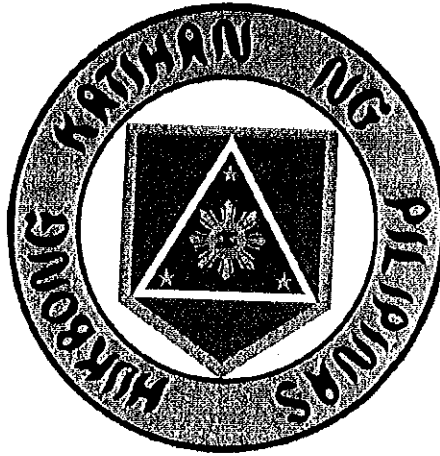


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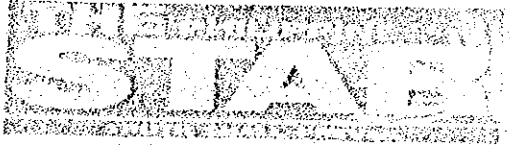
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Mom to Sara: Shut it down

'Inday Sara Show' vs opposition packs up

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY — Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio's mother Elizabeth Zimmerman has stepped into the word war between Carpio and Vice President Leni Robredo and the opposition's Otso Diretso senatorial candidates, telling the mayor to end her "bullying."

"Kaniinang umaga, nakatanggap ako ng phone call galing sa nanay ko na nasa Davao City, at sinabi niya 'wag daw ako makipag-away at 'wag ko raw i-bully ang mga opposition sa administration ni (Early this morning, I received a phone call from my mother who is in Davao City and she told me not to pick a fight with and bully the opposition to the administration of) President Duterte,'" Carpio said yesterday during Hugpong ng

Pagbabago (HNP)'s campaign rally in Lipa City, Batangas.

She said she is heeding her mother's call: "So mag-pack up na po ang Inday Sara Show. Wala na po siya. Sarado na po (So the 'Inday Sara Show' is packing up. It's gone. It's closed)."

"Sabi ng nanay ko, 'Alam ng lahat ng tao na anak ka ni Rodrigo, pero dapat malaman din nila na anak ka ni Elizabeth (My mother told me, 'Everyone knows you are the daughter of Rodrigo, but

Turn to Page 8

Mom From Page 1

people should also know you are the daughter of Elizabeth.) Shut it down," she added.

The President's daughter has taken on the opposition and Robredo on issues such as honesty and the proposed debate between the bets of Otso Diretso and HNP, which Carpio heads.

Carpio is known to be as feisty as her father, and one who does not back out from any fight.

The President has repeatedly admitted that he is a pushover to Carpio, his daughter with Elizabeth, his first wife, and his other daughter Veronica with his long-time partner Honeylet Avanceña.

Duterte also described Carpio as the "alpha" of the family who takes care of their affairs.

Carpio, according to the Chief Executive, is the one that keeps the family intact and at times even orders him

around if he is not able to do whatever he promises for the family, including providing their allowances.

Zimmerman, who is suffering from cancer, took a respite from her treatment and went on a Biyaheng Du30 bus campaign going around Visayas and Mindanao, exactly a month before the May 9, 2016 presidential elections.

The Biyaheng Du30 bus campaign was reportedly Zimmerman's idea in support of the father of her children.

No trading of barbs

Meanwhile, Robredo yesterday said she would not trade barbs with Carpio.

Insulting words do not help address the problems of the country, according to the Vice President.

"I can only control myself. My policy really is if the discussion is no longer productive, if it involves insults, I don't want to get involved,"

she said in an interview in Hong Kong where she joined the campaign sortie of five candidates of the Otso Diretso.

Asked about her reaction on Carpio's statement yesterday that she was scolded by her mother for "bullying" the opposition, Robredo said, "Mother knows best?"

Robredo added she would only criticize wrongdoings but would not insult people.

"If I think I need to say something, I won't hesitate no matter what the repercussions will be," she said.

Carpio earlier dubbed Otso Diretso bets as "black holes" for repeatedly challenging administration-backed candidates to a debate.

The presidential daughter also traded barbs with Robredo, who criticized her statement that honesty should not be an election issue.

Carpio called Robredo a "fake vice president" with questionable honesty and whose courage is also fake. — With Helen Flores

INQUIRER

LA MESA DAM WATER BREAKS CRITICAL LEVEL

Consumers in Metro Manila and parts of Rizal province are bracing for water rationing as water level at La Mesa Dam drops to 68.93 meters on Sunday afternoon.

By Patricia Denise M. Chiu
@PDMChiuINQ

Water rationing in Metro Manila and parts of Rizal province looms as the water level at La Mesa Dam continues to drop with the onset of El Niño, a dry spell triggered by periodic warming in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

As of 4 p.m. on Sunday, water elevation at the dam had dropped to 68.93 meters, breaching the 69-meter critical low level.

It may further go down due to increased demand, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Pagasa hydrologist Richard Orendain said the water level at La Mesa Dam had fallen because there had been no significant rainfall since December in Novaliches, Quezon City, where the dam's watershed is located.

La Mesa, an earth dam, has an ideal water level of 80 meters.

Demand for water from consumers

in Metro Manila and surrounding areas has increased, partly due to the onset of El Niño, Orendain said. *(See related story in Metro, Page A12.)*

"As time goes on, and especially with increased temperatures, the demand really rises, compared to colder months," he said.

Manila Water Inc., which gets its

water supply from La Mesa Dam, has implemented pressure and supply reduction schemes, which resulted in service interruptions in parts of the metropolis.

Although La Mesa Dam elevation levels are critical, Angat Dam in Bulacan province, which supplies water to La Mesa, has a healthy

A3

FROM A1

level of 200.97 meters as of 6 a.m. on Sunday, according to Orendain.

Angat Dam's critical low level is pegged at 180 meters.

According to Manila Water, its customers in Metro Manila in 2018 required 1,650 MLD (million liters per day).

Store water

Jeric Sevilla, Manila Water spokesperson, said the water concessionaire was "fine-tuning its operational adjustments."

"[The] objective [is to have] a window where people will have

water, and for them to store water for their needs," Sevilla said in a text message.

Orendain said water utilities should inform customers about service interruptions, which may continue, especially since the country was now feeling the effects of El Niño.

He said service interruptions were necessary for water utilities to try to extend supply until the onset of the rainy season.

Water at La Mesa Dam is expected to be replenished by the end of May or the first week of June, according to Pagasa.

The two concessionaires in Metro Manila—Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services

Inc.—rely on the water supply from Angat, Ipo and La Mesa dams. Water from Angat passes through Ipo where it is released to La Mesa.

Maynilad also draws from Laguna Lake water that it filters for distribution to customers in southern Metro Manila (Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Parañaque cities, and parts of Cavite province).

Manila Water provides water supply to the east zone—Makati, Mandaluyong, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, San Andres and Santa Ana in Manila—all in Metro Manila, as well as Angono, Antipolo,

Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Cardona, Jalajala, Morong, Pililia, Rodriguez, San Mateo, Tanay, Taytay and Teresa—all in Rizal.

Maynilad supplies water to the west zone—all parts of Manila except for San Andres and Santa Ana, some parts of Quezon City (west of San Juan River, West Avenue, Edsa, Congressional and Mindanao avenues, the northern part of Quezon City starting from the districts of Holy Spirit and Batasan Hills), Makati (west of South Superhighway), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas and Malabon—all in Metro Manila. —WITH A REPORT FROM INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

PH can't afford to wage war against China – Duterte

By GENALYN D. KABILING

The country cannot not afford to wage war with China over the South China Sea dispute because it is a "rich" country with "plenty of good quality weapons," President Duterte declared last Friday.

In his visit to Negros Occidental last Friday, the President admitted that going to war against China might only lead to the massacre of government troops.

"If we go to war against China, I would lose all my soldiers just as they are leaving for the war. It will be a massacre. We don't have the capacity to fight them," he said in his remarks.

"Unlike China, our money is being spent for education and the teachers' wages. They used to feed their people with rations, but what they did was they manufactured many weapons," he said.

He noted that China has "improved a lot" amid the construction boom that generated jobs for its nationals. "Now that they are rich country, they have plenty of good quality weapons... for many years,

they were ordered by their president to keep on creating guns," he added.

The President, however, reaffirmed his resolve to protect the nation "from those who want to occupy our land." He acknowledged that China was now "at its farthest" in the disputed region.

"They are only up to that point. Nobody said before that we should place cannons and machine guns here. So China claimed it. Eh 'di they are only up to there," he said.

The Philippines has a long-running dispute with China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea.

The country won an arbitration ruling nullifying Beijing's claims but Duterte opted to pursue bilateral dialogue with China to manage the territorial dispute for now. When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Manila late last year, he and Duterte agreed to stay committed to addressing disputes by peaceful means without resorting to the threat or use of force.

Some groups have criticized the Duterte government for not doing enough to protest China's increased military buildup in the disputed territory. 4

AFP issues manual on release of requested military info

By Jeannette I. Andrade
@jiandradeINQ

Only the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff can approve or reject information requests to the military establishment.

The AFP over the weekend officially released its manual on freedom of information (FOI), cascading to all ground units the standard operating procedures, remedies and administrative liabilities in enforcing President Duterte's Executive Order No. 2 which provides for the people's right to information.

"The public has the right to know the right information at

the right time. An informed populace is a source of national power and right information can empower Filipinos of informed decision," Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office (PAO), said at the FOI seminar and induction of FOI action officers and staff of unified commands and military units at Camp Aguinaldo on Friday.

Retrieved or denied

In the AFP's manual, the AFP-PAO chief is tasked to receive, assess, evaluate and transmit FOI requests filed by a citizen with the concerned offices and units.

Requested information shall

be retrieved or denied on valid grounds by the offices and units, which decision should be relayed to the AFP-PAO chief who then will communicate with the AFP chief of staff.

AFP chief's approval

It states that based on the recommendations of cognizant offices and units, relayed to the AFP-PAO chief, the AFP chief of staff "shall solely approve or deny the release of the requested information."

The AFP-PAO chief is then tasked to get in touch with the requesting party to communicate the approval or denial of the release of the informa-

tion requested.

Based on the AFP's FOI manual, the AFP can deny a request if the identity of the requesting party is fictitious; it is prompted by sheer idle curiosity or ulterior motive; it is contrary to law, morals, good customs, or public policy; it is for a commercial purpose; and it will compromise national, operational and personnel security.

The manual provides remedies for the denial of information requests and lists down administrative penalties under the Articles of War and the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees for failure of military personnel to act on requests. INQ

11 March 2019

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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UNTV Cup: AFP guns for sweep of title series

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) hopes to become the first three-time champion in the UNTV Cup as the Cavaliers go for a sweep of their title series with the Senate Defenders today at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

Their confidence boosted by a thrilling 76-73 come-from-behind win in the opener of the best-of-three title series on March 3, the Cavaliers vowed to pull all stops in the 7 p.m. encounter to complete another year of dominant performance.

As in their previous two championships, the Cavaliers hope to get significant numbers from veterans Boyet Bautista and Eugene Tan – the same players who provided the offensive punch that flattened the reigning titlist in the tournament organized by UNTV president and CEO Dr. Daniel Razon.

In what could be his most productive game of the season, Tan scattered 18 points, including a huge three with 1:27 remaining to snatch the win from the Defenders, who led most of the way.

Using his guile most of the time, the 6-foot-7 Bautista contributed 15 points – not to mention the intangibles he provided to the team that prevented the Defenders from pulling away.

AFP's Education Benefit Systems Office stands to receive a tax-free P4 million from UNTV if the Cavaliers go on to win the championship against a team seeking to become the first back-to-back champion in the league now on its seventh year.

AFP guns for UNTV Cup crown

Game Today
(Smart Araneta Coliseum)
7 p.m. – AFP vs Senate

ARMED FORCES of the Philippines (AFP) hopes to become the first three-time champion in the UNTV Cup as the Cavaliers go for a sweep of their title series with the Senate Defenders today at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

Their confidence boosted by a thrilling 76-73 come-from-behind win in the opener of their best-of-three title series on March

3, the Cavaliers vowed to pull all the stops in their 7 p.m. encounter to complete another year of dominant performance in the tournament designed for public servants.

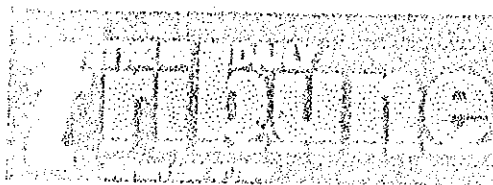
Also with two championships are the Judiciary Magis of Supreme Court Administrator Jose Midas Marquez.

As in their previous two championships, the Cavaliers hope to get significant numbers from veterans Boyet Bautista and Eugene Tan – the same players who provided the offensive punch that flat-

tened the reigning titlist in the tournament organized by UNTV president and CEO Dr. Daniel Razon.

In what could be his most productive game of the season, Tan scattered 18 points, including a huge three with 1:27 remaining to snatch the win from the Defenders, who led most of the way.

Using his guile most of the time, the 5-foot-7 Bautista contributed 15 points – not to mention the intangibles he provided to the team that prevented the Defenders from pulling away.



Stop PCSO militarization, DU30 urged

Cam is hoping that no military or former military official will be next in Balutan's position

By Gladys Mae Ahlon

A board member of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) appealed to President Duterte yesterday to stop the militarization of the agency and appoint a leader with a heart for the poor.

Sandra Cam, a former whistle-blower whose bid to head the PCSO as early as 2017 was hurt by the successive appointments of two former military men in Jose Jorge Corpuz and Alexander Balutan, made the appeal following the firing of Balutan, an ex-Marines general, on corruption charges.

"It's time to stop militarization within the PCSO," Cam said.

Cam claimed that since Balutan took over the PCSO, the agency's revenue has been steadily declining because he did not charge franchisees to operate the Authorized Agency Corporation.

A leader with a heart for the poor should be appointed to prevent it from being militarized.

Agency revenue should be available at Small Town Lottery (STL) operations, she noted.

Cam is hoping that no military or former military official will be next in Balutan's position. She insisted that a leader with a heart

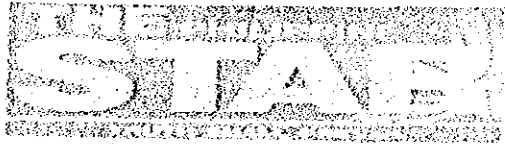
for the poor should be appointed to prevent it from being militarized.

Cam also confirmed allegations of subcontracting during the administration of Balutan who was appointed PCSO general manager in 2016.

Balutan is a member of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1983.

Close to being appointed two years ago, Cam's bid to head the agency was hurt by her perceived closeness to gambling tycoon Charlie "Atong" Ang, who is seen to benefit from her appointment. 3

Ang is the owner of Mercedien Vista Gaming Corp. which has jai-alai operations within the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority. His business, it is said took a beating from the reforms initiated by Corpuz and Balutan.



Duterte vows to fulfill promises until 'dying day'

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte has vowed to fulfill his promises until his "dying day," months before a midterm election widely seen as a referendum on his administration.

Duterte, whose bold pronouncements on drugs and corruption helped him seize a landslide victory in 2016, said he would be embarrassed if he fails to make good on his promises.

"I don't make promises that I can't keep. If I say it in public, I will fulfill that until my dying day. Even if I have to rot, I will do it as long as I can fulfill it," Duterte said during the distribution of land ownership certificates in Negros Occidental on Friday.

"That is my message to you. Believe it because even though it sounds arrogant, that message came from the President of the Philippines. I will never allow my promises to fail because I don't want to be embarrassed in front of Filipinos," he added.

Duterte has been on legacy mode in his recent public engagements, enumerating the accomplishments of his administration and promising to sustain his reforms in his last three years in office.

Last month, he claimed to have delivered on all his promises except easing the traffic woes in Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, Metro Manila's main thoroughfare.

Calling himself "a worker of government," Duterte cited anew his administration's gains. He mentioned the laws on free education and universal health care and the additional funding for the cash transfer program.

The President also cited his dismissal of some Cabinet members as part of his anti-corruption campaign and his intensified crackdown on illegal drugs. He had vowed to end the drug scourge within

the first six months of his term but later admitted that it was not doable because several officials are involved in narcotics trade.

The Chief Executive also promised to continue the land reform program to persuade communist rebels to abandon the armed struggle.

"For my remaining three years, I will give away all government-owned lands to the people. They are of no use to the government, anyway. The mountains are very vast. Except for the military reservation. Their area is very large," Duterte said.

"But there's nothing like that in the mountains. So, I instructed (Agrarian Reform Secretary John) Castriciones to give the lands away to the people because that is one of our most pressing problems," he added.

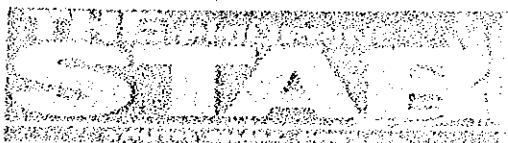
The President also promised to fast-track the distribution of fertilizers and joked that

they should be used to "bury" members of the communist armed group New People's Army.

"Bury the NPAs in those fertilizers. I will give you 2,000 plus. I will give you cell-phones. My phone number is there so you can call... Get it from the police here. This is my police. Where is yours? Let's see who is more beautiful," Duterte said.

"I will give you this. The price is also included here already. Massage, body, one half, massage all the way... I'm just joking to make you laugh. That is our agreement, okay? If you don't follow it, I will get back at you and shoot you with an armalite. I will be the one to fire the first shot," he added.

Aside from fighting corruption and illegal drugs, Duterte has also promised to pursue peace talks with communist and Muslim rebels and to push for a federal form of government. — **With Louise Maureen Simeon** 9



Troopers seize IED, firearms in Agusan

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

Army soldiers recovered an improvised explosive device (IED), firearms and other items following an encounter with suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Buenavista, Agusan del Norte over the weekend.

Aside from the IED, among the items recovered were two rifles, a pistol, electrical wires, a grenade, ammunition, five phones, binoculars and personal belongings.

The encounter between the troopers and at least 10 guerrillas occurred in Barangay

Lower Olave on Saturday, according to 1/Lt. Roel Maglalang, civil military operations officer of the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion (IB).

Maglalang said the troopers were responding to a report about the presence of armed men in the area when they clashed with the rebels.

Lt. Col. Francisco Molina Jr., chief of the 23rd IB, attributed the recovery of the items to the cooperation between the residents and the military.

"Through the cooperation of the civilian stakeholders, we were able to save lives by thwarting the hostile plans of the rebels," Molina said.

Soldiers, NPA clash in Agusan

Troops of the Army 23rd Infantry Battalion encountered more or less 10 New People's Army rebels in Agusan del Norte last Saturday.

A military report disclosed that the encounter took place in Purok 7, Barangay Lower Olave, Buenavista, at about 11:50 a.m.

The 23rd IB received reports from concerned civilian residents about the presence in their barangay of armed men believed to be NPA rebels.

Lt. Col. Francisco L. Molina Jr., commander of the 23rd IB, immediately sent out troops to check on the information.

Upon reaching the area, they chanced upon more or less 10 fully armed NPA rebels. A firefight ensued for about five minutes, after which the NPA fled to different directions.

Upon securing the area, the government troops recovered two Carbine M1 rifles, a caliber .22 pistol, an anti-personnel mine armed with blasting cap, 30 meters of electrical wires, three cartridges of 40mm, HE, a hand grenade, three UHF commercial radios (Cignus), three magazines for Carbine rifles, 350 rounds of live ammunition for Carbine rifles, five cell phones, two binoculars, a monocular, a sniper scope, and seven pack bags containing hammock, personal belongings, and subversive documents.

Molina thanked concerned citizens of Barangay Lower Olave for providing timely information about the presence of NPA rebels in their area. (Francis Wakefield) ¶

Duterte to rebels: Wait until you are awarded lands, don't illegally occupy them

By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

President Duterte has warned Communist rebels anew against illegally occupying or stealing lands, saying they should instead drop their weapons and wait to become land reform beneficiaries.

As he vowed to pursue genuine land

reform for the remainder of his term, the President said he has directed the military to "kill" armed rebels who illegally occupy private or public lands.

"The NPAs are meddling again. That's what I really don't like about them. They said they are the ones who decided to occupy a property, but I won't let that happen. ►6

Duterte to rebels...

P***** I** I will tell the military to kill them," he said during the distribution of land ownership certificates in Sagay, Negros Occidental last Friday.

"Why will you steal lands? You should wait if you want to have big lands. We'll divide that properly," he said.

Duterte remained confident that rich landowners would support the land reform program and share their vast lands with the poor. "The rich ones and the Catholics will understand. There is always a time to be a landowner and a big billionaire and a time just for a simple life," he added.

The President made the remarks after expressing concern about the alleged involvement of the rebels with the killing of sugar farmers in Sagay, Negros Occidental last year.

He maintained that the government was not behind the violence against the farmers.

"I really came here because I wanted to see who were the ones who fought over a piece of land. Those sons of b*****. It wasn't even their land," the President said.

"They were fighting over a piece of land here in Sagay and then blamed the government for it. What have we got to do with that? You are the only ones killing each other there because with the NPAs, if they don't reach a resolution, they kill," he added.

The military had earlier claimed that the farmers were used by the communist rebels to discredit the government. Charges have been filed against the sus-

pects behind the slay of farmers.

Instead of waging a failed rebellion, Duterte urged the communist rebels to lay down their arms and surrender to authorities. He said rebels would "never win in anything" and will just "keep on killing and terrorizing people."

"It would be better if you drop your guns and talk. Let's talk about how we're going to distribute the lands," he said.

In the same speech, the President renewed his commitment to give away "all government-owned lands" to the people in the remaining three years in office.

He said he has directed Agrarian Reform Secretary John Castriciones to give the lands away to the people since they have "no use to the government anyway."

He recognized that the agrarian reform program would help improve the lives of Filipinos but also help address the communist armed struggle.

"This war will never end if we don't give them land. These people dream of a better life for their children, better than their life and the life of their forefathers," he said.

Axed for imposing beliefs

The President said he removed communists he appointed in government because they wanted to impose their ideals.

"I placed them in government with the hope that we would be able to reach a common understanding. The worst thing is they want to impose on government their own ideals. But that wasn't our agreement, so I had to let them go.

The ideal thing for them to have done would be to lobby the concerns of those who are in the movement," Duterte said during the distribution of Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) in Sagay, Negros Occidental.

The President particularly identified former Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) Secretary Rafael Mariano, former Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary Judy Taguinaldo, and former National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) Secretary and lead convenor Liza Maza as the appointees he had to remove.

"Do not even bring the ideology of an idiot here in our government, because the government will never wage war against its own people. The job of the government is to preserve the nation from those who want to occupy our land," he said.

Duterte also urged the communist armed wing, New People's Army (NPA), to stop the armed struggle.

"You NPAs must have lost your mind when you believed in the armed struggle. We will just keep on killing each other then. Fifty-three years. Think about it. Sleep on it. For 53 years so many lives were wasted. You will die and get buried in the forest. Your children will grow up not even knowing what you look like," he said.

The Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA, in previous reports, has been allegedly tagged in cases of extortion, mass murder, and violation of indigenous people's rights.

The US State Department and the European Union have both tagged the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization. (With PNA)

NPA rebel slain, soldier wounded in Masbate 2-hour skirmish

By NIÑO N. LUCES

CAMP ELIAS ANGELES, Camarines Sur — A suspected New People's Army (NPA) was killed while one soldier was wounded in a two-hour encounter in Barangay Gangao, Baleno town in Masbate province on Saturday morning.

Captain Joash Pramis, spokesperson of 9th Infantry Division (9ID) based in Pili, Camarines Sur told the Manila Bulletin that the firefight started around 9:40 a.m. and lasted about 12 noon that resulted in the killing of still unidentified suspected NPA rebel, wounding of 1 soldier and recovery of firearms, ammunitions and explosives.

Pramis said that combined elements of 2nd Infantry Battalion and 1st Masbate Mobile Force Company were conducting combat operation in response to reports of NPA's presence in Brgy. Gangao, when they encountered undetermined number of NPA rebels.

Chief Inspector Malu Calubaquib, Police Regional Office 5 (PRO-5) spokesperson said at least 30 NPAs led by certain Rolidel Tugbo y Salcedo, alyas Nonoy, Tugbo or Ka Bungkig of KP4-Masbate, Larangan 1 was encountered by troops of PNP and Philippine Army while conducting combat operations in line with 1st MPMFC Oplan 08/2019 "Sugod."

NPA rebel killed in Masbate

BY VICTOR REYES

GOVERNMENT forces raided a lair of the New People's Army in Baleno, Masbate last Saturday and killed one of the rebels reportedly engaged in extortion and planning attacks in the province.

Capt. Joash Pramis, spokesman of the Army's 9th Infantry Division based in Camarines Sur, said a firefight resulted in the wounding of one of the soldiers who was promptly given medical attention.

Pramis said troops from the Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion, complemented by forces of the PNP's 1st Masbate Mobile Company, launched the operation in barangay Gangao based on information provided by residents.

Pramis said the rebels have been conducting extortion activity in the area, victimizing hapless civilians.

He added the rebels were said to be planning to launch attacks on military and civilian targets.

Pramis said fighting between the troops and the rebels, numbering around 20 to 30 men from the NPA's Larangan 1 operating in the province, broke out at around 9:40 a.m. and lasted for almost two hours.

During clearing operation, the troops recovered at the scene the body of the still unidentified rebel, an M16 rifle, a Molotov bomb, three rifle grenades, two cartridges of M203 ammunition and rebel documents.

Pramis said "pursuit operation is still."

Soldiers from the 23rd Infantry Battalion seized various war materiel after a firefight with another group of rebels at around 11:50 a.m. in Buenavista, Agusan del

Norte.

1Lt. Roel Maglalang, civil military operations of the 23rd IB, said the soldiers were on a security operation when they clashed with about 10 rebels on Saturday in Barangay Lower Olave. The rebels withdrew after trading gunfire for about five minutes.

Troops recovered at the scene two M1 rifles, a cal. 22 pistol, an anti-personnel mine with blasting cap, a 30-meter electrical wire, three cartridges of a 40mm gun, a hand grenade, three UHF commercial radios, three magazines for carbine rifles, 350 rounds of live ammunition for carbine rifles.

Also recovered were five cell-phones, two binoculars, one monocular, a sniper scope and seven pack bags containing hammock, personal belongings and subversive documents. B3

Go pushes for localized peace talks with Reds

VICTORIAS CITY, Negros Occidental: Senate aspirant Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go was warmly welcomed on Friday by people in the "Sugarbowl of the Philippines."

While on his visit, Go told his audience that he was pushing for the holding of peace talks at the local level, especially in areas with pockets of communist insurgency, such as Negros Occidental.

"Localized peace talks are the answer because insurgency is rooted in local conditions as well and you are the ones who understand best the culture and needs of your locality," said Go.

He had earlier encouraged the communist rebels to take advantage of President Rodrigo Duterte's offer for the resumption of peace negotiations, but at the local level.

Residents from various cities and towns of the province filled the 10,000-capacity Victorias City Gym to welcome Go and other Senate candidates of the Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban), who were in the province to rally support for their party.

Go gave details about his legislative agenda if elected to the Senate. Foremost among these, he said, was the improvement of the delivery of health services in the country through the institutionalization of the Malasakit Center.

"We now have 27 Malasakit Centers nationwide. The center in Bacolod City was one of the first established, the one here in Victorias City was the third," Go added.

"I would want to sponsor legislation that would mandate the creation of Malasakit Centers so that even after the present administration and even when we are no longer in government service, the program will continue," Go said.

A program of the Duterte administration based on Go's idea,

a Malasakit Center makes it more convenient and economical for needy patients to avail themselves of medical and financial assistance from the government. It puts together in one room all relevant government agencies such as the Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and the Philippine Health Insurance Corp.

Right choice

In the same rally, President Rodrigo Duterte told Negrenses that supporting Go is the right choice, as he vouched for his honesty and being a hard worker.

"I tell you, you won't go wrong

with him," Duterte said, as he vouched anew for the integrity of his former top aide.

He shared that during his term as Davao mayor and even into the presidency, he had entrusted Go in handling various responsibilities. In over two decades of serving him, he said, Go made sure all the resources were properly distributed or spent for intended purposes to help the people.

Meanwhile, Go appealed to his supporters to take down all his campaign materials and tarpaulin in places the Commission on Elections (Comelec) had not authorized.

Go told his supporters from Silay City that while they were

free to express support for his senatorial bid, "we must do this in accordance with the law; we have to follow the rules and regulations of the Comelec."

In December, Go commended Silay City for its implementation of laws and ordinance even if it resulted in the removal of a tarpaulin bearing his name at the city plaza.

Go said he had no idea who displayed the tarpaulin, but later learned that Mayor Mark Golez moved it to his private property to express his support.

He urged his supporters to refrain from putting up campaign materials in support of his candidacy, and instead use the funds to buy construction materials and relief goods to help fire victims.



RIGHT CHOICE

President Rodrigo Duterte tells the crowd that former special assistant to the President Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go is a right choice for the Senate when he introduced him during a political rally in Victorias, Negros Occidental.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'IPs most vulnerable to Red propaganda'

BY ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

BUTUAN CITY, Agusan del Norte: The Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Mindanao is the sector most vulnerable to the propaganda of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), according to a top military official.

Lt. Gen. Felimon Santos Jr., commander of the Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom), said this in a statement sent to the media over the weekend.

Santos said the IPs were con-

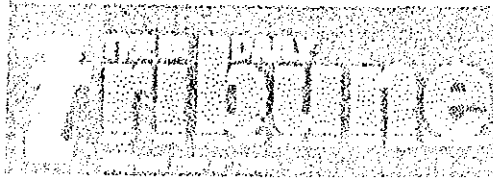
sidered major stakeholders in the peace and development in eastern Mindanao, but they continue to be defenseless and exposed to the influence of the CPP and NPA. This was manifested, he added, in the large number or percentage of IPs in the ranks of NPA combatants.

"We shall continue to implement our peace and development program with culture and conflict sensitivity. We will be the bridge of the IPs in their development

as a tribe, people and community," Santos said.

In the same statement, EastMinCom spokesman Lt. Col. Ezra Balagtey said Santos represented Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana during the 17th founding anniversary celebration of the Sovereign Tribal Council for Peace and Development (STCPD) held in Butuan City on Friday, March 8.

STCPD is a conglomeration of 39 tribal groups and communities in Mindanao, Balagtey added. *17*



Communism is dead – EU

By Mario J. Mallari

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Maria "Joma" Sison and his followers are using communism as an excuse in their anti-government campaign since

even the European Union (EU), where the CPP sources funding, believes the ideology is dead.

The EU does not believe that the CPP-New People's Army (NPA) continues to advocate communism, through armed revolution, which is

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Communism is dead –EU

Don't the CPP-NPA know that communism all over the world is dead

From page 1

already considered as dead throughout the world, Brig. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., deputy chief of staff for Civil Military Operations (J7) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said.

Parlade was part of the National Task Force (NTF) delegation sent recently to Europe to discuss the insurgency being waged by the CPP-NPA.

During the engagement, Parlade said some EU officials were in disbelief that the CPP-NPA continued to try to propagate communism.

"Doesn't the CPP-NPA know that communism all over the world is dead?" Parlade quoted an EU official as saying.

Last 18 February, the NTF, including National Intelligence Coordinating Agency Director General Alex Paul Monteagudo, had a series of engagements with the EU, European Parliament, European Commission and the Belgian government.

The US State Department and the EU have both tagged the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization.

Successful mission

Parlade said the NTF delegates succeeded in presenting the true character of the CPP-NPA during the engagements and got the commitment of the Europeans to look into the information provided by the NTF detailing the communist fraud in the Philippines.

According to Parlade, the Europeans stressed they do not want to be tagged as supporters of terrorist organizations like the CPP-NPA.

On 9 January 2019, the EU reaffirmed the inclusion of the CPP-NPA in its list of terrorist

organizations.

During the series of engagements with European officials, the Philippine delegation requested to "stop the flow of funds to identified communist terrorist front organizations."

Parlade said the NTF is currently preparing the documents and pieces of evidence to back up its initial exploratory engagements with the Europeans.

"The engagement in EU was exploratory and now that they gave their commitment, the Philippine government will soon provide them with the necessary documentation, official reports, evidence or whatever administrative actions done on the part of Philippine government," Parlade said.

Data presented by the Philippine delegation showed communist front organizations receive funds from the Belgian government and some European countries in the guise of marginalized and pro-poor programs.

Europeans stressed that they do not want to be tagged as supporters of terrorist organizations like the CPP-NPA.

Documents obtained by the AFP also revealed the Belgian government has released its first tranche of more than 621,000 euros (P36,663,840) out of the 15-million euro (P885,600,000) grant to some non-government organizations (NGO) for the 2017-2021 program.

This year, the AFP said some 1.3 million euros (P76,752,000) is expected to be released as funding support to NGO identified with the communist group.

Forced beliefs

President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday said communists he appointed in government were removed because they wanted to impose their ideals.

"I placed them in government with the hopes that we will be able to reach a common understanding. The worst thing is they want to impose on government their own ideals. But that wasn't our agreement, so I had to let them go. The ideal thing for them to have done would be to lobby the concerns of those who are in the movement," Duterte said during his speech at the distribution of Certificate of Land Ownership Award in Sagay, Negros Occidental.

The NTF is currently preparing the documents and pieces of evidence to back up its initial exploratory engagements with the Europeans.

The President particularly identified former Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Rafael Mariano and former Department of Social Welfare and Development Secretary Judy Taguiwalo, whose confirmations were not approved by the Commission on Appointments.

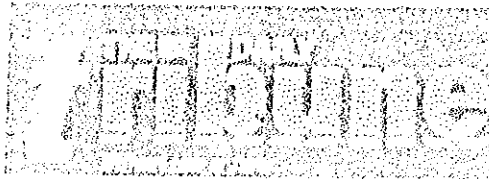
Former National Anti-Poverty Commission Secretary and lead convener Liza Maza, meanwhile, resigned in August last year.

Idiotic ideology

"Do not even bring the ideology of an idiot here in our government, because the government will never wage war against its own people. The job of the government is to preserve the nation from those who want to occupy our land," he said.

Duterte also urged the communist armed wing, NPA, to stop the armed struggle.

"You NPA must have lost your mind when you believed in the armed struggle. We will just keep on killing each other then. Fifty-three years. Think about it. Sleep on it. For 53 years, so many lives were wasted. You will die and get buried in the forest. Your children will grow up not even knowing what you look like," he said.



Reintegration program lures more rebels

More and more rebels are returning to the fold of the law to take advantage of the government's centerpiece Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-Clip).

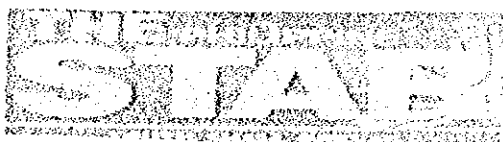
This, as 43 former members of New People's Army received their financial assistance through E-Clip during a turn-over ceremony held at Camp Major David P. Sabido in Guipos, Zamboanga del Sur over the weekend.

The financial benefits included livelihood assistance worth P50,000, immediate financial help worth P15,000 for each former red fighter.

The surrenderers received a total of P2,629,500 grant from the government.

Before receiving their assistance, they underwent a series of psycho-social and values formation activities and a briefing on the programs and services to be provided to them by the government.

KMBulquerin



Dwindling in Mideast, ISIS rises in Phi

BASILAN — Across the islands of the southern Philippines, the black flag of the Islamic State is flying over what the group considers its East Asia province.

Men in the jungle, two oceans away from the arid birthplace of the Islamic State, are taking the terrorist brand name into new battles.

As worshippers gathered in January for Sunday Mass at a Catholic cathedral, two bombs ripped through the church compound, killing 23 people. The Islamic State claimed a pair of its suicide bombers had caused the carnage.

An illustration circulated days later on Islamic State chat groups, showing President Duterte of the Philip-

pinos kneeling on a pile of skulls and a militant standing over him with a dagger. The caption on the picture sounded a warning: "The fighting has just begun."

The Islamic State's territory in Iraq and Syria, once the size of Britain, has shriveled after four years of US-backed bombing and ground combat by Kurdish and Shiite militia fighters. What is left is a tiny village in southeast Syria that could fall any day.

But far from defeated, the movement has sprouted elsewhere. And here in the Mindanao island group of the southern Philippines, long a haven for insurgents because of dense wilderness and weak policing, the Islamic State has

attracted a range of militant jihadis.

"ISIS has a lot of power," said Motondan Indama, a former child fighter on the island of Basilan and cousin of Furuji Indama, a militant leader who has pledged fealty to the group. "I don't know why my cousin joined, but it's happening all over."

The group first made a big push for southern Philippines recruitment in 2016, circulating videos online beckoning militants who could not travel to its self-proclaimed caliphate in Iraq and Syria. Hundreds of fighters poured in from as far away as Chechnya, Somalia and Yemen, intelligence officials said.

The next year, militants who

had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State took over the city of Marawi in Mindanao. By the time the army prevailed five months later, the largest Muslim-majority city in the country lay in ruins. At least 900 insurgents were killed, including foreign fighters and Isnilon Hapilon, the Islamic State's East Asia emir.

Duterte declared victory over the Islamic State. But his triumphalism apparently has not deterred its loyalists from regrouping.

"ISIS has money coming into the Philippines, and they are recruiting fighters," said Rommel Banlaoi, chairman of the Philippine Institute for Peace, Violence and Terrorism Research. "ISIS is the most

complicated, evolving problem for the Philippines today, and we should not pretend that it doesn't exist because we don't want it to exist."

Since the Jan. 27 cathedral bombing on the island of Jolo, the Philippine military has responded with airstrikes and 10,000 soldiers in Jolo, according to Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman for the regional military command in the city of Zamboanga.

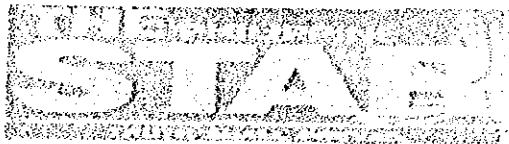
US surveillance drones monitor the southern Philippine archipelago, where the nation's Muslim minority is concentrated and local insurgencies have long battled the Christian-majority state.

But even as the military

offensive intensifies, the government avoids conceding that the Philippines is in the global slipstream of Islamic extremism. Top officials have played down incidents in which the Islamic State has sent foreign fighters and financing to the Philippines for deadly attacks. The violence, they often say, is squabbling between Muslim clans, or common banditry.

Within a week of the Jolo cathedral bombing, police declared the case solved, blaming a local militant group, Abu Sayyaf, with scant acknowledgment of how many of its insurgents have partnered with the Islamic State.

— NYT



Abu bandit slain in Sulu clash

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspected Abu Sayyaf bandit was killed while another was wounded in an encounter with Army troopers in Talipao, Sulu on Saturday morning.

Troopers of the Army's 2nd Special Forces Battalion were intensifying efforts to rescue the hostages of the bandit group when they clashed with the followers of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Anga

Adji at around 6:30 a.m.

The firefight resulted in the death of Rakib Dasul and wounding of Jaber Susukan, a brother of another Abu Sayyaf sub-leader, Idang Susukan, the military said.

Troopers seized two rifles and ammunition from the scene of the encounter.

The Joint Task Force Sulu said Dasul was involved in kidnapping activities led by Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Apo Mike.

"There is a continuous operation against the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu who are holding three kidnap victims from Malaysia and Indonesia," Western

Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Arnel de la Vega said.

The bandits are still holding seven hostages including four foreigners and three Filipinos.

Assault craft mulled vs Abus

Meanwhile, the Philippine Navy is planning to deploy a missile-equipped assault craft in Mindanao to help the

military fight the Abu Sayyaf.

Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad told local journalists on Thursday that discussions were ongoing on the protocol for firing the missile.

He said the protocol is important as it determines when or who would give the order to fire the P10-million missile.

Last year the Navy equipped some of its

multi-purpose assault craft (MPAC) with Rafael Missile Systems.

The Navy had considered deploying the MPACs in Zamboanga and Palawan, where the Westmincom and Western Command are based, respectively.

During his visit here, Empedrad installed Rear Admiral Erick Kagaoan as chief of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao. /u

Abu Sayyaf killed as military pounds terrorists in Sulu

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

An Abu Sayyaf militant was killed in one of two gunbattles with military troops in Sulu over the weekend.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu, under Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo Jr., said the body of Rakib Dahsul was found after troops scoured an encounter site in Barangay Upper Binuang, Talipao on Saturday.

Dahsul was a follower of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Apoh Mike, whose group was involved in kidnappings.

Pabayo said the brother of Idang Susukan, a key Abu Sayyaf leader, was seriously wounded in the firefight.

Soldiers also recovered two M16 rifles, magazines, and ammunition.

On Sunday morning, troops from the 2nd Special Forces Battalion engaged the group of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Anga Adji in Barangay Upper Binuang.

"Deliberate offensives against terrorists will be launch by the JTF Sulu to debilitate and inflict more casualties on the adversary," said Lt. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom).

"While we are advancing on our campaign, we will sustain our offensives and employ more pressure on the terrorists," Dela Vega added.

Col. Gerry Besana, WestMinCom spokesman, said that last Friday, Philippine Air Force planes conducted bomb runs targeting a group of 200 Abu Sayyaf under Radulan Sahiron and Hatib Hajari Sawadjaan in Sitios Agas-Agas and Limasan of Barangay Kabhun Takas, Patikul, Sulu.

Pabayo said the military has stepped up its offensives against the terrorist group following a tip that the Abu Sayyaf were converging in the hinterland of Patikul. ||

Air strikes vs Sayyaf:

One dead

By Francisco Tuyay

THE massive military campaign against 200 members of Abu Sayyaf Group that began Friday has so far yielded one ASG dead even as ground troops said nine to 10 terrorists might have been killed in aerial and ground bombardment in Patikul, Sulu.

Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu, said the account on 10 ASG members killed during air and ground strikes in Barangay Kabbun Takas, Patikul was based on civilians' report.

Pabayo, however, said the troops had not found any dead bodies of bandits yet as security forces scoured the battle site.

Pabayo could not confirm if ASG leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan

was one of those killed during the bombardment.

"We could not pinpoint yet; there were many accounts indicating that there are nine or 10 that might have been killed, but there was no confirmation yet," Pabayo said.

The ASG bandits led by Sawadjaan and Radulan Sahiron were spotted converging in Barangay Kabbun Takas.

So far, troops from the 11th Infantry Division reported to have pinned down an ASG bandit in separate clash with the terrorists in Brgy Upper Binauang, Talipao, Sulu last Saturday.

Army soldiers were still on clearing operations at the battle site and found

Rakib Dahsul dead.

The slain was among the ASG splinter group under Sub-group leader Jaber Susukan who was chanced upon by troops of the Army's 2nd Special Forces Battalion. As the bandits tried to evade soldiers, a 20-minute clash ensued, the military said.

"The engaged troops are part of the blocking force of the JTF Sulu as its main force scour the hinterlands of Patikul, the main battle area to hunt down the ASG," the 11th IB said.

After a lull in the fighting, soldiers recovered two M16 rifles left by the escaping terrorists. **A3**

Pabayo said the AFP in Sulu was still hunting down the ASG.

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10 Abu Sayyaf
members slain
in bombardment

BY VICTOR REYES

At least 10 members of the bandit group Abu Sayyaf were reportedly killed while scores were injured in last Friday's bombardment of their lair in Patikul town in Sulu, military official reported yesterday.

Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, commander of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu, said the information on the casualties was based on intelligence information, adding they were not able to recover any body.

Various military aircraft on Friday pounded the Abu Sayyaf lair in Barangay Kabbuntakas where about 200 ASG members were and planning attacks. Ground troops were later deployed to scour the area.

The Abu Sayyaf group included Abu Sayyaf leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan who masterminded the Jan. 27 twin bombings at the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Jolo town that left 23 people dead and over a hundred others injured.

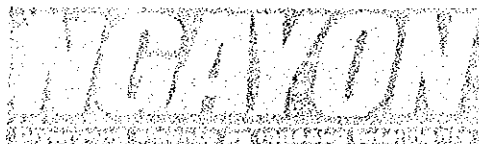
"Some are saying 10 (Abu Sayyaf men died), some are saying nine... There are reports but we have yet to confirm it, there is still no body count," said Pabayo.

"It's based on human intelligence, account of the (civilians) but there is still no confirmation to it. We were not able to recover their body because they were taken (by their companions)," Pabayo added.

Earlier military estimates indicated there are about 300 Abu Sayyaf members operating in Sulu. The group is holding five foreign and Filipino kidnap victims in the province.

Pabayo said many Abu Sayyaf members were injured in the aerial bombardment based on their information. He said ground troops are still conducting clearing operations at the bombed lair.

24



10 Sayyaf todas sa aerial bombing

Patuloy na biniberipika ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang ulat na 10 miyembro ng bandidong Abu Sayyaf ang napatay sa ginawang pambobomba ng militar noong Biyernes sa Barangay Kabuntakas sa Patikul, Sulu.

Ayon kay Brig. General Divino Rey Pabayo, commander ng Joint Task Force Sulu (JTFS), na may ulat silang natanggap na mayroong casualties sa ginawa nilang aerial bombing sa kuta ng ASG.

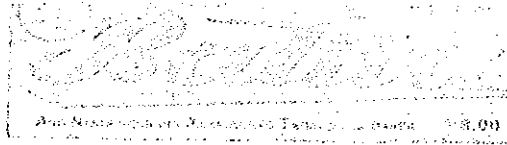
Paliwanag ni Pabayo, sa ngayon hindi pa nila ma-confirmed kung ilan ang bilang ng casualties subalit marami ang nagsasabi na 10 o 9 subalit wala pang confirmation at base lamang ito sa intelligence report.

Sa ngayon ay sinusuyod pa umano ng tropa ng militar ang nasabing area na masyadong masukal at malawak.

Nilinaw naman ng opisyal na nagsagawa sila ng aerial assaults matapos makatanggap ng ulat na may presenya doon ng mga bandido.

Nasa lugar din umano ang ASG sub-leader na si Halib Halan Sawadjaan doon ng mangyari ang pambobomba.

Hindi naman makumpirma ng militar kung isa si Sawadjaan sa mga nasawi habang patuloy ang follow-up operations. (Gemma Garcia) 2.



ASG member, todas; utol ni Susukan sugatan

Patay ang isang miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) habang sugatan naman ang kapatid ng sub-commander ng grupo sa isang sagupaan sa Sulu, nitong Sabado ng umaga.

Ang napatay ay kinilala ni Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu commander B/Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, Jr., na si Rakib Dahsul.

Ang bangkay aniya ni Dahsul ay itinago ng mga bandido malapit sa pinangyarihan ng bakbakan sa Barangay Binuang, Talipao.

Kinumpirma ni Pabayo na si Dahsul ay tauhan ni ASG sub-leader Apoh Mike na sangkot sa kidnapping activities sa lalawigan.

Sugatan naman sa engkuwentro ang kapatid ni sub-commander Idang Susukan na si Jaber.

Nilinaw ni Pabayo na nasawi si Dahsul nang makaengkuwentro ng grupo nito ang mga tauhan ng 2nd Special Forces Battalion sa naturang lugar, dakong 6:30 ng umaga.

Kumpiskado naman ng militar ang dalawang M16 Armalite rifles, ilang

magazine at mga bala nito.

"Deliberate offensives against terrorists will be launch by the JTF Sulu to debilitate and inflict more casualties on the adversary," pahayag naman ni Lt. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega, commander ng Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom).

Idinagdag pa nito, lalo pa nilang patigtingin ang kampanya laban sa mga bandido upang mapilitang sumuko ang mga ito.

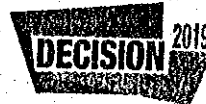
5 Francis T. Wakefield

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★★★★★ Dependable Dong; Marawi's angel



MANGUDADATU



GUTOC

A two-term representative of the 2nd District of Maguindanao, administration candidate Zajid "Dong" Mangudadatu has been the tireless voice of Muslim Filipinos in Congress.

His pursuit is instrumental in changing the negative

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From page 1

perception on Muslims and indigenous peoples in their search for lasting peace and progress in Maguindanao.

Mangudadatu is also a staunch advocate of genuine change, good governance, peace and prosperity, not only in Maguindanao, but also the entire Philippines that echoes the aspirations of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Mangudadatu is running under the ruling Partido Demokratiko Pilipino.

His mission as a public servant is encapsulated in the acronym "Delta" which means "Development, Education, Livelihood and Transparency are my Advocacy."

He vowed to pursue economic progress in Mindanao if he bags a

Senate seat.

Investors are interested in gas exploration, primarily in Maguindanao, where an energy plant will soon rise, he said.

Long government service

He started his long service to the nation in 1996 when he served as Sangguniang Kabataan Federation president in the Municipality of Buluan for six years.

In 2007, he became the mayor of the Municipality of Pandag. Through his leadership, the local government was awarded a Seal of Good Housekeeping in 2011.

In 2013, voters recognized his hard work and dedication to be elected in Congress.

Asia's Dubai

Mangudadatu said with the vast



deposits of natural gas beneath Liguasan Marsh, "Maguindanao and the country will become like Dubai."

"When that is realized, our OFW (overseas Filipino workers) can come home because job opportunities will be available here," he added.

Development, education, livelihood and transparency are my advocacy.

The marshland will cease to become a battlefield once natural gas production commences, he added.

The vast marshland produces methane gas which he suggested be initially used by nearby residents if the government distributes cooking stoves to enable locals to benefit from it while exploration has yet to start.

"Otherwise, these natural resources will be wasted," he said.

Promises of a marsh

A government survey showed the marshland, surrounded by the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, has a 300-kilometer radius of natural gas deposits beneath.

With the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in place, Mangudadatu expressed optimism that peace is attainable in Maguindanao.

As a House member, he was the senior vice chairman of the Committees on Muslim Affairs, Mindanao Affairs and Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. He was also a member of the House Committees on Energy, Basic Education and Culture, Government Reorganization, Indigenous Cultural Communities and Indigenous Peoples, Local Government, National Defense and Security and

Public Works and Highways.

Women's champion

On the other hand, Samira Gutoc previously served as a member of the Regional Legislative Assembly of ARMM and of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission that oversaw the transfer of authority from the ARMM to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The University of the Philippines (UP)-educated Maranao is best known for her civil and women's rights advocacy in response to the Marawi City siege laid by the Islamic State-inspired terrorists in 2017 and its aftermath.

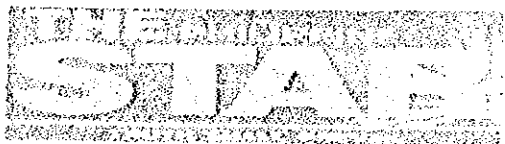
Gutoc helped organize the Ranao Rescue Team, a group set up in

response to the humanitarian crisis that ensued after the five-month siege that left Marawi City in ruins.

A graduate of Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication from UP, she had aspired for peace in Mindanao, improvement of education for Muslims and the promotion of women and children's rights. She is also a supporter of the legalization of divorce.

As student at UP Dilliman, she became the first woman president of the UP Muslim Students Association and the Metro Manila-wide Muslim Youth and Students Alliance.

Gutoc is running under the opposition banner *Otsa Diretso*. **MJMallari**



Japan, FAO, ILO team up for Bangsamoro water infra

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The Japanese government has joined the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Labor Organization (ILO) for water infrastructure and agriculture training in the Bangsamoro region.

The FAO project, which amounts to \$1.765 million, aims to help farmers and fishermen, women, indigenous peoples and former combatants of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) acquire various agricultural vocational expertise.

Officials said these new knowledge and skills will help them efficiently operate farms, gain employment or set up their own businesses.

The support for farmers and fishermen in Mindanao from the Japanese government through agriculture-based livelihood and technical skills training will help enhance productivity, improve efficiency and increase their incomes.

The ILO intervention has a total budget of approximately \$2.66 million. It envisions to develop water infrastructure that will benefit an estimated 11,814 households. At least 1,800 workers from the target communities will be employed to help build the water supply facilities.

The two projects will provide sustainable livelihood and build healthier communities, which are key milestones to achieving

peace and development in Mindanao.

The two undertakings signed on Wednesday form part of the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development, or J-BIRD to empower people and communities to benefit from the dividends of peace.

Since 2006, Japan has provided a total of about P13 billion or \$260 million worth of assistance to the Bangsamoro region.

"Mindanao, particularly its agriculture sector, is a major contributor to the Philippine economy given its vast natural resources," FAO Representative in the Philippines José Luis Fernandez said.

In BARMM, backyard gardening pushed as hedge against drought

By ALI G. MACABALANG

COTABATO CITY – Farmers and non-farming families in the fledgling Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) have been urged to try backyard gardening to “meet squarely” the ill effects of drought.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmail Mangudadatu suggested backyard farming as a family-level remedy to fight the dry spell.

BARMM 1.27 million populace have been warned by higher authorities to brace for full-blown drought this summer.

“We launched backyard gardening campaign in Maguindanao as early as 2013 as a regular source of livelihood for our people at all times, drought period included,” Mangudadatu told Manila Bulletin Friday.

A day earlier, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Administration (PAGASA) reported that dry spells have gripped the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, Sulu and Maguindanao.

Reeling from the effects of drought are Tawi-Tawi, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Palawan, Romblon, Occidental Mindoro, Aklan, Catanduanes, Zamboanga del Norte and Misamis Occidental. Forty-one other provinces could follow, PAGASA said.

BARMM Interim Chief Minister Murad Ebrahim, through Local Governor Minister Naguib Sinarimbo, issued last week a memorandum enjoining local government units (LGUs) in the region to institute El Niño-mitigating measures.

Maguindanao, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi are component provinces of BARMM. Ebrahim's order also covered Basilan and Lanao del Sur.

In Maguindanao, Mangudadatu said, the provincial disaster risk reduction management office, the integrated provincial health office and the social welfare office were directed to come up with a “harmonized” report on the effects of the dry spell and point out “specific areas” needing relief services and assistance.

“We have substantial calamity fund

to provide for our affected people,” he assured.

But the governor pointed out that “with or without dry spell, backyard gardening is very essential for every family in Moro communities to bank on not only during emergency moment but throughout the year.”

Provincial Administrator Abdulrahman Asim said Mangudadatu himself has been “exemplifying his advocacy for backyard gardening by maintaining vegetable backyards in his residential homes.”

Mangudadatu said backyard gardening can be “useful” for families of thousands of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members who would not be employed in the ARMM bureaucracy.

He said that in “many countries” he had visited, “most of my time was spent in observing agricultural farms” especially those proven “effective in Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, and in Middle East, West and Europe.”

Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol on Saturday posted in his Facebook page news and photos of booming backyard gardens using Israeli technologies.

Sports as antidote to armed conflict

For the last few weeks, we have been bombarded by statements from the United States and China, both telling us in effect how much they are concerned about our welfare and security. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared "We have your back," in case of aggression citing the Mutual Defense Treaty between the two countries. No matter how spin doctors try to justify it, it is clearly a vague and dusty document from the past. On the other hand, Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua said that attacking anyone "is not our policy," and that China desires peace, stability and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. But China continues to "build, build, build" within our exclusive economic zone. Mr. Ambassador, in the words of a popular song, you are killing us softly, reef by reef, island by island.

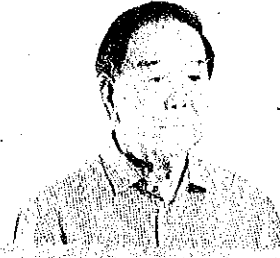
So, therefore, how should we face all these uncertainties?

First of all, let us not put too much weight on smooth and soothing talks from others. We must begin to think for ourselves, to get rid of our penchant for relying on handouts and hand-me-downs, and prepare for the worst with the limited resources at our disposal. Most important of all, let us not align ourselves with anyone, but at the same time, strive to keep the friendship of all. When elephants are on a collision course, it is best to keep out of the way lest we end up as tenderized meat in their wake.

My crystal ball shows that we will have an absence of armed conflict in the South China Sea, at least until 2023 for several compelling reasons.

In August this year, China is hosting the Fiba Basketball World Cup. Thirty-two countries, including China and the Philippines, have qualified for this all-important basketball event. It will determine the seven finalists that will move on to the Fiba championship round during the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. For basketball-crazy Chinese and Filipino fans, how could an issue like freedom of navigation in the South China Sea be allowed to interfere with deciding world basketball supremacy? How could any country think of a shooting war when the important thing is shooting for the basket?

That is not all.



REVEILLE

RAMON J. FAROLAN

In November 2019, the Philippines will host the 30th Southeast Asian Games. It will be the fourth time we shall have this honor. We must prepare well if we are to be overall champions. Traditionally, host countries have the most advantage but it is important that we devote time and attention in providing our athletes with the best of training and facilities to ensure success. After poor showings in earlier SEA Games, we need overall supremacy to boost our sagging morale.

In July 2020, Japan will host the 32nd Summer Olympics. It will be the second time for Tokyo to handle the Games. For the Philippines, it represents another opportunity to finally win an Olympic gold medal. Our sports officials must realize this is a goal of a lifetime and everything must be done to see a dream come true—the raising of the Philippine flag to the tune of the national anthem in the Olympic world.

In February 2022, China will host the Winter Olympics with Beijing becoming the first city to welcome both the Summer and the Winter Olympic Games. China hosted the Summer Games in 2008. China will go all out to best previous host countries while showcasing its skills and expertise in winter sports.

Remember that last year, amid the tensions between North and South Korea, the South organized the Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, with the North agreeing to participate in the formal opening ceremony as part of a unified Korean delegation. In fact, the sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was a special guest at the Games. All these activities lowered temperatures in the Korean Peninsula and war was farthest from the thoughts of the participants and the people of both nations.

Finally, in September 2022, China again will handle the Asian Games for the third time. Hangzhou will be the site with China almost a sure overall winner in these games.

How can China possibly be thinking of armed conflict and aggression when it has so much more to gain in terms of world respect and admiration for another brilliant hosting of an Olympic event and the Asian Games?

Instead of armed conflict, let us have competition aimed at providing a better quality of life for our people. Instead of risking the destruction and annihilation of each other, let us fight our battles in the field of sports and in so doing, bring out the best efforts of our youth in a world of peace and prosperity.

Envoy assures China's commitment to peace

CHINA'S Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua was attending the first anniversary celebration of the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission in Malacañang last Wednesday when he said in an interview on the sidelines of the Malacañang event: "China is committed to peacefully settle the disputes we have and we are working very well in managing our different views." He affirmed China's resolve to settle any dispute through peaceful means and expressed hope for further progress in maintaining peace in the region.

The ambassador was obviously responding to a statement from United States (US) Secretary of State Michael Pompeo that the US vows to defend the Philippines against armed attack in the South China Sea. It was the first time any US official had publicly stated the US intends to defend the Philippines in the South China Sea. The PH-US Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 had specifically provided for mutual defense action "in case of an armed attack in the Pacific area." But Secretary Pompeo now declared that "as the South China Sea is part of the Pacific," the defense treaty covers the South China Sea.

It is in the South China Sea where the Philippines and four other ASEAN nations – Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam – have conflicting claims with China over certain islands.

In the Malacañang interview, Ambassador Zhao declared there is no need to "worry over China attacking anybody because it is not our policy. China, he said, has never waged any attack against the Philippines in the over 1,000-year history of relations between China and the people of the islands.

The ambassador cited the goodwill in the relations between China and various Philippine kingdoms and sultanates from way back in 1,000

AD, starting with Rajah Kilig of Butuan who sent several missions to China. More missions were sent by Sultan Paduka Batara in 1417, with the sultan himself visiting Emperor Yongle. The sultan died from cholera while in China and was buried among the Ming emperors in Shantung province.

There is today a tomb in Jolo with a stone tablet paying homage to "Pei-Pei Hien" or "honorable fountainhead," a title given to Poon Tao Kong, an officer of the great Chinese navigator Changho who sailed to the South Seas of the Pacific long before the European explorers.

As far as the Philippines is concerned, China has always been peaceful and brotherly towards it, Ambassador Zhao said. As for the South China Sea, he said, "80 percent of China's trade with the rest of the world passes through the South China Sea. Hence we should understand its concern that this route be kept free and open."

The ambassador's words should assure those who fear a rising of tension in the South China Sea following Secretary Pompeo's declaration that the US will defend the Philippines under the 1941 Mutual Defense Treaty "as the South China Sea is part of the Pacific."

We welcome the assurance of Secretary Pompeo. At the same time, we welcome Ambassador Zhao's own assurance that the world has nothing to fear from China as it is China's own interest that peace is maintained in the South China Sea.

The ambassador spoke of the proposed Code of Conduct which China and the ASEAN are now working on to help manage their differences and maintain peace and stability in the region. They agreed on the framework of the proposed Code of Conduct as early as 2017. Greater efforts should now be exerted to finalize the Code of Conduct to make it a strong and firm part of the overall structure of peace in the region. 9

Editorial

The NGO connection to the insurgency and European duplicity

THERE are growing signs that the government and the armed forces are fully determined to defeat and terminate the 50-year-old communist insurgency in the country.

Instead of just fighting the insurgents on the battlefield, or singing wistfully about peace, the government is now moving into the serious business of cutting off funding, domestic and foreign, for the insurgency.

The latest evidence of the new strategy is startling and revealing.

Last month, the government, through a delegation, officially called the attention of the European Union and the government of Belgium to their unfriendly practice of providing funding to the communist insurgency through non-government organizations (NGOs) that are based in the country.

This is the first time in memory that the surreptitious and menacing role of NGOs in the insurgency has so plainly been exposed and denounced by our government. For years, we have been lulled by the thought that the NGOs are benign and a positive force in society.

Now, the nation and the media are learning the facts of the NGO connection to the persistent and unrelenting communist insurgency.

The Philippine delegation, which included Brig. Gen. Antonio Parlade, Jr., the AFP deputy chief of staff for civil-military operations, presented to the EU and Belgian officials a report on how seven NGOs have been receiving funding from EU and Belgium, and how the funds were being used to radicalize the Filipino youth and assist in the recruitment of NPA members for the insurgency.

The delegation asked EU and Belgian officials to stop giving monetary aid to the NGOs and sever all connection to the communist insurgency in the country.

General Parlade told the media that Belgium is programmed to release 3 million euros a year for five years to seven NGOs based in the Philippines.

The EU for its part gave an initial 621,000 euros to the groups. A second tranche of financial assistance, amounting to 1.3 million euros will follow.

We wish General Parlade had been quick to name the NGOs and explain who they are. That would have provided more perspective to this disturbing revelation.

Parlade said Belgium and other European countries have been funding all groups connected to the CPP.

The general said that both the EU and Belgium have committed to investigate the matter.

"The Philippine government will provide them the necessary documentation, official reports, evidence or cite whatever administrative actions are being taken by the government," he said.

During the meetings, officials of the EU and Brussels declared that they did not want to be seen as financiers of a terrorist organization. In January this year, the EU reaffirmed that the CPP/NPA are in their list of terrorist organizations.

One EU official quipped that the CPP/NPA should realize that "communism all over the world is dead."

It is important now for the nation to look at the larger picture here.

It is not just European blindness and duplicity that are at issue here. The issue is even more the blindness and soft headedness of Philippine society about the communist movement and its fronts and supporters, in the interest of providing democratic space.

In October last year, the AFP claimed that 17 universities in Metro Manila were places for active recruitment by the CPP in the capital. The number grows exponentially when you survey the whole country.

AFP Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez says the communists have also infiltrated the labor sector.

Communist radicalization has spread so widely and burrowed so deep that cutting off the funding and uprooting the insurgency will require sustained and aggressive action by government and the whole society.

It has been wisely observed by one strategy expert that the military is effective in fighting and winning wars. But it is not as adept in the termination of war.

Allegations of corruption

PRESIDENT Duterte fired last Friday General Manager Alexander Balutan from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) which handles multimillion-peso lotteries for the government.

The reason given by the Palace is "serious allegations of corruption" and Secretary Salvador Panelo, the presidential spokesman who never misses an opportunity to perorate on Duterte's pronouncements, did not elaborate on the reasons for the sacking.

Panelo, applying PR skills, paints a picture of a decisive, unequivocal president who would like to see results in his campaign against graft and corruption. Panelo said, "Those who fail to observe the same will inexorably suffer the harsh and punitive consequences."

'We still believe General Manager Balutan, the man who stood up against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the AFP leadership on the issue of election cheating in 2005, is essentially a good man and should be given his day in court.'

On the same day of the announcement, GM Balutan's spokesman released to social media his statement, in which the retired Marine general asked for a full and impartial investigation if there is an accusation of corruption against him and his staff.

Balutan said, "I told all PCSO employees when I assumed as GM in 2016 that if somebody from the Office of the President and Congress who asks or orders me to do something which I cannot stomach, I will resign." The PCSO spokesman, in fact, said Balutan has resigned, and was not fired.

The plot thickened as both Duterte and Balutan's spokespersons traded attacks and innuendoes, even as members of Congress joined the fray with their own takes on this weekend scandal.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on games and amusements, recalled the series of public hearings he conducted on the Small Town Lottery (STL) and the police investigator that he is, observed and studied Balutan and his reports.

Lacson did not mince words as he summarized his Senate inquiry: "If only his demeanor and other data gathered by our committee in those hearings, I am inclined to think there is basis in his sacking as PCSO general manager." House minority leader Rep. Danilo Suarez of Quezon has more or less the same opinion, although he offered some facts and circumstances to support his contention.

We still believe General Manager Balutan, the man who stood up against President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and the AFP leadership on the issue of election cheating in 2005, is essentially a good man and should be given his day in court. After all, he risked his life fighting the MILF in Camp Abubakar during President Joseph Estrada's patriotic total war against the US-backed Muslim rebels. He requested for an impartial investigation and this should be granted.

Beware the Chinese Trojan horse



BACK
CHANNEL

ALEJANDRO
DEL ROSARIO

MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad warned the Philippines about the perils of allowing a large number of Chinese workers in the country. Here on an official visit, the 93-year-old Malaysian leader last year pulled a shocking election victory in his return to power.

Known for his outspoken views, Mahathir took on global currency trader George Soros by proving him wrong about his dire prediction on Malaysia's economy. The Malaysian

“This is what Mahathir really said.”

leader diminished Chinese grip on the Malaysian economy during his earlier first term in by imposing Bumiputra—a concept originally coined by Abdul Razak Hussein.

Mahathir should not be accused of having a serious case of Sinophobia. Aside from his desire to assure a higher level of education for native Malaysians, Mahathir's passion was to set a level playing field in the business sector for ethnic Malaysians and Chinese. This he accomplished without doing what the army perpetrated in the killing of 500,000 Chinese in Indonesia. The number of Chinese merchants and suspected members of the PKI Communist Party alleged to be involved in a coup and killed is estimated to reach a million. The 1965-1966 massacre led to the downfall of

President Sukarno and the start of Suharto's 30-year rule.

Some say the bloody scenario in Indonesia could be reprised in the Philippines. We hope not, because Chinese-Filipino taipans here are helping fuel the engines of growth and actually propping up the Philippine economy.

Philippine legislators have expressed concern that some 200,000 Chinese in the gaming industry have displaced Filipino workers who have to look for jobs overseas, Filipinos are asking if the Chinese workers in the various online gambling are paying taxes that the Department of Finance needs badly for the government's Build Build Build infrastructure program.

In a sense, Mahathir warned of the Chinese Trojan horse that could make the Philippines a country vassal of the Mandarin cabal in Beijing. Millions of US dollars in loans and grants from China to the Philippines could compromise the country's independence. Given that Manila has a territorial dispute with Beijing in the South China Sea, the influx here of the 200,000 Chinese workers pose a security problem. Other countries like Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam and Taiwan have conflicting claims in the South China Sea where Beijing with its nine-dash line claims nearly the entire body of water which is rich in potential oil, gas and minerals under the seabed.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro Locsin, Jr., however, allayed Filipinos' fear of the Chinese debt trap. He said the country can handle bad loans that might compromise its sovereignty.

On the other hand, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo who received reports of Chinese patrol boats driving away Filipino fishermen from their own waters in the West Philippine Sea

Turn to A5

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A4

Beware...

From AA

reiterated America's commitment to defend the Philippines from external attack. A statement of US commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty between Washington and Manila by Pompeo, who was in Manila for an official visit, was received with lukewarm response by the Duterte administration. Former President Barack Obama said the same thing in his visit to Manila during the time of then-President Benigno Aquino III.

Mahathir, like the United States, advocates a freedom of navigation in the vital SCS sea lanes on which trillions of dollars in commercial cargo carried by international vessels pass through. Concern over the Chinese military build-up in the area could impede freedom of navigation which could affect global trade. A confrontation between Chinese warships and fighter planes and that of the US is a flashpoint in the South China Sea which could spark World War III, according to world analysts. This, even as a trade war is already brewing between China and

the United States.

Last week, the US sought sanctions by trade allies against buying Huawei products which it believes is at the forefront of hacking into US defense files and electronic companies. Huawei, on the other hand, said it would sue the US government over what it claims is an unlawful act against a duly established global company.

How does Mahathir maintain a sharp mind and keep fit? He said it's by managing his weight by eating right and also by moving a lot and walking.