered millions of Jews, Mr. Duterte said he was also willing to kill the 3 million drug addicts in the Philippines if it were the only way to solve the country's drug problem.

"There are 3 million drug addicts (in the Philippines). I'd

RODY/A12

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From page A1

be happy to slaughter them, he said.

"If Germany had Hitler, the Philippines would have ..." he said, pausing and pointing to himself.

"You know my victims. I would like (them) to be all criminals to finish the problem of my country and save the next generation from perdition," he said.

Clarification sought

Israel's foreign ministry yesterday said it was "unfortunate" that Mr. Duterte chose to invoke Hitler and the Holocaust in his bloody anticrime war.

Ministry spokesperson Emmanuel Nahshon said Israel was convinced Mr. Duterte would "find a way to clarify his words."

World Jewish Congress president Ronald Lauder on Friday said Mr. Duterte's remarks were "revolting" and demanded that he retract them and apologize.

"Drug abuse is a serious issue. But what President Duterte said is not only profoundly inhumane, but it demonstrates an appalling disrespect for human life that is truly heartbreaking for the democratically elected leader of a great country," Lauder said in a statement issued from Jerusalem, where he was attending the funeral of former Israeli leader Shimon Peres.

Yesterday, UN special adviser on the prevention of genocide, Adam Dieng, said Mr. Duterte's remarks were "deeply disrespectful of the right to life of all human beings."

In a statement issued from New York, Dieng stressed that the Holocaust was one of the darkest periods of the history of hu-



IN HIS ELEMENT
Amid growing international outrage over his controversial remarks, President Duterte stays on course as far as his speaking engagements are concerned. Back on his home turf, the President addresses an audience of law enforcers at the 9th National Biennial Summit on Women Community Policing in Davao City on Friday.

MALACANANG PHOTC

mankind, and that any glorification of the cruel and criminal acts committed by those responsible was unacceptable and offensive.

Dieng urged Mr. Duterte "to exercise restraint in the use of language that could exacerbate discrimination, hostility and violence, and encourage the commission of criminal acts which, if widespread or systematic, could amount to crimes against humanity."

Dieng also exhorted Mr. Duterte to support instead the investigation of the reported killings in his war on drugs and crime.

'Deeply troubling'

Speaking on the sidelines of a regional security summit of Southeast Asian ally nations, Carter, the US defense chief, said he had not discussed Mr. Duterte's comments with his Philippine counterpart, Delfin Lorenzana, who also attended the meeting.

"Just speaking personally for myself, I find these comments deeply troubling," Carter said.

The Pentagon chief noted that the Philippines is a longtime US treaty ally.

"Like all alliances, it depends on the continuation of a sense of shared interests," he added. "So far in US-Philippine history we have had that. We look forward to continuing that. But that's something that we continue to discuss with the Philippine government."

In Manila, the US Embassy issued a statement yesterday calling Mr. Duterte's comments "deeply troubling."

"America's partnership with the Philippines has long been based on a foundation of shared values, including our shared belief in human rights and dignity," US Embassy press attaché Molly Koscina said.

"President Duterte's recent comments depart from that common tradition and are deeply troubling," she said.

'Unacceptable'

The German government on Friday said it called in Philip-

pine Ambassador Melita S. Sta. Maria-Thomaczek and told her that Mr. Duterte's likening his deadly war on drugs to Hitler's effort to exterminate Jews were "unacceptable."

"Any comparison of the singular atrocities of the Holocaust with anything else is totally unacceptable," ministry spokesperson Martin Schaefer told reporters.

Germany, Europe's top economy, has expressed serious concerns about Mr. Duterte's crackdown on illegal drugs, which has cost the lives of more than 3,000 people in three months and threatened a breakdown of the rule of law in the Philippines.

"Those killings—and the government's celebration of them as evidence of a successful 'war on drugs'—are nothing less than mass killings disguised as 'crime control,'" Philip Kine, deputy director for Asia of Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

In an interview on CNN on Friday night, Kine noted that

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Mr. Duterte had warned that more people would be killed, and urged urgent action by the international community.

Amnesty International (AI) also slammed Mr. Duterte's remarks.

"With this latest outburst President Duterte has sunk to new depths. Governments—both in the region and around the world—should speak out immediately and condemn these outrageous statements," Josef Benedict, AI deputy director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, said in a statement issued on Friday.

"They serve no discernible purpose other than to put more lives at risk," he said.

"Since coming to power, there has been a surge of state-sanctioned violence and unlawful killings across the Philippines. Instead of stopping and condemning these human rights violations, and ensuring those responsible are held to account, he has vowed to escalate them," Benedict said.

"Mass killings under President Duterte must end," he added.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) expressed alarm over Mr. Duterte's comments.

Public admission

"[Mr. Duterte's words are] something we are concerned about because [they create] the backdrop, the bigger message arc. We'll monitor closely the possible implication and meaning of those words," CHR chair Jose Luis Gascon said by phone yesterday.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman said Mr. Duterte's remarks were a public admission of being behind "Hitler-like killings" in the

war on drugs.

"President Duterte's rhetoric has worsened from recklessness to culpability, from accusations to confession of guilt," Lagman said.

He said Mr. Duterte's comments were an attempt to justify the killing of drug addicts without due process.

"His having compared himself to Hitler, who caused the slaughter of 6 million Jews during World War II, is a virtual confession that the extrajudicial killings of thousands of suspected drug dealers and addicts since the start of his term almost 100 days ago, have been instigated, encouraged and condoned by him," Lagman said.

The left-leaning Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) also objected to Mr. Duterte's reference to Hitler.

"We do not subscribe to the President's referencing of Hitler in relation to the war on drugs and the killings of so-called drug addicts. Killings by state forces of unarmed civilians, even if they are suspected criminals, goes against the principle of due process," Bayan said in a statement yesterday.

'Height of insensitivity'

Fr. Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of Permanent Committee on Public Affairs of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said Mr. Duterte's drawing parallels with his war on drugs and the Holocaust was the "height of insensitivity." *With reports from Jeannette I. Andrade, DJ Yap and Tina G. Santos; Ivan Angelo L. de Lara, Inquirer.net; AP and AFP*

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Narco wiretap gets backing from House

By JESS DIAZ

The House of Representatives committee on dangerous drugs has voted to endorse several amendments to Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, to strengthen the administration's anti-drug campaign.

Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers, committee chairman, said yesterday the proposed changes include allowing the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to wiretap drug dealers, their financiers and protectors or coddlers.

"We want to allow it to improve law enforcement capability and effectiveness in gathering intelligence," he said.

During the two committee hearings on the illegal drug trade inside the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), he said Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre Jr. complained that they could not monitor the mobile phone communications of convicted drug lords because it is against the law.

He added that Aguirre proposed that law enforcers be allowed to wiretap drug convicts and dealers.

Barbers pointed out that if wiretapping was allowed, those involved in the illegal drug trade, including Bilibid inmates, would be careful in their communications, knowing that these could be monitored.

There would be less incentive for Bilibid convicts to turn to Page 2

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Narco From Page 1

pay their guards P1 million for every mobile phone that they smuggle into the supposedly tightly guarded prison, he stressed.

He said another proposal of his committee is to allow the PDEA to coordinate and make confidential report/recommendation to the Anti-Money Laundering Council in order to initiate action for freeze order,

seizure and forfeiture or for investigation, inspection or examination of financial transactions of any person found involved in drugs, including their financiers or protectors.

"To help elicit information on drug syndicates, a person charged for any drug-related crime may be given immunity from prosecution or, if convicted,

may either be penalized by a minimum imposable penalty or be granted commutation of sentence," he said.

He said seized or confiscated firearms, explosives or weapons should be allowed to be disposed of even during pendency of the case, for use of the PDEA or other law enforcement agencies.

He added that other proposed changes in the law aim to ensure legitimate conduct of

every anti-drug operation and prevent illicit practice of planting of evidence, and mandate all owners-lessors of property to make sure their place is not being used to manufacture illegal drugs. They are also required to report to authorities any sign of illegal activity in their premises.

Barbers said his panel is also endorsing "legal presumptions," under which drug suspects would be presumed to have committed the offenses

they are accused of.

For instance, he said the owner of a property where illegal drugs are found should be presumed to have knowledge of the presence of unlawful substances in his property or the conduct of illicit activities.

"Rules on delay and bungling in the prosecution of drugs cases have been amplified so that an acquittal or dismissal is deemed to have been caused by bungling in the

prosecution thereof," he said.

He added that the proposed amendments were the result of briefings, meetings and consultations his committee had with officials of the PDEA, the Philippine National Police Anti-illegal Drugs Group, Department of Justice and National Bureau of Investigation.

The charges would be contained in a bill the Barbers panel would soon endorse to the House.

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Wounded soldiers honored

By **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD**

Five soldiers wounded in skirmishes with Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits were conferred medals for heroism by the Armed Forces of the

Philippines (AFP) in a simple ceremony at Camp Bautista Station Hospital in Jolo, Friday morning.

Awarded with the Wounded Personnel Medal were 2nd Lt. Joelimar Sulit, T/Sgt. Mario de Guzman Jr., Sgt. Berhamin Jumdana, Pfc. Deborah Parac-

uelles and Pvt. Michael Andre Atega.

Brig Gen Arnel dela Vega, commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu personally pinned the medals on the wounded troops who are recuperating at the Station Hospital.

"This is one way of recognizing the bravery and services of our troops in protecting the people of Sulu," Dela Vega said.

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24/7 checkpoint in Maguindanao

ESPERANZA, Sultan Kudarat: (PNA) – Police and Army authorities here have taken measures to prevent the transport of improvised bombs, unlicensed guns and illegal drugs by putting up 24/7 checkpoints along the Sultan Kudarat-Maguindanao highway.

Chief Insp. Bryan Bernardino, Esperanza town police chief, and 1Lt. Jano Reyes, commanding officer of the 57th Infantry Battalion Alpha Company, led the inspection of all types of vehicles on a rotation basis to ensure the 24/7 checkpoint operation in Barangay Sallao, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat.

Bernardino said in a statement that the move was in response to the directive of Philippine National Police Chief Dir. Gen. Ronald dela Rosa.

The 24/7 checkpoint operation also aims to monitor the movement of Private Armed Groups (PAGs), criminal groups, guns for hire, terrorists of the Abu Sayyaf Group and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and kidnap-for-ransom gangs at the borders of Sultan Kudarat and Maguindanao.

Esperanza is the last town of Sultan Kudarat in its border with Maguindanao where suspected bombers, illegal drug pushers and kidnap-for-ransom gangs emanate.

On Thursday, residents alerted the police about the presence of a suspicious bag left unattended in front of a roadside restaurant. A check by police bomb experts showed the bag was not a bomb.

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<http://bomboradyo.com/>

Mga armas ng ASG narekober sa Basilan

By Bombo Marilyn delos Santos

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Narekober ng militar ang matataas na kalibre ng mga baril, bala at mga eksplosibo sa Barangay Katipunan, Tuburan sa lalawigan ng Basilan.

Ayon sa Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), pag-aari ng teroristang Abu Sayyaf group (ASG) ang mga nakuhang kagamitan.

Kabilang sa mga narekober ang isang unit ng M14 rifle na may walong magazines at 39 mga bala; M16 rifle at dalawang long magazine, walong short magazine na may walong bala; apat na rifle grenade, binocular, dalawang bandolier, pair combat boots at isang hammock.

Nagsasagawa umano ng patrolya ang mga sundalo ng 7th Scout Ranger Company sa pangunguna ni Lt. Serrano kasama ang tropa ng 14th Scout Ranger Company sa pangunguna rin ni Cpl. Francisco nang namataañ nila ang liang kahina-hinalang laiaki sa hindi kalayuan.

Pinaputukan umano ang mga sundalo ng mga bandido saka tumakbo sa karatig na kabahayan ay tumakas palayo.

Nagsasagawa ng pursuit operation ang mga sundalo laban sa mga tumakas na Abu Sayyaf at narekober ang mga naiwan nilang kagamitan.

Patuloy namang tinutugis ng mga sundalo ang mga tumakas na ASG.

<http://www.inquirer.net/>

Soldier arrested in North Cotabato for drugs, disturbance

By: Edwin Fernandez

PIKIT, North Cotabato – Police authorities here on Saturday said they arrested a soldier for public disturbance and possession of prohibited drugs.

Senior Inspector Sindatu Karim, Pikit town deputy police chief, identified the soldier as Corporal Abraham Pader of the Army's 38th Infantry Battalion based in Aleosan, North Cotabato.

Karim said Pader, who supervises a unit of the government militia force in Pikit, was under the influence of liquor when police accosted him on Friday afternoon.

Earlier, a resident complained that Pader, who was armed, was creating disturbance in the village. Karim said prohibited drugs and an improvised "tooter" was found in Pader's possession. He appeared to be high on illegal drugs, he said. **CDG**

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<http://www.inquirer.net/>

NPA in Mindanao still extorting, kidnapping despite ceasefire—Army

By: Frances Mangosing



In this December 2013 photo, communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels perform in Davao. AP

Despite the ceasefire declared by both the Philippine government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army in August, the rebels are still extorting and kidnapping people in the areas of Sarangani and Davao, according to the Army.

"We are calling the rebels in Sarangani province to stop kidnapping and extortion of the poor residents and elected officials as it would put in jeopardy the spirit of the ceasefire declared by the National Democratic Front in Norway which is to have an atmosphere of peace while peace talk is going on," Lt. Col. Ronnie Babac, commanding officer of the Army's 73rd Infantry Battalion, said in a statement.

Last Tuesday, a barangay councilor from Barangay Datal Anggas in Sarangani was abducted by five communist rebels led by a certain @L3 at Sitio Kalugbo in the same village. He was released last Thursday in exchange for P50,000 to be paid by Sunday, Oct. 2, the statement added.

The Army also claimed that based on reports from residents, the rebels had been inviting businessmen and store owners for a dialogue and demanding cash from them.

Last Sunday, a certain Mr. Calibay and Mr. Baan, also identified as barangay councilors from Datal Anggas, were invited by Arnel Culano, a known NPA sympathizer.

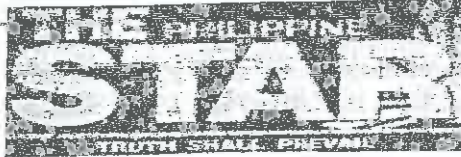
They were brought to Sitio Tangis of the same village for a dialogue with communist rebels supposedly led by an alias Joey. When the two men arrived, Joey threatened them that they would be killed if they would not give the group P25,000 each and M16 rifles.

The demand was supposed to serve as payment for a tip to government forces that led to an encounter last February, resulting in the recovery of high-powered firearms and the deaths of a certain Brigoi, an NPA leader, and six others.

Last August, a store owner in Barangay Little Baguio in Davao Occidental, identified as Mr. Ompong, said he was invited by the communist rebels for a dialogue in Sarangani province. After the meeting, he was not allowed to leave until he paid P20,000. Ompong's companion, whom he asked to go home and get the money, was able to produce only P12,000, but the rebels still released the businessman.

The next round of peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front will be held on Oct. 6 to 10, less than two months after the resumption of the peace talks.

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US defense chief finds Rody remarks 'deeply troubling'

WASHINGTON - As the body count mounts in the Philippines' deadly war on drugs, and its combative President's rhetoric plumbs new depths, the mood in Washington toward a key Asian ally is hardening, with Defense Secretary Ash Carter hunting at US impatience.

He said he found it "deeply troubling" that President Duterte did not mind being compared to Nazi

leader Adolf Hitler by some critics of his bloody war on drugs. On Friday, Duterte compared the killings of drug addicts to the Holocaust.

Influential US lawmakers are warning that the extrajudicial killings in the drug war could affect American aid.

And while the Obama administra-

tion maintains that its 65-year-old alliance with the Philippines remains "ironclad," a senior US diplomat is cautioning Duterte against more anti-US posturing.

"I think it would be a serious mistake in a democratic country like the Philippines to underestimate the power

of the public's affinity for the US. That's people power," Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel told AP.

Russel did not draw a direct comparison, but past Philippine presidents have been toppled by popular protests dubbed "people power," including former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was ousted in 1986.

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US defense

From Page 1

Duterte has bristled at US criticism of the drug war and repeatedly spoken about dialing back security cooperation - although he says he will maintain the alliance.

Last week he said that joint military exercises of Filipino and American troops scheduled for next week in the Philippines will be the last such drills.

His foreign secretary, however, quickly said the decision was not final. Such a step would impede Washington's plans to expand the footprint of US forces in Southeast Asia to counter China.

The previous Philippine government signed an agreement to give the US forces access to five Philippine military bases. That reflected Manila's anxiety over the territorial ambitions of China with which it has

competing claims in the disputed South China Sea.

"If he followed through on this pledge it would be devastating to alliance management," said Gregory Poling, a fellow with the Southeast Asia program at the Center for Strategic Studies. "How does one sustain a military alliance if your militaries don't exercise together?"

The Obama administration has consistently played down the significance of such pronouncements from Duterte, which have typically been walked back by other Philippine officials.

On Friday, the Philippine leader said that Adolf Hitler had killed three million Jews and that he himself would be "happy to slaughter" three million addicts.

More than 3,000 people have died

in the crackdown on drug pushers and users since Duterte took office three months ago.

Germany and the United Nations - through its Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide - have condemned Duterte's Holocaust remarks.

"It is impossible to make any comparison to the unique atrocities of the Shoah and Holocaust," said Germany's foreign ministry spokesman Martin Schaefer in Berlin.

UN's Adama Dieng called Duterte's statements "deeply disrespectful" of the right to life of all human beings. He reminded that the Holocaust was one of the darkest periods in history and that any glorification of the cruel and criminal acts committed by those responsible was unacceptable and offensive. He added such statement was also undermining the efforts of the in-

ternational community to develop strategies to prevent the recurrence of those crimes.

Earlier, World Jewish Congress president Ronald Lauder said Duterte's remarks were "revolting" and demanded that he retract them and apologize.

"Drug abuse is a serious issue. But what President Duterte said is not only profoundly inhumane, but it demonstrates an appalling disrespect for human life that is truly heartbreaking for the democratically elected leader of a great country," Lauder said in a statement issued from Jerusalem.

'Deeply troubling'

In Hawaii for the 45th Conference of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) defense forum, Carter expressed alarm over Duterte's Hitler remarks.

"Just speaking personally for myself, I find these comments deeply troubling," Carter said. A day earlier, he had described the US relationship with the Philippines as "ironclad."

The State Department has tended to parry questions about Duterte's outbursts. Spokesman Mark Toner also described the Holocaust reference as "troubling."

However, Sen. Ben Cardin, top-ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, pulled no punches.

"It is reprehensible and, frankly, disgusting that a democratically elected leader is talking about the mass murder of his own people, with Hitler's Holocaust as his inspiration, no less," he said.

Cardin and Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy, author of a law that prohibits US assistance to foreign security forces that commit gross human rights abuses, took to the Senate floor this week to decry the drug war. They accused Duterte of terrorizing Filipinos through his drug war and endorsing "mass murder."

Leahy, a senior figure on the Senate Appropriations Committee, said because of the "systemic challenges" in the Philippines, it may be necessary to consider further conditions on aid until the Duterte government "demonstrates a commitment to the rule of law."

Carter said he had not discussed Duterte's comments with his Philippine counterpart, Delma Lorenzana, who was also in Hawaii for the ASEAN meeting.

"Just speaking personally for myself, I find these comments deeply troubling," Carter said. The Pentagon chief noted that the Philippines is a longtime US treaty ally.

"Like all alliances, it depends on the continuation of a sense of shared interests," he added. "So far in US-Philippine history we have had that. We look forward to continuing that. But that's something that we continue to discuss with the Philippine government."

When Carter visited the Philippines in April, he praised the strength of the partnership. Earlier this week in San Diego, he called US-Philippine defense relations "ironclad."

That seeming closeness took a sharp downturn when Duterte was elected president in June. In early September, President Barack Obama canceled a meeting with Duterte after the Philippine leader publicly called

him a “son of a b***h.” Later, Duterte said he regretted the comment.

Beijing aid

The aid Manila gets from Washington is substantial – although it may pale next to the investment that could potentially flow from regional economic powerhouse China, where Duterte is expected to visit this month in a bid to improve ties with Beijing.

The Philippines received about \$175 million in US development assistance in 2015 and \$50 million in foreign military financing. In 2016, it has gotten \$75 million for counterterrorism and maritime security. Since 2011, it has received three decommissioned US Coast Guard cutters to bolster its meager navy.

Russel said Thursday it was no surprise that senior lawmakers were looking to monitor where US assistance funds were going, given the “collateral damage” from Duterte’s drug war. But he added it’s premature to impose restrictions on aid.

He stressed Washington’s desire to work with Duterte. He said the US-Philippine relationship – rooted in a 1951 mutual defense treaty – remains very popular in the Southeast Asian country, notwithstanding Duterte’s repeated references to rights abuses committed a century ago under American colonial rule.

“All politicians have to be responsive to both the mainstream public attitude and the national security and economic interests of their country. All of that leads to continued close ties between our two countries,” Russel said.

Earlier this week, Duterte said joint military exercises of Filipino and American troops scheduled for next week will be the last such drills, although his foreign secretary quickly said the decision was not final. Duterte said the Philippines will maintain its military alliance with the US because they share a 65-year-old mutual defense treaty.

Aides to Carter said he likely would seek clarification in Hawaii from Llorizana regarding the future of US-Philippine military exercises.

Llorizana is well known to US officials after serving for more than a decade at the Philippine embassy in Washington prior to taking the defense portfolio after Duterte was elected.

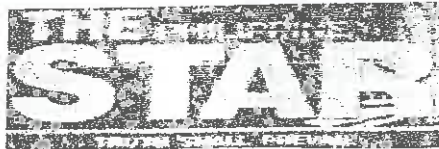
Earlier Friday, Carter said he wants to encourage more regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific on key issues like maritime security and combating terrorism.

As part of a broader Obama administration push to “rebalance” its security interests by paying greater attention to Asia and the Pacific after 15 years focused mainly on the Middle East, Carter is pitching the idea of an Asian security “network.”

“The network will help us uphold important principles like resolving disputes peacefully, ensuring countries can make their own choices free from foreign coercion and intimidation, and preserving the freedom of overflight and navigation guaranteed by international law,” he said.

– With AP

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Rody approves combat pay hike

By EDITH REGALADO

Soldiers and policemen could soon receive up to P5,000 across-the-board increase for combat operations, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) disclosed yesterday.

As this developed, sources told The STAR, President Duterte pronounced that the joint military exercises

between the Philippines and the United States this month would be the last in his term did not shared with all of the soldiers.

Duterte also admitted earlier there were rumormongers within the military because of issues involving the peace talks with the communist

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Rody

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rebels.

Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno said based on Executive Order No. 03 approved by President Duterte and signed by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea on Sept. 26, the soldiers and policemen would get a fixed P3,000 monthly combat duty pay plus P300 per day "combat incentive" pay for those directly assigned in operations against insurgents, terrorists and lawless elements.

The Constitution "provides that professionalism in the armed forces and the adequate remuneration and benefits of its members shall be a prime concern of the state," the EO read.

"Laws and executive issuances have been enacted in cognizance of the heroism and sacrifices of the frontline soldiers and police officers who figure directly in actual

combat against various groups which threaten national peace and security," it added.

The combat incentive pay is subject to the following conditions: the operation must be for a specific combat mission that is duly covered by an operations order (OPORD) or fragmentary order (FRAG-O) for the military or mission order for the police; the personnel involved in combat must be in the published task organization of the AFP OPORD/FRAG-O or the PNP mission order; and total for each individual shall not exceed P3,000.

"There is an urgent need to increase the said benefits to improve the living conditions of the men in uniform who are engaged in combating threats to national security and public peace and order," the EO stated.

The increases are retroactive to Sept. 1 and will be given to

all officers and enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP).

"Yes, (the increases are) across the board regardless of rank and tax free. DBM is releasing the money soon," Diokno told The STAR. Diokno said the increases would cost the government a total of P12 billion for the first four months of implementation from September to December of this year.

Next year, Diokno said another P39 billion would be set aside for the same incentives on top of the salary increases proposed in the 2017 budget still undergoing scrutiny in Congress.

Duterte has often told AFP and PNP members to check their pay slips because the increase in their take home pay would increase.

Initially, the President wanted to double their salaries by yearend but the DBM said

it was not viable as the government was using a budget prepared by the previous administration.

"Officers and enlisted personnel of the AFP performing combat duties or activities and uniformed personnel of the PNP engaged in actual police operations (against insurgents, terrorists and lawless elements) as defined in regulations to be issued by the secretary of national defense and the National Police Commission, respectively, are entitled to receive combat duty pay," the EO said.

Members of the military used to get P500 per month for combat duty while the policemen receive P340 monthly. The soldiers' combat incentive pay was P150 per day not exceeding P1,500 per OPORD or FRAG-O.

The initial funding will come from the President's Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund while the succeeding funds for the incentives will be included

in the specific budgets of the PNP and AFP through the General Appropriations Act.

Both the PNP and AFP will be required to submit a list of its rosters, which will be validated and made basis for funding in the succeeding years.

AFP unhappy?

All is not well within the military, according to sources, as American forces and their Filipino counterparts prepare for their annual joint military exercises on Oct. 4 at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

Duterte has been adamant not to allow Philippine soldiers to participate in more joint training exercises with US forces. He said he did not want any such exercises within his term and that those scheduled this month would be the last.

The holding of joint military exercises between the two countries is provided for under the Mutual Defense Treaty forged in the 1950s.

But the President has yet to make a written order to the AFP related to his pronouncement.

Sources said Duterte's move was not fully welcome within the AFP.

STAR sources said the statement of the President did not sit well with some quarters in the military as the training program or course for the soldiers in the next few years would be affected.

The planning of such joint military exercises reportedly take months if not years to determine which areas in the defense departments of both countries will be covered by such activities.

AFP officials will have to discuss the President's pronouncement, the sources added.

Duterte said the country was not benefiting from such joint exercises as the American forces were giving the Filipino soldiers nothing but their soiled clothes and not the needed support for their continued training.

- With Giovanni Nilles

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AFP recovers heavy firearms, ammo, bombs in Basilan

GOVERNMENT forces recovered high-powered firearms, ammunition and explosives during their patrol operations the other day in Tuburan, Basilan.

May Edmon Tan Jr., spokesman of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the heavy firearms recovered include an M14 rifle with eight magazine and 39 ammunition; an M16 rifle with scope, two long magazines, eight short magazines and 88 ammunition; four rifle grenades, a binocular, two bandoliers, a pair combat boots and a hammock.

Tan said elements of the 7th Scout Ranger Company (SRC), 14th SRC and 3rd SRC were conducting patrol operation in Bgy. Katipunan, Tuburan, Basilan, when they saw a suspicious-looking man roaming in the area.

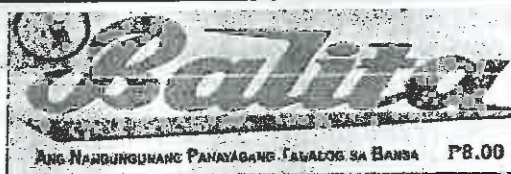
Upon seeing the team, the suspect ran away and proceeded to one of the houses in the area as if alerting the occupants.

The military troops conducted a pursuit operation and later searched the vicinity where the different firearms, explosives and ammunition were recovered.

The recovered items were turned over to military custody. **Zaida delos Reyes-Palanca**

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Combat duty pay itinaas sa P3k kada buwan

DAVAO CITY - Bilang pagtupad sa ipinangako niya sa bansa, dinagdagan ni Pangulong Duterte ang duty pay at mga insentibo ng mga operatiba ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at Philippine National Police (PNP), alinsunod sa executive order na nilagdaan nitong Setyembre 26.

Sa bisa ng Executive Order No. 3, itinaas ang combat duty sa P3,000, na naging epektibo nitong Setyembre.

Batay sa kopya ng EO, ang

kasalukuyang combat duty pay ng militar ay nasa P500 kada buwan, habang ang combat incentive pay naman ay nasa P150 hanggang P1,500.

Sa pulisya, ang kasalukuyang combat duty pay ay nasa P40 kada buwan.

Sa EO, sinabi ng Pangulo na "there is an urgent need to increase the said benefits to improve the living conditions of the men in uniform who are engaged in combating threats to national security and public peace and order."

Sinabi ni Pangulong Duterte na kinikilala ng EO ang "heroism and sacrifices of the frontline soldiers and police officers who engage directly in actual combat against various groups which threaten national peace and security."

Bukod sa combat duty pay, tatanggapin din ang mga armadong operatiba ng katagdagang combat incentive pay na P300 kada araw kung ang operasyon ay isang specific order, at dapat na hindi humigit sa P3,000 bawat buwan.

Yas D. Ocampo

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The Manila Times

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Troops seize Sayyaf firearms, explosives

BY ANTHONY VARGAS

GOVERNMENT troops on Friday morning seized several firearms and explosives after a brief firefight with a member of the Abu Sayyaf group in a hinterland village in Basilan province, a military official said on Saturday.

Major Filemon Tan, spokesman for the military's Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said

in a statement emailed to defense reporters that the brief encounter between government troops and

the bandit took place at around 10:30 a.m. in Katipunan village in Tuburan town, Basilan province.

Tan said in the statement troops of the 7th Scout Ranger Company (SRC) and of the 14th SRC and 3rd SRC were conducting a law enforcement operation when they chanced upon a suspicious-looking person in the area, a known bailiwick of the Abu Sayyaf.

Upon seeing the government troops, the person quickly drew

out his firearm and fired a shot at the soldiers.

Tan said the suspicious-looking person immediately ran toward one of the houses in the village. The house's occupants scampered toward different directions.

The military spokesman said troops conducted a pursuit operation and later, a search operation at the house and its immediate vicinity.

The search operation by government troops resulted in the

seizure of several high-powered firearms, ammunition, explosives and military paraphernalia.

Recovered by government troops were one M-14 rifle, an M-16 rifle with a scope, two long magazines, eight short magazines and eighty rounds of ammunition, four rifle grenades and explosives.

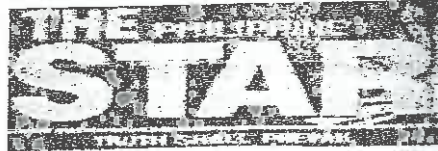
Military paraphernalia recovered by government troops included two bandoliers, a binocular, a pair of combat boots and one hammock.

Tan said government troops continued to hunt members of the Abu Sayyaf to prevent them from occupying certain areas in Basilan.

The Abu Sayyaf, which have pledged their allegiance to the Islamic State, is a kidnapping and terrorist group operating in southern Philippines.

The group, estimated by the military to have 400 members, is also known for kidnapping foreign and local tourists, and beheading them.

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5 Islamic preachers leave BIFF, form breakaway group

MACUENDANAO – Five radical clerics bolted from the separatist Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and called themselves the “moassesseen,” or the Mindanao counterpart of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Local officials in the province confirmed that five Islamic preachers bolted from the BIFF to form a breakaway faction focused on establishing an Asian Islamic caliphate al-

bed with the ISIS.

The BIFF, who had earlier pledged allegiance to the ISIS, released a statement on Thursday identifying the five Islamic clerics as Salahudin Hassan, Abdulmahit Esmael, Bashir Ungah, Nasser Adil and Ansari Yunus.

The five clerics branded themselves as “moassesseen,” an Arabic term for “founders.”

“They are no longer with BIFF and the BIFF has nothing

to do with their activities now,” BIFF spokesman Abu Misry Mama said.

Relatives said the five jihadists broke away from the BIFF after forming alliances with the Maute terror group and the notorious Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

The BIFF earlier split into two factions, one led by Karialan and the other by Bongos, who differed in their views on

jihad and on how to relate with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is helping the military restrain them from terror attacks in Central Mindanao.

The BIFF was founded in late 2010 by Ameril Ombra Kato, a former MILF commander.

Kato bolted from the MILF in late 2010 due to his opposition to pursuing a negotiated

peace deal with the government.

Like the Abu Sayyaf, the BIFF claims loyalty to the ISIS.

Meanwhile, government troops yesterday found several firearms and ammunition that were abandoned by the Abu Sayyaf in a remote village in Tuburan, Basilan.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman of Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the troops from the Army's

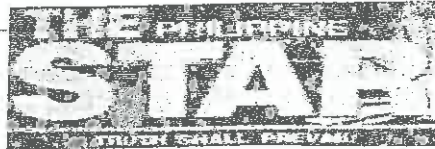
Scout Rangers spotted a suspected Abu Sayyaf gunman and gave chase.

Tan said the bandit alerted his companions in the area and fled.

He said the troops arrived several minutes later and found an M14 and M16 rifles, several rounds of ammunition and magazines, four rifle grenades and some clothing.

— With Roel Pareño, Cecille Suerte Felipe

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Next round of gov't-NDF talks to tackle land reform, industrialization

By DING CERVANTES

PAMPANGA – Land reform and national industrialization would be the focus of the second round of peace negotiations with the Philippine government in Oslo, Norway this month. Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison said yesterday.

"The center of gravity of the peace negotiations is the twin necessity for national industrialization and land reform," Sison declared in a message to the Kilusang Maglulubukid ng Pilipinas during the launching of its "Campaign for Land and Peace."

"A self-reliant program for economic development cannot walk and advance without two legs: national industrialization and land reform," he stressed.

Sison said land reform is needed to produce a definite and wealthy source of food, raw materials for industry and a broad market for industrial

and agricultural products.

"National industrialization is needed to produce machines and other equipment for agriculture, create numerous and new jobs for the increasing population and destination of surplus agricultural produce," he added.

Sison described as "fake and complete failure" the previous land reform program, saying the farmers are incapable of paying the high redistribution price imposed through the collusion between landlords and the government.

"It should be popularized that lands grabbed from landless farmers by big landlords, high bureaucrats and foreign corporations will be distributed for free," he said.

The peace panels of the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDP)

will resume their second round of formal talks in Norway on Oct 8-12.

The first round of formal peace talks was held from Aug 22-25 in Oslo, where the two panels expressed their commitment to resume the negotiations in order to resolve the armed conflict by addressing its root causes.

"I think through the peace process, all the issues and things to be done by the (Philippine government), NDF, peasant organizations and broad masses will become clearer in framing and implementing a genuine land reform program," Sison said.

On the other hand, the University of the Philippines (UP) has committed to extend institutional support to the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP), mak-

ing their academic personnel and resources available to help end armed conflict in the country through political settlement.

The commitment was formalized by UP president Alfredo Pascual in signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza during the closing ceremony of the 2016 National Peace Consciousness Month at the Quezon Memorial Circle on Friday.

"This is another historic and unprecedented event in the history of the peace process in the Philippines. Now, the best minds of the country's premier universities are on board to help end the decades-old armed conflict," Dureza said.

The involvement of UP in the peace process was a brainchild of Department of Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III who also recom-

mended to President Duterte the appointment of UP vice president Prospero de Vera Jr. as adviser to the government panel negotiating peace with the NDF.

"We are tapping the best and the brightest in the academe and other sectors of Philippine society to help us forge a final peace agreement that will be mutually-acceptable to government and the communist guerillas," said Bello, the concurrent chairman of the government peace panel.

"We will also hold public consultations to enable ordinary citizens and other stakeholders in the peace process to amplify their issues and concerns related to our negotiations with the NDF," Bello added.

Government peace panel member Hernani Braganza said De Vera will not only sit as adviser but will also assume an active role as one of the five committee members who will negotiate the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Eco-

nomic Reforms (CASER) with their NDF counterparts.

A Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) was created to check on human rights and international humanitarian law violations of communist guerillas and government forces.

The JMC was formed to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

The human rights group Karapatan is calling on government to look into the 4,569 complaints filed before the Joint Secretariat from June 4, 2004 to March 13, 2014.

Karapatan said majority of the complaints filed were from relatives of victims of human rights and international humanitarian law violations in connection with anti-insurgency operations of the military in Lacub, Abra in September 2014 - With Jose Rodel Clapano, Artemio Dumlaog

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Ex-soldier dies in Batangas mishap

By JOJO C. MAGSOMBOL

A RETIRED member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, was declared dead at the hospital while several passengers were injured when the jitney they were riding collided with a truck on the national highway in Bgy. Sto. Cristo, San Jose, Batangas, on Thursday.

Dead on arrival at the San Jose District Hospital was Nestorio Balido Morales, 64, a retired member of the AFP, who sustained severe head injuries, said Senior Insp. Lamsito Lumbo, DCOP.

The injured passengers also taken to the same hospital were Dolores Hernandez Gomes, 47, of Bgy. Balagtas; Marry Grace Alcantara Bonsol, 27, of Bgy. Concepcion; Merry Joy Moncal-

bo de Chavez, 16, of Bgy. Balete; Jan Jefferson Alvarez Erruista, 19, of Hill Top; Bgy. Kumintang, Yvonne Aclar Bagon, 37, of Bgy. San Pedro, Batangas City; Armando Velasco Sostedo, 58, of Bgy. Bukal; Noble Sasteda Ascan, 45; Michael Angelo Loude Dargos, 21, of Sierra Verde Subd. Bgy. Pallocan West; Christopher Garcia Ilao, 28, of Sitio Quipoc, Bgy. Aguila San Jose; Junjun Abesade

Cruzar, 27, of Bgy. Concepcion; Ellazar Castor Durtes, 5, of Concepcion; Neriza Alo Clet, 31, of San Jose; Vicente Andal Alcoraz, 41, of Bgy. San Pedro, all in Batangas City; and Alvin Eitan Cruz, 36, of Bgy. Sampaguita, Lipa City.

The incident was reported at the San Jose Police Station at 5:30 p.m. Thursday by a concerned citizen.

Investigators PO2s Alfonso de Casero Jr. and

Jake M. Cuevas said that at 5:20 p.m. on September 29, an Isuzu passenger jitney (DXN 730) driven by Ruel Rafa Castellanes, 47, of Bgy. Sto. Cristo, San Jose, was headed to Batangas City when it collided head-on with an Isuzu Elf truck (RCH 648) driven by Robert Sales, 36, of Bgy. Dagupan, San Jose, which was traveling on the opposite direction.

Sales said his vehicle suddenly went out of control.

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China stands ready to contribute to RP military enhancement

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Beijing has already communicated the areas to be covered by Philippine-China "enhanced cooperation" where improvements on military and other country sectors are included, its envoy to Manila said.

Ambassador Zhao Jiajun, in an interview, told the diplomatic press corps that the Chinese side has "enumerated some of the areas" including President Rodrigo Duterte's request for Chinese-funded railway system.

On the sideline of an event in Taguig late

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From page 1

Wednesday, he listed the areas such as "infrastructure projects, ports, railway, airport (and) bridges," to which he said the "President cares" about.

Further delving to express interest in cultivating the Philippine agriculture and aquaculture sector, Zhao shared his observation that even their "farmers and fishermen were willing to cooperate with the Filipino side to enhance agriculture cooperation."

He said the two nations are now looking into the possibility on how "we can engage in industrial, commercial cooperation and fishery area that will help benefit the farmers and fishermen directly."

In an informal discussion in Hong Kong earlier, former President Fidel Ramos and Fu Ying, foreign affairs chief of China's top legislature, the National People's Congress, explored possible human and ecological security options and suggested cooperation in fields such as fishing, tourism, trade and

investment, and the fight against corruption to benefit both sides.

Zhang Jie, an analyst with Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the key consideration of the Duterte administration is improving ties with China not at the cost of antagonizing the US, in an effort to share benefits of China's economic growth while enjoying the US' protection in terms of security.

Shi Yinhong, professor with the Renmin University of China, said the Philippines seeks US' protection while blaming it.

Though the blaming got louder under Duterte's leadership, it's not possible for Manila to break up with, or ditch, Washington, he said.

According to political analyst Richard Javad Heydarian, it has been evident that the Philippines and China are indeed on the stage of "warming up ties" after years of low point relationship due to some maritime disputes.

With the reported visit of Duterte in China this month, Heydarian said as what to be

seemed as the first Philippine President to have meeting with China, this is "bound to raise an eyebrow in Washington and around the world."

He said "the signal will be very clear that the Philippines is no longer just a Western ally, it at the Philippines is an independent country that choose its priorities, foreign policy priorities depending on what the national interest dictates."

"I think President Duterte's reading is that, at this point in time, our national interest is to push back against criticisms in his war on drugs and to avoid interference from the Westerners in domestic affairs, to ease tension in the South China Sea and to (renew) economic ties with China."

Russia, China, RP ties

With the now growing alliance of Russia and the country, Zhao said the prospect of China also providing armaments to Manila is heading to a good direction.

"Investments from China in the Philippines, it's going to be very

good for the economic and social development of the Philippines."

He said China is "willing to be an active participant in President Duterte's socio-economic agenda" so that they can "prove together with the Philippines" that we are "good neighbors, we're good partners and we are brothers."

Along with Duterte's series of tirades against Washington comes his pronouncement of strengthening alliance with China and its ally Russia.

On Wednesday he has suddenly announced that the October joint exercises between Filipino and American troops would be the last, sending confusion on his officials.

Heydarian analyzed that if there is tension with the country and the US, "that will definitely not help the Philippines negotiate its position when it deals with China."

He cautioned that "if anything, it will encourage China to contribute tension so that it would become easier for China to dominate areas claimed by the Philippines."

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The Manila Times

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Beijing eyes military cooperation with Manila

AS the treaty alliance between the Philippines and the United States slowly turns sour, the Chinese ambassador said a stronger military cooperation between Manila and Beijing was in the offing.

Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua said an enhancement of military ties between the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) foes was "something we are looking at."

"I think, first of all, because of the differences we have in the South China Sea; the two militaries need to talk to each other to enhance trust and mutual confidence to avoid incidents of misunderstanding because no country, including China and the Philippines, wants conflict or tension," he told reporters last week.

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier announced plans to buy arms from China and Russia, allowing them to finally have a foothold in the Philippine arms market, in which 75 percent

> Military A8

MILITARY FROM A1

China

of weapons come from the US.

The two powers have agreed to 25-year soft loans that would allow the Philippines to purchase weapons, said Duterte.

Apart from military deal, Beijing wants to enhance cooperation with Manila in areas such as infrastructure, transportation, industry, commerce, agriculture and fisheries.

"Investments from China in the Philippines, it's going to be very good for the economic and social development of the Philippines. And China is willing to be an active participant in President Duterte's socioeconomic agenda so that we can prove together with the Philippines that we are good neighbors, we're good partners and we are brothers," Zhao said.

Zhao said that the upcoming visit of Duterte to Beijing, reportedly on October 20, was still being arranged.

"I think warming up relations with China has its own merits. We will promote not only friend-

ship and cooperation between the two countries but we will also contribute to the development of the Philippines," he said.

"We have differences but we can talk and I believe we're patient and wise enough to seek a peaceful solution to whatever differences we have in the South China Sea," Zhao said.

Professor Richard Javad Heydarian of De La Salle University's political science department said Philippines-China ties were "already warming" after reaching a low point over the sea dispute.

He said Duterte was doing good in establishing relations with other major powers, especially in engaging with China bilaterally to ease longstanding tensions in the West Philippine Sea and revive economic ties with the Asian giant.

On Duterte's China visit, he said, "The signal will be very clear. The Philippines is no longer just a Western ally, that the Philippines is an independent country, that it chooses its foreign policy priorities depending on what the national interest dictates."

MICHAEL JOE T. DELIZO

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www.interaksyon.com/national

DON'T DO IT | Think tank cautions Duterte against ending military drills with US

By: InterAksyon.com
October 1, 2016 2:33 PM



Joint US-PH amphibious military exercises. Philstar file photograph

MANILA - The Philippine government was cautioned on Saturday against making good on President Duterte's vow to end further military exercises with key defense ally the United States for the rest of his term.

Such drills, according to Dindo Manhit, president of the local think tank Albert del Rosario Institute, named after Manila's immediate past foreign affairs secretary, do not just bolster ties between nations and armed forces, but also develop the capabilities of the military to independently deal with challenges, both military and civilian.

"Military exercises range from those intended to improve, say, maritime security, such as strengthening anti-piracy capabilities, to addressing internal concerns such as counter-terror and counter-insurgency capabilities.

"Moreover, the same exercises are used to improve the military's ability to respond to humanitarian challenges during natural disasters, as well as conduct search-and-rescue operations," Manhit said.

It was under Del Rosario's watch that the Philippines filed – and won – a case against China in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, with the UN-backed tribunal dismissing China's claims of historical sovereignty over nearly 90 percent of the South China Sea.

There had been observations that Duterte could be bashing the US as he cozies up to China, which he will visit Oct. 19-21, and where he hopes to tackle ways for the two Asian neighbors to move forward on the SCS issues.

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Beijing snubbed the entire Hague proceedings and dismissed the court's ruling, while Duterte vowed to use the

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

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

--- "four corners of this document" (the ruling) to get Beijing to ease up its blockade of Filipino fishermen in Scarborough Shoal off Masinloc, Zambales.

But if casting away the traditional joint exercises with the US were meant to please China, Manhit said, the latter should not take offense because Manila has never spoken out against China's holding joint drills with other countries in the region's seas – including recent ones that China undertook separately with the US and Russia.

Manhit noted that "The Philippines has conducted and joint military exercises with international partners for years, and these should not be interpreted provocatively by any one country. In June of this year, China joined naval exercises hosted by the United States. This month, China conducted naval exercises with Russia in the South China Sea. The Philippines has not interpreted any of these moves provocatively, and China should do the same."

Duterte had said Wednesday (Sept. 28) he will soon end joint military exercises with the US, in one of his speeches in Hanoi. He said the military drills that begin Oct. 4, called Phiblex, would be the last.

"I will serve notice to you now, that this will be the last military exercise, jointly Philippines-US, the last one," he told several hundred Vietnam-based Filipinos.

The Philippine-US Amphibious Landing Exercises (Phiblex) runs from October 4 to 12 in the Philippines. The Philippines and the US April conducted the larger annual Balikatan exercises, with over 8,000 forces from both sides participating.

Before the remarks in Hanoi, Duterte said he will eject US special forces from Mindanao, saying there won't ever be peace when foreign troops are meddling. He also skipped an ASEAN leaders' meeting with President Barack Obama in Laos.

<http://www.philstar.com/>

BIFF renegades launch more radical ISIS-style group

By John Unson (philstar.com) | Updated October 1, 2016 - 4:30pm



The radical group had also pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Philstar.com/File photo

MAGUINDANAO, Philippines - Five radical clerics bolted from the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and tagged themselves genuine "moassesseen" of the Mindanao counterpart of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The Arabic term moassesseen literally mean "founders" in English and can also contextually imply as either progenitors or pioneers.

Local officials in three towns in Maguindanao on Saturday confirmed the separation early this week of the five preachers and their followers from the BIFF during a gathering in the second district of the province.

The radical group had also pledged allegiance to ISIS, whose black flag they now use as their revolutionary banner.

The BIFF leadership distributed on Thursday a written press statement confirming that the five clerics, Salahudin Hassan, Abdulmalik Esmael, Bashir Ungab, Nasser Adil and Ansari Yunus, have left the group to form a breakaway faction focused on establishing an Asian Islamic caliphate allied with ISIS.

Relatives said the five jihadists broke away from the BIFF after forging alliances with the Maute terror group in first district of Lanao del Sur and the more notorious Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

The Maute group is led by ethnic Maranaws Abdullah and Omar, both surnamed Maute.

They both studied Islamic theology while employed as contract workers in the United Arab Emirates before they established their so-called "black flag movement" in Lanao del Sur.

Barangay residents said Salahudin and Esmael, both of Maguindanaon lineage, were trained by the slain Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, most known as Marwan, in fabrication and handling of improvised explosive devices in Mamasapano town southwest of Maguindanao.

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

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

They are both from Shariff Saidona town in Maguindanao, according to local officials.

"They are no longer with BIFF and the BIFF has nothing to do with their activities now," BIFF's spokesman, Abu Misry Mama, said on Saturday.

The BIFF earlier split into two factions, one led by Karialan and the other by Bongos, both Imams, but differed in their views on Islamic militancy and on how to relate with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, (MILF) which is helping the military restrain them from pulling off IED attacks in Central Mindanao.

The government and the MILF are bound by a 1997 ceasefire accord to mutually cooperate in maintaining law and order in flashpoint areas in Mindanao.

The BIFF was founded in late 2010 by Imam Ameril Ombra Kato, who started as commander of the MILF's 105th Base Command.

Kato bolted from the MILF in late 2010 due to irreconcilable differences with its central committee, whose figurehead, Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, is keen on pursuing a negotiated peace deal with Malacañang.

Kato died of a lingering illness in 2014 at Datu Saudi town in Maguindanao, after half of his body was paralyzed as a result of a hypertensive stroke two years before.

Like the Abu Sayyaf, the BIFF also boasts of its loyalty to ISIS and incites people in areas where it operates to hate non-Muslims and treat them with animosity for being kuffr, which means unbelievers.