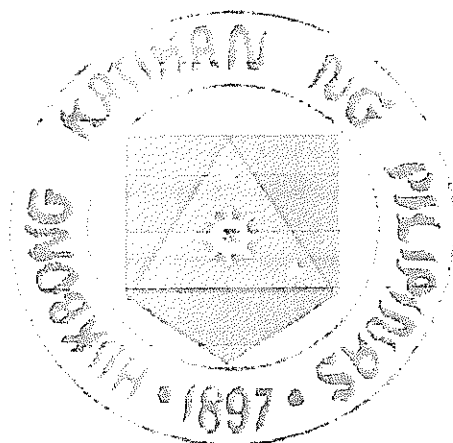


Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



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30 September 2016

Friday

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Duterte out to end war games with US

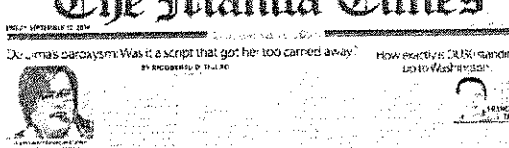
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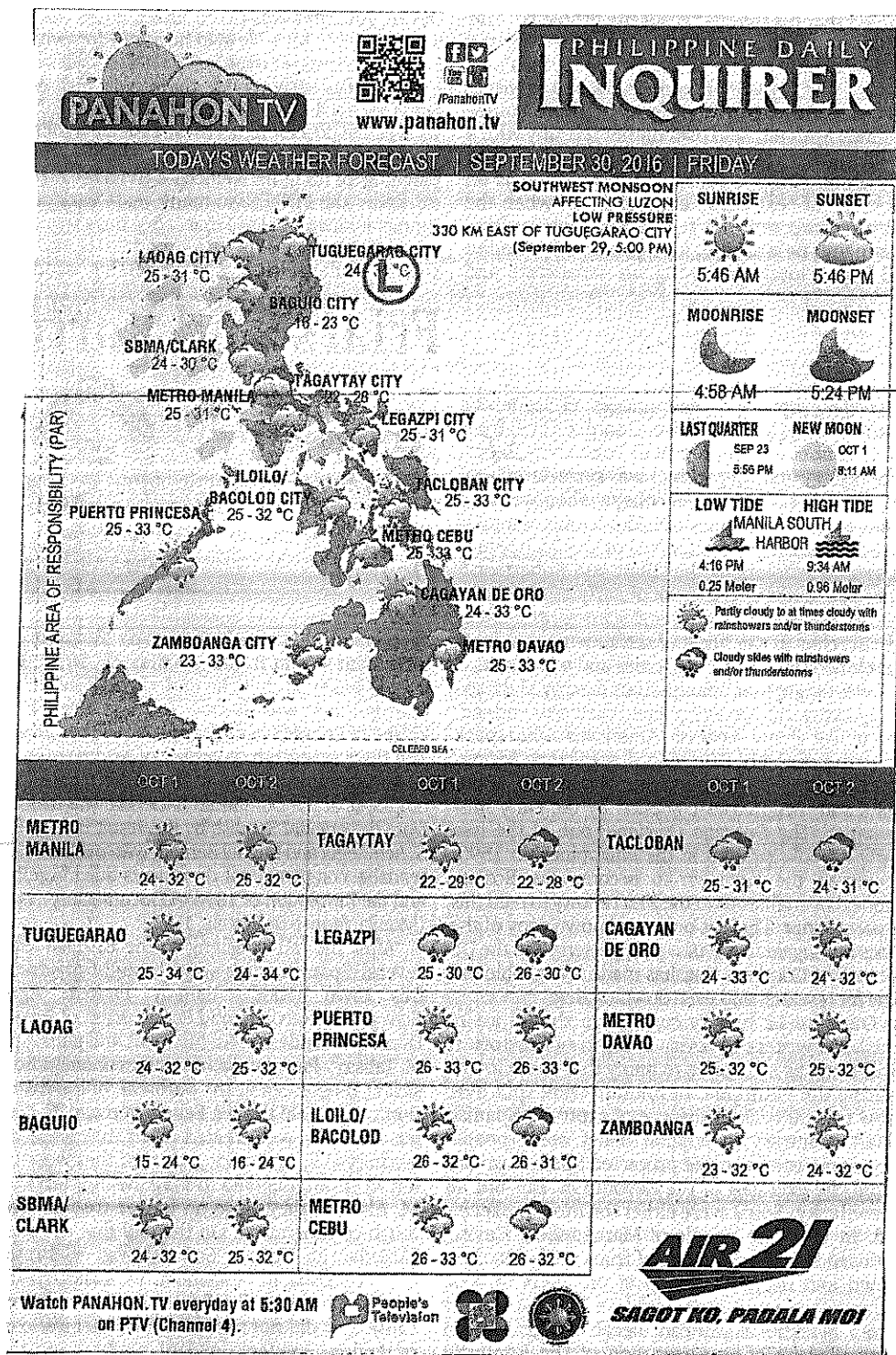
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Duterte out to end war games with US

Bilateral relations get more uncertain

By Julie M. Aurelio

HANOI—President Duterte on Wednesday plunged one of the United States' most important Asian alliances deeper into uncertainty by declaring next month's US-Philippine military exercises "the last," and ruling out joint navy patrols in the heavily disputed South China Sea.

Addressing the Filipino community here after arriving for a two-day official visit to Viet-

DUTERTE/A14

Philippines would demilitarize the West Philippine Sea, a reference to waters in the South China Sea within the Philippines' EEZ. He gave no details, though.

Uncertainty

Mr. Duterte's latest comments add to uncertainty about what his end game is and whether Manila's next moves could complicate regional diplomacy or alter the status quo in the South China Sea.

A US official said he had not seen the Philippines make a formal request to stop sea patrols and added that the bar for a "joint patrol" with the Philippines was low.

"If the joint patrols stop, will this have any sort of major impact on the situation in the South China Sea? Most likely not," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

He added that, in a sign things were continuing as usual, the landing ship USS Germantown would be making a port call in Manila from Wednesday.

Richard Jacobson, an American security expert, said Mr. Duterte's posturing could embolden China to exploit a testy relationship between two old allies.

"The US-Philippines relationship might become strained and even shaken," Jacobson said.

"The US geopolitical stake in the region are much too high to react to his hyperbole. The current attitude in Washington is mature—more of patience than feeling provoked," he said.

Mr. Duterte paid courtesy calls on top Vietnamese officials on Thursday night to cap his visit.

He and his entourage met first with Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the premier's office then with Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

The hosts threw a state banquet in honor of Mr. Duterte at the International Convention Center in Hanoi.

Mr. Duterte was expected to leave Hanoi on Thursday night, arriving in Davao City early on Friday. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila, Reuters, AP and AFP*

beyond the Philippines' 22-kilometer territorial waters, he said.

Briefing reporters in Manila on Thursday, presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said Mr. Duterte was leaning toward an "inclusive" foreign policy, by reaching out to and strengthening relations with more countries and not just with the United States.

Abella said Mr. Duterte had vowed to honor the Philippines' agreements with the United States.

"However, there are also certain modifications in their relationship and the relationship remains solid according to the agreements. But also there will be other activities that will be more open to other nations, too," he said.

Abella said there was no definite date yet for the last war games between the Philippines and the United States.

He said the foreign policy shift that Mr. Duterte wanted was not "unfortunate," as former Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario had described it, but was "part of the process which the President sees as setting... our own independent course."

The shift may be "difficult and challenging," he said, but the President sees it as something that will "add to our well-being and prosperity as a nation."

What Mr. Duterte was saying, he said, was that at this stage, the Philippines was moving from its "exclusive relationship" with the United States and going into "a more open relationship with others."

In his speech to the Filipinos here, Mr. Duterte said he would not allow the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard to join joint patrols with the United States because they risked dragging the Philippines into conflict with China.

"I'm not ready to commit the soldiers of this country just to be massacred, and besides, besides—son of a bitch—the battleground is Palawan. Oh, no. Let's bring it to San Francisco, that's fine with me. Or China, you choose," he said, drawing laughter from his audience.

"But if we quarrel and you make the Philippines a battleground, oh, no, I'll expel you, including America. You get out," he said.

In July, the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, ruling in an action brought by the Philippines, found that China's claim to nearly all of the South China Sea had no basis in international law, and that Beijing had violated Manila's sovereign rights by preventing it from fishing and exploring for resources in waters within its 370-km exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Bilateral talks

Beijing has rejected the ruling, and Mr. Duterte has said he prefers bilateral talks with China to resolve the dispute.

Asked if the cessation of joint military drills with the United States was a condition set by China for talks on the dispute and improvement of relations, Esperon said, "I don't think so."

He said, however, that the

IN THE KNOW: Phiblex

THE PHILIPPINE Amphibious Landing Exercise (Phiblex) is one of the joint military exercises between the Philippines and the United States. This year's edition is the 33rd of the drills aimed at improving interoperability of the participating forces' amphibious assault capabilities.

Last year, more than a thousand Filipino and American troops took part in the Phiblex, which included joint humanitarian and disaster response exercises in Luzon and Palawan province.

Existing agreements—the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty and the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA)—have also allowed visits by US forces to the Philippines, including participation in the “Balikatan” (shoulder to shoulder) military exercises.

US soldiers arrived for the Balikatan exercise in 2000, the first since the ratification of the VFA. The annual joint military exercises are designed to serve as a venue for Philippine and US military forces to exchange

combat expertise.

The last Balikatan was held in April with the participation of 5,000 US troops, 3,500 personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and 80 Australians.

It was also in April that the United States and the Philippines began joint patrols in the South China Sea under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Last week, despite President Duterte's statement about asking

US military forces to leave Mindanao, a group of American and Filipino soldiers visited officials of Ormoc City to discuss the possibility of holding joint military exercises there next year.

Capt. Louis Kalmar, humanitarian and civic assistance planner of the Philippine-US Balikatan program, said Balikatan teams planned to return to Ormoc in December to finalize plans for Balikatan 2017. *Inquirer Research*
Source: *Inquirer Archives*

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Goodbye, Miriam

By MARVIN SY

Two years after announcing that she had stage four cancer of the lungs, former senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago passed away yesterday at the age of 71.

Her husband, former interior and local government undersecretary Narciso Santiago Jr., said she died peacefully in her sleep early yesterday morning.

Santiago was rushed last Sept. 2 to St. Luke's Medical Center in Global City, Taguig and has since been confined at the hospital due to complications of her cancer.

Last Sunday, she was transferred to the intensive care unit until she succumbed at 8:52 a.m. yesterday.

Santiago was admitted to the ICU of the Makati Medical Center last June after contracting pneumonia.

Her wake is at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Cubao, Quezon City.

In spite of the severity of her ailment, the news still came as a surprise to many, considering

that just a few months ago, the late senator announced that she had beaten cancer.

Santiago herself felt that she was well enough to make another bid for the presidency in the May 9, 2016 elections.

A team of doctors was regularly handling the case of Santiago, including one of the world's most distinguished oncologists from the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

After undergoing treatment, Santiago's doctors said that her cancer was under control and on that advice, she felt she was well enough to run for president.

She ran under her own People's Reform Party and chose former senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. as her runningmate.

Right before and during

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the campaign, Santiago still showed signs of weakness, oftentimes requiring the assistance of her staff to walk.

She skipped the March 20 presidential debate to undergo a clinical trial for an unnamed cancer-treatment pill.

Santiago said she joined the international clinical trial to gain free access to the medication, which would otherwise reportedly cost P500,000 every three weeks. The trial required Santiago to report for outpatient radiation treatment at the hospital daily for a short period.

Mystery at first

As early as January of 2013, Santiago

went on an indefinite medical leave from the Senate due to what she said was chronic fatigue syndrome.

What was ailing the senator was clearly a mystery to her at the time because she also said that she was suffering from hypertension and Vitamin D deficiency.

Her ailment was serious enough to prevent her from assuming her seat as a judge in the International Criminal Court. Santiago was elected to the ICC in 2011, making her the first Filipino and the first Southeast Asian from a developing country to be elected to the post.

When she found out about her cancer, Santiago informed the ICC that she could

no longer assume her seat as judge and subsequently gave this up so that the body could elect her replacement.

Santiago was clearly unfazed when she received news about her cancer and even hinted to reporters during her announcement that she was planning to make another bid for the presidency.

She first ran for president in the 1992 elections, which she lost in a tight race with Fidel Ramos. Santiago made another bid for the presidency six years later.

After failing in her first bid for the presidency, Santiago joined the Senate in 1995. She lost in her bid for reelection in 2001 but returned to the Senate in 2004. Santiago was reelected in 2010 for her last term as senator.

Prior to becoming a senator, Santiago had a stint in government as commissioner of the then Bureau of Immigration and Deportation and secretary of agrarian reform.

But before she joined the executive branch, Santiago served as a Quezon City regional trial court judge from 1983 to 1987.

Santiago also became a legal officer of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva, Switzerland, a legal consultant of the Philippine embassy in Washington and a professional

lecturer of the University of the Philippines College of Law.

In November 2003, Santiago's youngest son Alexander died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

She is survived by her husband and her eldest son, Narciso Santiago III.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III said that necrological rites would be held at the Senate if her family wishes.

The Philippine flag at the Senate building is flown at half-staff in honor of Santiago.

Outstanding student

Santiago consistently excelled as a student, graduating as class valedictorian in elementary and high school and magna cum laude in college at UP, where she was also Collegian editor before the First Quarter Storm.

Her brilliance as a student was further demonstrated when she finished her undergraduate degree in political science in only three and a half years and even recorded an average grade of 1.1 in her last semester. In UP, the highest grade is 1.0.

She constantly craved knowledge and even after graduating from law school, went on to take up further studies here and overseas.

Santiago received her master

of laws as a Dewitt fellow at the University of Michigan with an average grade of "A."

She then received her doctor of juridical science as a Barbour Scholar and DeWitt Fellow also at the University of Michigan, which she fulfilled in six months, with an "A" average.

This was not enough for Santiago, who went on to take up a master of arts in religious studies at the Maryhill School of Theology in Quezon City.

Feisty but funny

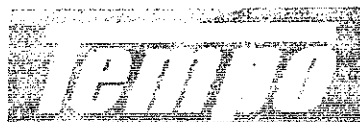
Love her or hate her, Santiago always drew the spotlight because of her quotes, which were as scathing as they were humorous.

Among her most famous quotes was during the impeachment trial of former president Joseph Estrada, when she said that she would jump headfirst from a helicopter in Rizal Park if the president gets removed from power.

Asked by reporters about her statement after Estrada was impeached, Santiago responded with the now famous "I lied! Hahaha."

Known for her strong stance against graft and corruption, Santiago was also remembered for saying "I eat death threats for breakfast" back when she was immigration commissioner.

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3 Abus hurt in encounter

Three members of the Abu Sayyaf Group were wounded in an encounter with the military chasing the bandit group in Panamao, Sulu Wednesday.

A report from the Armed Forces Western Mindanao Command disclosed that the encounter between patrolling troops of the 10th Infantry Battalion and the ASG led by Alhabsy Misaya occurred in Barangay Pugad Manaul at 9:05 a.m.

Army Major Felimon Tan Jr., AFP

Westmincom spokesman, said three ASG fighters were wounded while no casualties were reported on the government side.

On Tuesday, two notorious kidnappers under Alhabsy Misaya were killed by Joint Task Force Sulu conducting operations against them in Daungdung, Pata, Sulu.

Tan identified them Nixon Muktdil and Brown Muktdil.

The Armed Forces said the death of the Muktdil brothers is

a big blow to the ASG as they lost their main sea navigators during kidnapping activities.

"Close air support is being provided by augmenting troops as of this moment to hunt down the other ASG fighters," Tan said.

Brig. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, attributed the success of their operations to the positive cooperation of residents. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

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bulletin files

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Army truck bumangga sa karinderya: 8 sugatan

ROXAS CITY - Isinugod sa ospital sa Lungsod ng Iloilo ang mga sugatang biktima matapos bumangga ang isang army truck sa mga sasakyan at karinderya sa Jamindan, Capiiz.

Nangyari ang insidente sa labas lang ng Camp Macario Peralta, ang headquarters ng 3rd Infantry Division ng Philippine Army.

Sa panayam ng Bombo Radyo kay Police Insp. Bryant Fallera ng Jamindan Municipal Police Station, sa inisyal na imbestigasyon, nasa walong sundalo ang sugatan.

Pababa mula sa kampo ang army truck ng Engineering Brigade ng Philippine Army na minamaneho ni Private First Class Ronnie Montalvo, 39-anyos, karga ang grader nang mawalan ng preno.

Dahil hindi na makontrol ang sasakyan, binangga na lang ito ng driver sa poste ng kuryente subalit hindi pa rin huminto ang sasakyan at sunod na inararo ang anim na motorsiklo nakaparadang at Isuzu Crosswind, dalawang bahay at isang karinderya.

Nagkataon naman na marami ang kumakain sa karinderya kabilang dito ang walong sundalo.

Maliban sa mga sundalo, inaalam pa kung may mga sibilyan na kabilang sa mga sugatan.

7D September 2016

**The
Standard**
PHILIPPINE COMBAT NEWS

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TURNING POINT? This file photo taken April 20, 2015 shows Philippine soldiers and a US Army soldier from the Hawaii-based Stryker Brigade Combat of the 5th Infantry Division taking positions after disembarking from a C-47 Chinook helicopter during an air assault exercise at the military training camp in Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. On Sept. 28, 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte said he will soon end joint military exercises between Manila and Washington in what observers say could dampen ties between the two allies. **AFP**

7/ September 2016



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THIS file photo taken on April 20, 2015 shows Philippine soldiers and a US army soldier from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat of the 5th Infantry Division based in Hawaii taking their positions after disembarking from a C-47 Chinook helicopter during an air assault exercise inside Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija. (AFP)

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INQUIRER

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'Abus high in battle'

THE ABU Sayyaf terror group is believed to be using illegal drugs to lure new recruits and to fund its operations, the military said on Thursday.

Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS)—headquartered at Camp Bautista in Sulu—said military units based in Zambasulta (Zamboanga, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi) told of engaging mostly young recruits who were "most probably high on certain drugs, particularly 'shabu,'" as evidenced by paraphernalia found among the belongings of slain Abu Sayyaf members and in their camps.

"Drugs are being used to lure youngsters who may have been given 'shabu' for free and are recruited once they become addicted," the JTFS said. "Reports also indicate that money generated from 'shabu' is used to finance the group's daily operations."

Per hostages

In its report to Armed Forces of the Philippines headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, the JTFS said this was also indicated by several former hostages of the terror group.

It cited Indonesian hostage Herman Bin Manggak who said in his debriefing that up to seven Abu Sayyaf members "guarded him during his captivity and he saw them taking 'shabu.'"

Talking to interpreters, Manggak said he was nearly rescued three times by government troops who engaged the terrorists in gun battles. In those instances, Manggak said, he saw how the drugs affected the rebels who treated the gun battles like a game.

Drugs tie-up

The JTFS said the proliferation of drugs in Zambasulta was believed to be a result of a tie-up between the Abu Sayyaf and drug lords.

In Sulu, for instance, several antidrug operations by joint police-military forces resulted in big drug hauls and the deaths of some suspects and government troopers.

The latest fatality in the drug war in Sulu was PO2 Tirso Montalba, 27, of the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force.

In an operation on Saturday in Barangay Kaulayan, Patikul, suspected drug dealer Anuddin Akiran Daharani fired the first shot that killed Montalba but he was also killed in the fire fight.

In Zamboanga City, Abu Sayyaf member Arnisar Dangsani Ismahuddin was arrested by police in a buy-bust operation on Tuesday.

Cynthia D. Balana

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US unruffled by Rody's tirades

By JOSE KATIGBAK
STAR Washington bureau

WASHINGTON - The United States, on the surface at least, appears unruffled by President Duterte's repeated tirades.

Bristling at US criticism of extrajudicial killings under his war on drugs, Duterte has insulted President Barack Obama, forcing the American leader to cancel a meeting between them.

Duterte has also maligned the US ambassador, called for the withdrawal of US forces from Mindanao and an end to joint patrols with the US Navy in the South China Sea.

"It is hard to do business with a country whose president, every few days now it seems, says things that presumably cause some consternation here," State Department spokesman John Kirby said on Wednesday at his press briefing.

"What I would say is, broadly speaking, we continue to focus on our relationship with the Philippines - built on shared sacrifices for democracy and human rights, and strong people-to-people and societal ties, and obviously we'd like to see that continue," Kirby said.

"The bottom line is that the United States has significant security commitments with the Philippines and is commit-

ted to meeting those commitments and to furthering this relationship," he said.

Kirby was commenting on Duterte's announcement that he is serving notice to the Americans that an upcoming joint military exercise with the US will be the last between the two countries.

A few days ago, Duterte said he was seeking to pursue alliances or partnerships with China and Russia, two potential adversaries of the US.

"They're a sovereign nation and we're certainly not going to hold them back from pursuing closer relations with either of those countries," said State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner.

Kirby and Toner said the US alliance with the Philippines was broad and one of the most enduring and important relationships in the Asia Pacific region.

The US and the Philippines have a Mutual Defense Treaty signed in 1951, which commits both nations to support each other if either is attacked by an external party.

They also have an Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which allows US troops and supplies rotational access to Philippine military bases.

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Military: Abus engaged in illegal drug trade

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The military yesterday expressed belief the Abu Sayyaf bandit group is engaged in the illegal drug trade to support its terrorism activities in Mindanao.

The military said the bandits are using shabu to keep themselves alert at all times.

Col. Rodrigo Gregorio, spokesman for the Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), said former Abu Sayyaf hostages have told the military that the bandits were using shabu.

Gregorio said former Indonesian captive Herman Bin Manggak revealed during a debriefing that five to seven bandits who guarded him used shabu.

Herman said he was nearly rescued thrice by government troopers during clashes, in which he noticed that the bandits – who where high on methamphetamine – were acting like they were merely playing games.

The military said its ground units shared the same observation, saying most of the young

bandits appeared to be under the influence of illegal drugs.

Troopers had recovered drug paraphernalia from the camps they overran and personal belongings of slain bandits.

The military said the bandits offer illegal drugs to convince the youth to join the group.

Gregorio said reports showed that bandits who fought it out with government troops were mostly young recruits.

"These new recruits were most probably high on drugs, particularly shabu, as evidenced by paraphernalia recovered from their bodies and from their lairs."

"They may have been given shabu for free and later on recruited once they are addicted to it. Reports also indicated that money generated from shabu is being used to finance the Abu Sayyaf daily operations."

Gregorio said the proliferation of drugs in Zamboanga, Basilan and Sulu is believed to

be connected with the group in cahoots with big drug lords.

In Sulu, several anti-drug operations by joint Philippine National Police-Armed Forces of the Philippines troops resulted in drug hauls and deaths of some suspects and soldiers, he said.

The latest fatality in the drug war in Sulu was PO2 Tirso Montalba, 27, of the 24th Special Action Company of the Special Action Force.

Last Saturday, joint PNP-AFP forces conducted an anti-illegal drug operation in Barangay Kaunayan, Patikul, Sulu resulting in a gunbattle.

The suspected drug dealer Anuddin Akiran Daharani, 38, fired the first shot and killed Montalba. Daharani was later killed in the firefight while troops recovered high-powered guns and drug paraphernalia.

In Zamboanga City, another Abu Sayyaf member, Arrisar Dangsani Ismaluddin, was arrested by police in a drug sting on Tuesday.

In Metro Manila, several Abu Sayyaf men involved in the drug trade were also arrested.

Rody won't condone Abu acts

President Duterte said he would rather engage the Abu Sayyaf in a war than condone their brutal acts like decapitating hostages whose families cannot afford to pay ransom. "You kill people for money and if there is no payment, you just kill them like chickens and goats. *Mahirap iyan* (it's hard)," Duterte said in a speech in front of the Filipino community in Hanoi yesterday.

"I would never agree to peace talks that would include the Abu Sayyaf. Either you leave them out or *walang is-torya* (no story). I'd rather fight. As a matter of principle, I'd rather fight," he said.

Duterte said he does not want to offend Islam, but as long as he is President there will be no peace talks that would include the Abu Sayyaf. — **With Cecille Suerte Felipe**

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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ASG lures young recruits with free shabu – JTF Sulu

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The recovery of illegal drugs particularly shabu in the belongings of dead Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits and drug paraphernalia in their mountain lairs bolsters theories that the marauders are using illegal drugs to embolden them to fight government troops hot on their trail.

Aside from this, the findings of the military units operating in Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (ZamBaSulta) also show that the terrorist group

use illegal drugs not only as a source of funding but as an effective tool to lure young recruits to fight alongside them.

According to the Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu, the drugs are initially being given for free that would make recruitment easy. And the money generated from the sale of shabu is reportedly being used to finance the daily operations of the ASG.

The revelation of several former ASG hostages supports the findings of the Task Force. They said the ►20

young bandits who were guarding them were always high on drugs.

In his debriefing, former Indonesian hostage Herman Bin Manggak revealed that about five to seven ASG were always guarding him and during these times he saw them sniffing shabu. Talking through interpreters, he said he was nearly rescued three times by government troops who were engaged in fierce gun battles.

In those instances, Manggak said he witnessed the effect of drugs on the ASG bandits who treated the running gunbattle like child's game.

Drugs, too

Proliferation of drugs in ZamBaSulta area is also believed to be the handiwork of ASG who are in cahoots with big drug lords. Particularly in Sulu, several anti-illegal drugs operations by joint PNP-AFP troops resulted in a drug haul and the death of drug suspects and government troops.

The latest fatality in the drug war is Police Officer 2 (PO2) Tirso Montalba, 27 of the 24th Special Action Company of the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF).

Last Saturday, joint PNP-AFP forces composed of 24SAC, 33SAC, 52SAC of SAF, PNP, and the Army's 10th IB conducted a joint anti-illegal drug operation in Barangay Kaunayan, Patikul, Sulu, which resulted in a heavy gunbattle.

The suspected drug dealer Anuddin Akiran Daharani, 38, reportedly fired the first shot that caused the death of Montalba. Daharani was also killed in a firefight that ensued. Troops recovered high powered firearms and drug paraphernalia.

Montalba, a native of La Trinidad, Benguet was flown to Manila Sunday.

In Zamboanga City, another ASG member, Arnisar Dangsani Ismaluddin was arrested by police in a buy-bust operation Tuesday. In Metro Manila, several ASG members involved in the drug trade have also been arrested.

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The Manila Times

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Abus in cahoots with drug lords, says military

BY FERNAN MARASIGAN

THE terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is in cahoots with drug lords and is responsible for proliferation of illegal drugs in the ZamBaSulta area, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said on Thursday.

Zambasulta is made up of the provinces of Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi in southern Mindanao.

Citing reports from different units that had engaged the ASG, Col. Rodrigo Gregorio, spokesman for the AFP Joint Task Force Sulu, said the bandits not only kidnap for ransom but also trade in illegal drugs to fund their terrorist and other criminal acts.

The illegal drugs, according to Gregorio, also serve to motivate ASG members to commit crimes.

"These are the findings of numerous units in the ZamBaSulta

area... Reports coming from the line units indicate that those engaging the troops are mostly young [ASG] recruits who are most probably 'high' on certain drugs particularly shabu [methamphetamine hydrochloride] as evidenced by paraphernalia found in belongings of dead [bandits] and in their lairs," he said.

Gregorio added that drugs are being used to lure youngsters who are given shabu for free and later on recruited once they are addicted to it.

"Reports also indicate that mon-

ey generated from shabu is being used to finance the ASG's daily operations," he said.

Gregorio also cited claims of some of the former hostages of the group one of them an Indonesian, Herman Bin Manggak, who told authorities during his debriefing that he saw the bandits guarding him taking shabu.

Talking to interpreters, Manggak said he was nearly rescued three times by government troops who were engaged in fierce gun battles.

In those instances, he added, he witnessed effects of drugs on the terrorists who treat such battles as a game.

The military has also claimed that the Abu Sayyaf Group has connections with the drug lords in the distribution of illegal drugs in the ZamBaSulta area.

The group, it said, also backs up drug suspects whenever anti-drug operations are conducted in the area.

Authorities also cited a number

of such operations by joint police and military troops that resulted in bloody confrontations.

One of them took place in Sulu where a policeman identified as Police Officer 2 Tirso Mantalaba, 27, of the 24th Special Action Company of the elite Special Action Forces of the Philippine National Police, was killed in a firefight with a drug dealer identified as Anuddin Akiran Daharani, 38, who was also killed.

The anti-drug operation was conducted last Saturday by military forces in Barangay Kaunayan, Patikul, Sulu.

Troops recovered high-powered firearms and drug paraphernalia during the operation.

In Zamboanga City, another ASG member, Arnisar Dangani Ismaluddin was arrested by police in a buy-bust last Tuesday afternoon.

Gregorio said in Metro Manila, several Abu Sayyaf bandits have also been arrested for drug trafficking.

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Abu bandits hooked on shabu: AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

FORMER hostages of the Abu Sayyaf group in Sulu witnessed some of their captors sniffing shabu, the military's Joint Task Force Sulu said yesterday.

The revelation bolsters information gathered earlier by the military that the bandits, whose main activities are kidnapping for ransom and beheading hostages, are hooked on illegal drugs.

"Those guarding hostages are always high on drugs," said Col. Rodrigo Gregorio, the task force's spokesman.

The group is still holding around 15 foreign and Filipino hostages in Sulu. President Duterte, whose main focus is stopping the illegal drugs

trade, has said he wants the Abu Sayyaf destroyed.

Gregorio said one of the hostages who saw Abu Sayyaf men sniffing shabu was Indonesian Herman Bin Manggak, 30 who was released last September 22, or 50 days after he was abducted off Sandakan in Sabah.

He said that during debriefing, Manggak said "five to seven ASG are always guarding him and were personally seen by him taking shabu."

Gregorio said the Indonesian also told interpreters that in the three instances that he was almost rescued by government forces, he saw his captors treating "a deadly gun battle as a sort of game."

Gregorio also said the mili-

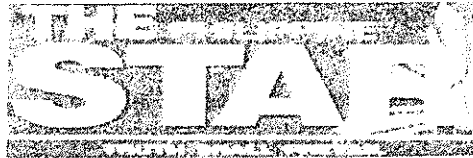
tary has information that the Abu Sayyaf has been luring youngsters by giving them free shabu. Once addicted, they are recruited to the group.

He noted that in clashes, "those engaging the troops are mostly young recruits who are most probably high in certain drugs particularly shabu."

He also said soldiers have recovered drug paraphernalia from the possession of slain Abu Sayyaf men and from lairs seized by government forces in past operations.

Government forces have stepped up operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu and in Basilan since last month, in line with the promise of President Duterte to defeat the group during his term.

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NDF optimistic on 'striking a deal' with gov't

By DING CERVANTES

CLARK FREEPORT, Pam-panga – The National Democratic Front (NDF) yesterday expressed optimism on "striking an agreement with the government" as it cited President Duterte's "encouraging gestures that promote the atmosphere of peace."

According to the NDF Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (RWC-SER), whose members are now in Utrecht, the Netherlands in preparation for the second round of peace negotiations in Oslo, Norway from Oct. 6 to 10, there are "positive signs" that both parties would agree on agrarian reform.

This developed as government peace panel member League of Cities of the Philippines president Edgardo Pamintuan stressed that all the reciprocal working groups are functioning well.

"I think it's all systems go for the next round. We're ready for peace," Pamintuan said. NDF consultant and RWC-SER member Randall Echaris said "one manifestation (of success in the talks) is that despite the vacuum on agrarian reform due to the expiration of the government's comprehensive agrarian reform program in June 2014, the government, like the NDF, has included the issue as one of the talking points."

"Another encouraging gesture is Duterte's order to condone unpaid arrears on land amortization of farmer beneficiaries and the moratorium on land use conversion," Echaris said.

"Writing off unpaid amortizations is a step towards free land distribution," he said.

Meanwhile, NDF consultant and RWC-SER member Adel Silva said the development of the steel industry would be one of the priorities in the discussions on national industrialization.

Socio-economic reforms sought

On Monday, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, current chairman of the gov-

ernment peace panel with the NDF, stressed the need to address the root causes of armed conflict through socio-economic reforms in order to attain peace.

Bello identified extreme poverty, injustice and corruption in government as the underlying factors that breed insurgency and said these concerns must be immediately resolved.

"In order to achieve peace in our country, we should not be signing peace agreements alone but we should be addressing the root causes of conflict," he said.

He added that the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) with the NDF seeks to address these concerns.

CASER – which Bello described as the "heart and soul of the peace process" – is one of the remaining substantive agenda on the talks, aside from the political and constitutional reforms and the end of hostilities and disposition of forces.

As embodied in the joint statement signed last Aug. 26, both panels agreed to finish the CASER within a period of six months.

CASER and the two remaining substantive agenda are set to be tackled during the next round of peace negotiations in Oslo.

Aside from resolving the root causes of conflicts, Bello also shared the current initiatives of both panels to come up with a bilateral ceasefire aimed at permanently ending the hostilities on the ground.

No surrender of guns

Meanwhile, Luis Jalandoni, the Netherlands-based top negotiator for the NDF, said the organization's military wing, the New People's Army, would not surrender their weapons even if a peace deal is reached with the government.

"We don't think the NPA should be disarmed or the weapons surrendered and destroyed," he told reporters in Manila. – With Jose Rodel Clapano, Reuters

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MILF questions timing of graft, malversation raps vs Misuari

By Mario J. Mallari

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) yesterday questioned the timing of the graft and malversation charges against its founding chairman Nur Misuari – warning that such may lead to bigger problem, including possible war, between the government and the group.

Lawyer Emmanuel Victor Fontanilla, spokesman for the MNLF faction of Misuari, said they are surprised over the cases recommended by Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales for filing the charges before the Sandiganbayan.

"The MNLF is surprise why these matters are raised. The matters complained of allegedly happened almost 20 years ago," Fontanilla told *The Tribune*.

"We are very sad this may result to bigger problem...the consequences would be huge, including the possibility of war. The timing is full of sinister reasons," he added.

The MNLF spokesman scored the government for contradicting messages, citing Malacañang's readiness to talk and even lift the arrest warrant of Misuari, who is



MISUARI

wanted for rebellion in connection to the 2013 Zamboanga City siege, for the peace process, and then suddenly the filing of latest criminal charges.

"We are wondering what kind of message the government wants to send. They said they want to talk peace with MNLF and then another unit of the government is filing these cases...they better synchronize their moves," Fontanilla said.

"The government is speaking with fork tongue...the messages are not synchronized. This should tread one direction toward one bid," he

said.

Fontanilla said that if the government will pursue the charges against Misuari, then the MNLF has no other choice but to go back to war.

"They (government) will leave us without any choice but to go back to war, that is one of the possibilities, and that would be disastrous for Mindanao...I do not know what will happen," Fontanilla said.

The case against Misuari stemmed from the procurement of educational materials for ARMM totaling P137.5 million in 2000-2001 while serving as ARMM governor.

Duterte has sought Misuari's assistance in dealing with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu which is a known bailiwick of the MNLF.

Misuari responded – leading to the recent release of five foreign hostages – Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and four Indonesians.

Duterte, however, refused to heed Misuari's call for the inclusion of the Abu Sayyaf in the peace talks – citing the "despicable" acts committed by the terrorists.

Fontanilla expressed belief that the filing of cases has something to do with the peace negotiations

being pursued by Duterte with Misuari.

"There are parties who want to derail the peace process," Fontanilla said.

Fontanilla said that the MNLF Central Committee will soon discuss the latest development.

"We are sad and we will calibrate our response. The central committee will discuss the matter," he said.

Relatedly, Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division (ID), met with Misuari's most trusted man in Mainland Mindanao on Tuesday in Sultan Kudarat.

Galvez visited Datu Randy Karon in Lebak. The two agreed to cooperate on domestic programs and help each other address extremism through diplomacy.

"Peace is something we cannot impose by use of force. It can only develop through diplomacy, cooperation and understanding," Galvez said.

For his part, Karon expressed his desire for a constructive relationship among all stakeholders in support to the peace process. He said he believes in the sincerity of the government to end the Mindanao Moro rebellion.

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CPP lauds scrapping of all RP-US exercises

By Mario J. Mallari

The Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) yesterday welcomed President Duterte's scrapping of all military exercises between Philippine and United States troops after next week's joint amphibious landing.

"The peace-loving and patriotic Filipino people are pleased that the GRP president has heeded their clamor to put an end to US military exercises in the Philippines, which have long violated Philippine sovereignty and served as an insult on their national dignity," the CPP said in a statement.

In a speech before Filipinos in Hanoi, Vietnam, Duterte declared "I will serve notice to you now, that this will be the last military exercise, jointly Philippines-US, the last one."

For its part, the Department of National Defense (DND) said it will await further orders from the Commander in Chief regarding the AFP's exercises with the US forces.

"Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana will discuss this with the President to seek more clarification and guidance," DND Public Affairs Service Director Arsenio Andolong said in a statement.

"As stated earlier, all agreements and treaties with the US are still in effect. As to succeeding exercises, we will have to sit down with our US counterparts to discuss them,"

he added.

The CPP said that the scrapping of joint RP-US military exercises is in accordance to Duterte's efforts toward an independent foreign policy.

"Indeed, amid efforts of the Duterte regime to promote an independent foreign policy, such war maneuver exercises by US troops are completely anachronistic and should be put to a permanent end," added the CPP.

Earlier, Duterte also declared that all US forces in Mindanao must go. He then said the Philippine military will no longer participate in US-led naval patrols of the South China Sea.

At the same time, the CPP chided National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon who interpreted Duterte's statement claiming that what he meant was the upcoming war exercises will be the last only for the year.

"Esperon and other officials who have long looked up to the US, must stop pulling back efforts by Duterte to end the presence of US military troops and their war machinery" in line with his efforts to pursue an independent foreign policy.

Next week, the Philippine Amphibious Landing Exercise 33 (Phiblex-33), a joint marine training involving almost 2,000 Filipino and American troops, will start in Luzon areas. This was the last PH-US bilateral exercise according to Duterte.

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'Davao del Sur' joins Navy fleet

THE Philippine Navy's second strategic sealing vessel was launched yesterday as BRP Davao del Sur in Surabaya, Indonesia.

Philippine Ambassador Maria Lumen Isleta stood as sponsor and smashed the ceremonial bottle of champagne on its bow.

The ship is the last of two SSVs ordered by the defense department from the PT PAL of Indonesia for P3.8 billion as part of the ongoing modernization program of the Armed Forces.

The other SSV, now named BRP Tarlac, arrived last May and was damaged when it was rammed by a commercial tanker while anchored in Zamboanga City last Sept. 19.

Navy spokesman Capt. Lued Lincuna said BRP Davao del Sur is due to arrive the middle of next year.

"She will undergo a series of test, training, sea trials, equipment familiarization of the crew and a lot more in order to operate the vessel," Lincuna also said.

Lincuna said BRP Davao Del Sur, like BRP Tarlac, "will serve as a floating command and control, especially in the conduct of humanitarian assistance and disaster response and will also serve as a military sealift and transport vessel."

Lincuna said defense undersecretaries Ricardo David and Raymond Elefante; AFP vice chief Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda; Navy vice commander Rear Adm. Rafael Mariano, and other Philippine military officials witnessed the launching. – **Victor Reyes**

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New PAF-TOG1 commander to bear tradition of excellence

From the Baguio Midland Courier (Sep 29): New PAF-TOG1 commander to bear tradition of excellence



TURNOVER OF COMMAND – Philippine Air Force 1st Air Division commander B'Gen. Enrique Reyes presided the turnover of command responsibilities between outgoing PAF Tactical Operations Group 1 commander Lt Col. Onorlie Brillantes and incoming commander Lt Col. Thad Rufino Candelario at the Baguio Air Base last week. The new commander has vowed to continue the tradition of excellence of PAF-TOG1. – Haney Pelandongan

The new commander of the Philippine Air Force Tactical Operations Group 1 vowed to continue the tradition of excellence the unit has established in serving the people and institutions in Northern Luzon.

Lt Col. Thad Rufino Candelario, new PAF-TOG1 commander, said the unit he will lead has achieved its targets in the previous years and it is matter of sustaining its gains while innovation will take its natural course.

Candelario, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1993 and a known military strategist, will put into action his vast experience in military service on how to further improve the logistical and operational capabilities of PAF-TOG1.

PAF-TOG1, over the years, have expanded its linkages with government agencies and private institutions resulting to excellent partnership in non-combat missions such as search and rescue, civil relations, relief efforts, anti-illegal drugs and illegal logging operations.

The unit has been adjudged back-to-back best group of the 1st Air Division of PAF for 2015 and 2016 under the leadership of Col. Dennis Estrella and Lt Col. Onorlie Brillantes, respectively.

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B/Gen. Enrique Reyes, PAF 1st Air Division commander, who presided over the turnover of command responsibilities between Villanueva and Brillantes, commended the men and women of PAF-TOG1 for elevating the bar of excellent military service in Northern Luzon.

This, even as Reyes challenged all PAF-TOG1 officers and personnel to be ready at all times to serve the Filipinos especially in time of natural calamities.

"Every time we have the opportunity to save lives, let's do it," Reyes said.

In a private dialogue with PAF-TOG personnel, Reyes rallied them to support the government's all-out campaign against illegal drugs.

Reyes said the declaration of state of lawlessness has mandated the three major services of the Armed Forces of the Philippines – PAF, Philippine Navy and the Philippine Army to complement police operations.

Reyes made the same directive to all units under his division.

Aside from TOG 1 other units are TOG 2 based in Cauayan, Isabela; TOG 3 based in San Miguel, Tarlac; TOG 4 based in Lucena City and TOG 5 based in Legaspi City.

Also under the 1st Air Division is the 600th Air Base Wing, which maintains and secures Clark Air Base in Angeles City, Pampanga, where the division headquarters is based.

Brillantes, a member of PMA Class 1994, will be assigned to the PAF Flying School in Fernando Air Base, Lipa City.

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Ilonggo named outstanding soldier

Sun Star-Iloilo (Sep 28): Ilonggo named outstanding soldier



AN ILONGGO soldier was hailed as one of the 10 awardees in this year's search for The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers (Tops) conducted by Metrobank Foundation and Rotary Club of Makati.

Petty Officer-in-Charge Fernando Junio Parcon of the Philippine Navy joined the elite roster of Outstanding Filipinos in receiving the award during Metrobank's 54th anniversary celebration last September 5 at Metrobank Plaza, Makati City.

He received a trophy, a medal, and a cash prize of P500,000 courtesy of Metrobank Foundation.

Parcon, who has been in the service for 24 years, is currently assigned at the Counter Intelligence Group, Naval Intelligence Security Force, Philippine Navy, Taguig City.

The citation for Parcon said, "He may have lost sight in one eye, but multi-awarded athlete Intelligence Specialist Chief (ISC) Fernando Parcon continues to make waves in service of the military and the community."

Parcon was a gold medalist in the 1991 Asean Cup Boxing Championship. In 2004, despite having partial loss of eyesight he won a gold medal in the 8th World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation Championship.

He extended his love for sports to his advocacy for the youth.

In 2009, he conducted a free clinic on arnis and boxing at the Southern Police District (SPD) compound in Taguig City. Around 100 youth participants learned various self-defense techniques. Parcon believes that engaging the youth in sports will keep them away from vices and will help them have a sense of direction in life.

As an intelligence officer, the information gathered by Parcon helped the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) foil several threats.

He pre-empted the further recruitment of soldiers by disgruntled elements of the military through solid intelligence. He was also instrumental in the successful rescue of 71 human trafficking victims in Malate, Manila in 2012.

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Parcon's vigilance also prevented incidents of ghost deliveries and overpricing in the military. One of his biggest accomplishments was preventing an anomalous delivery of substandard spare parts that would have cost the Navy P100 million in 2007.

As treasurer of the Philippine Navy and Coast Guard Enlisted Personnel Association Incorporated from 2010 to 2013, Parcon implemented several cost-cutting measures and started fundraising projects.

By the end of his term, the association's revolving fund increased by 62.5 percent to P39 million, benefitting members in terms of benefits and financial assistance.

Parcon is also a recipient of numerous awards, including eight Military Merit Medals. He was also adjudged as 2012 Regular Agent of the Year for Administration by the Naval Intelligence and Security Force.

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/iiloilo/feature/2016/09/28/longgo-named-outstanding-soldier-500511>

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Air Platforms /ADAS 2016: Philippine Navy looks to secure anti-piracy platforms and supporting technologies

From IHS 360 (Sep 29): Air Platforms /ADAS 2016: Philippine Navy looks to secure anti-piracy platforms and supporting technologies

The Philippine Navy (PN) has outlined a requirement for a near-term emphasis on procuring capability that will help its efforts to tackle piracy, terrorism, and drug trafficking, a senior officer disclosed to *IHS Jane's* on 28 September.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity at the Asian Defence and Security 2016 (ADAS 2016) exhibition in Manila, the officer also highlighted a growing priority in the PN's procurement planning on securing licences and technology transfers from foreign contractors in order to meet future PN requirements from local sources.

The PN official added that the service expects to sign a contract with South Korean shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) within the next month for two new frigates for about USD337 million....

[Subscription required for full article]

<http://www.ihs360.com/2016/09/29/philippine-navy-looks-to-secure-anti-piracy-platforms-and-supporting-technologies/>

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Reds firm against disarming NPA, negotiator says

Christian V. Esquerre ABS-CBN News

MANILA - Communist rebels stood firm on keeping the 4,000-strong New People's Army even if they reach a peace agreement with the government, their chief negotiator said Thursday. The NPA could "cooperate" with the military "in the service of the Filipino people," said Luis Jalandoni, who heads the rebels' peace panel.

"We are firm on that. No disbandment, no disarmament because the NPA has been serving the people in so many ways," he told a forum in Manila.

Jalandoni said negotiators could consider "different possibilities of integration" by NPA combatants into the military.

But he cited cases of "discrimination" against former Moro fighters absorbed by the military after the 1996 peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front.

"It is essential for us that the integrity and unity of the New People's Army remain under the command of the Communist Party of the Philippines," Jalandoni said.

Both sides hope to hammer out a deal within a year, ending decades of communist insurgency that has killed around 30,000 people.

But first they have to hurdle the most crucial phase of the negotiation, which seeks to address the root causes of the armed conflict.

They will tackle socio-economic reforms such as free land distribution and the nationalization of 21 industries when talks resume in Oslo, Norway next week.

"We have high hopes but we know there's a lot of work to be done," Jalandoni said.

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