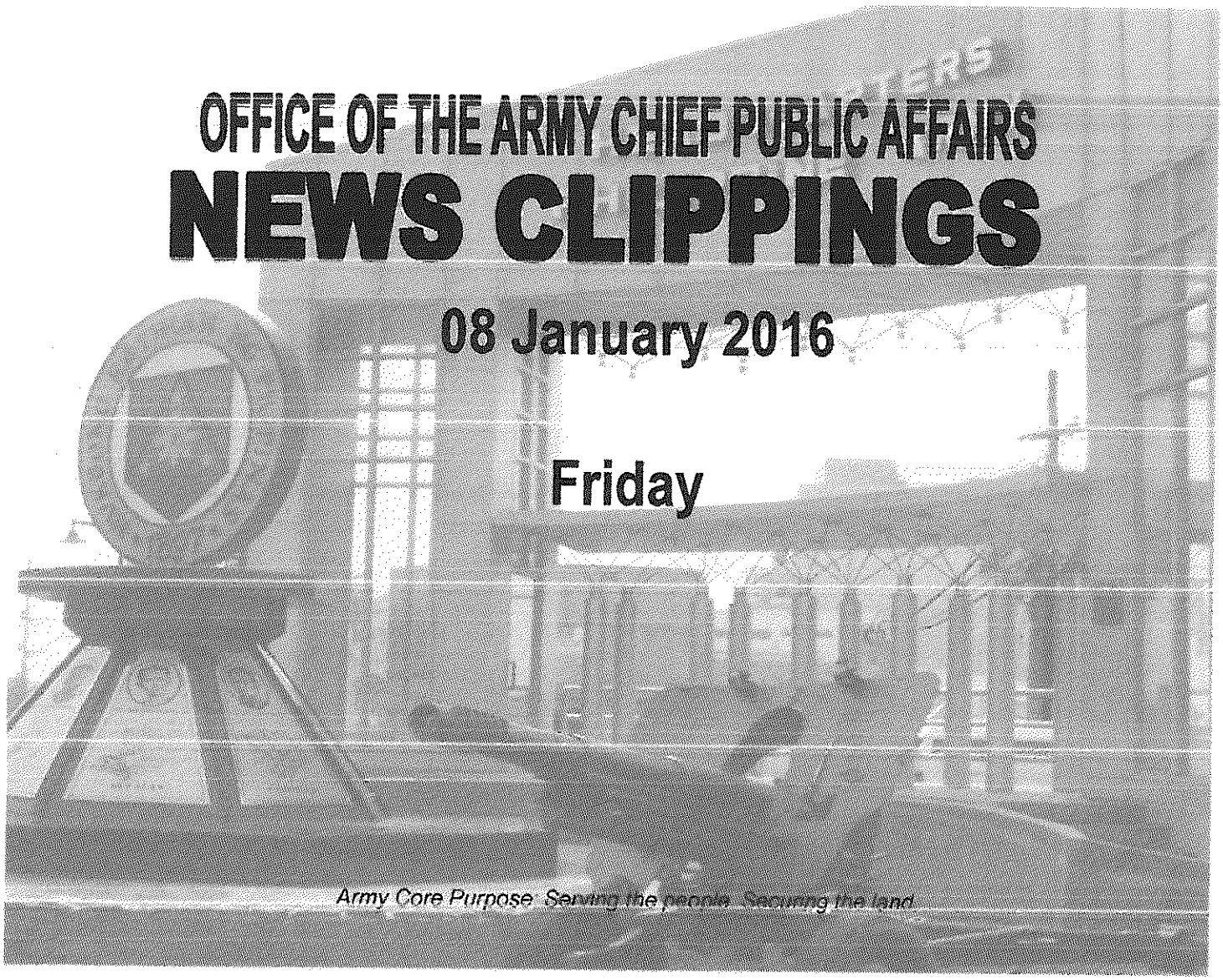
Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride

TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com



OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 January 2016

Friday

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

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

NEWS HEADLINES
08 JANUARY 2016

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS
08 JANUARY 2016

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	The Manila Times p. A8
	NATIONAL NEWS		
2-3	BI chief sacked	Delon Porcalla	Phil Star p. 1
4-5	Comelec insists Poe lied in CoC	Benjamin Pulta	Tribune p. 1
	ARMY RELATED NEWS		
6	2 troopers hurt in N. Samara ambush	Ricky Bautista	Phil Star p. A-23
7	Paying permits to campaign is like killing Filipino soldiers – Army official	Alexander Lopez	Mla Bulletin p. 6
8	Militar umapela: 'Wag magbayad ng permit to campaign sa NPA	Alexander Lopez	Balita p. 5
9	AFP vows sustained peace development campaign	Mike Crismundo	Mla Bulletin p. 9
10	2 sundalo, sugatan sa pinasabog na IED ng NPA sa Northern Samar Cafgu member killed in NPA attack in Camarines Sur	Bombo Tacloban Delfin T. Mallari Jr.	www.bomboradyo.com www.inquirer.net
11	COWARDLY ATTACK // CAFGU Shot in CAMSUR	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
	AFP RELATED NEWS		
12	AFP gives itself big pat on the back	Victor Reyes	Malaya p. B6
13	AFP claims it has accomplished goals for 2015, vows to sustain momentum this year	Mario Mallari	Tribune p. 4
14	AFP aims to 'Win' peace in 2016	Ferman Marasigan	Mla Times p. A8
15	Stay apolitical, Iloilo police urged as election period nears	Tara Yap	Mla Bulletin p. 8
16	Gazmin to soldiers: Remain non-partisan	Alexis Romero	Phil Star p. 16
17-18	Mamasapano probe: Noy not afraid to face truth	Aurea Calica	Phil Star p. 1
19	Former SAF chief welcomes Mamasapano probe reopening	Raymond Africa	Malaya p. B1
20-21	China, Military deal on table in Phl-US talks in Mid-January	Rene Acosta	Business Mirror p. A1
22	Gazmin, Del Rosario set for talks with US counterparts	Aaron Recuenco	Mla Bulletin p. 4
23	PH, US to hold '2+2' meet	Victor Reyes	Malaya p. B6

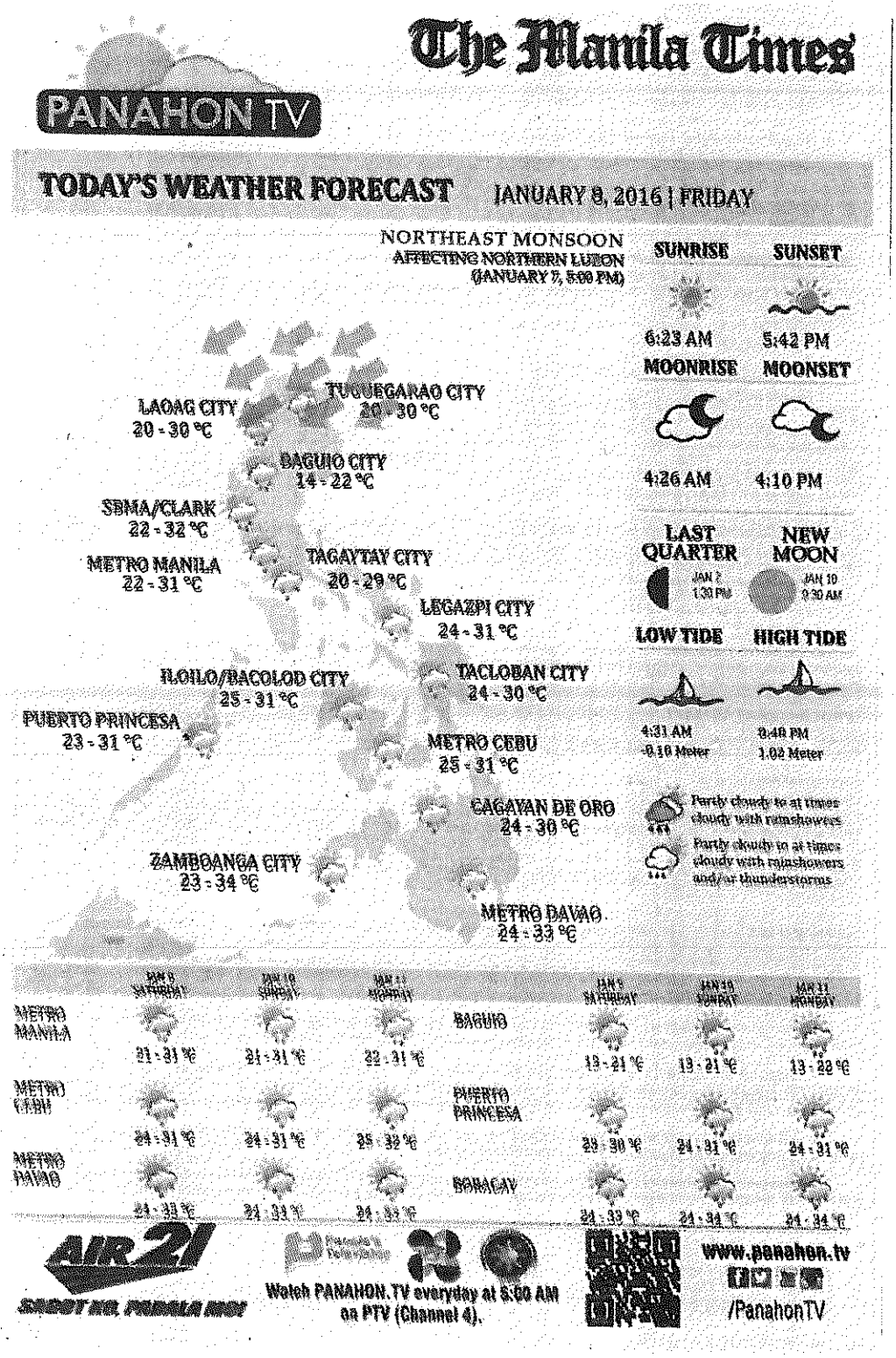
24	**Sea, air freedoms non-negotiable - UK**	AFP	Mla Times p. A2
25-26	**UN to punish NoKor**	-	Mla Bulletin p. 1
27-28	**China should be challenged on flights to island**	Pia Brago	Phil Star p. 6
29	**158 Pinoys rescued near Sabah**	Roel Pareño	Phil Star p. 3
	ONLINE NEWS		
30-31	**DND reminds soldiers to be apolitical during May polls**	Alexis Romero	www.philstar.com
	Gazmin reminds military personnel to remain apolitical	Frances Mangosing	www.inquirer.net
32-33	**DND to acquire 7,000 rounds of 25mm HEI-T**	-	www.pna.gov.ph
	Great strides made in AFP modernization – iriberri	-	www.pna.gov.ph
	'AFP 'di worried sa bagong ebidensiya kaugnay sa Mamasapano encounter'	Bombo Anne Soberano	www.bomboradyo.com
34	**INTENSE OPERATIONS // AFP scores anew in Sulu vs ASG**	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF ccPUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

08 January 2016

The Manila Times

Page: A8



OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

06 January 2016 STAR Page: 1

BI chief sacked

By DELON PORCALLA

Amid persistent allegations of corruption, President Aquino has fired Siegfred Mison as commissioner of the Bureau of Immigration (BI) and replaced him with Palace official Ronaldo Geron Jr.

Aquino swore in Geron on Wednesday night, as a report of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) found Mison and 17 others liable for the repeated escapes of a South Korean detained at the BI.

Mison had denied reports that he would be fired, although he said he served at the pleasure of the President.

Prior to taking over the BI, an agency under the Department of Justice (DOJ), Geron served as deputy executive secretary for finance and administration under the Office of the President since July 2010, when Aquino assumed office.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. told reporters that according to Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr., Geron "has been in public service for over 20 years."

A lawyer, the new BI commissioner also previously served as administrator and board member of the provincial government of Batangas, his home province.

Turn to Page 7

Geron graduated from the University of the Philippines College of Law in 1987 and was admitted to the Bar in 1988.

Coloma said the performance of immigration officials is always "subject to the evaluation" of the DOJ chief, in this case Secretary Benjamin Caguioa, who exercises supervisory powers over attached agencies like the BI and the NBI.

It would be up to Aquino, however, to retain presidential appointees like the BI chief.

Reliable sources say Caguioa will be appointed in March to the Supreme Court, following the retirement of Justice Martin Villarama who opted for early retirement for health reasons.

In turn, DOJ's newly appointed undersecretary, lawyer Emmanuel Caparas, who is also a classmate of Aquino and Caguioa at the Ateneo from grade school to college (economics), will be taking over the DOJ until June 30 this year, when Aquino concludes his six-year term.

The NBI has found Mison and 17 others liable for the escape of South Korean fugitive Cho Seongdae last year.

The NBI recommended the filing of administrative charges of grave misconduct against Mison and BI guard Juan Rafael Ortega.

Criminal charges for evasion through negligence or violation of Article 224 of Revised Penal Code were recommended against BI security guards and several members of the military.

Geron started his first day in office yesterday even though there was no formal turnover. Mison merely issued a statement welcoming Geron as his replacement and asking BI employees to cooperate with their new chief.

"I encourage everyone in the bureau to give as much cooperation and teamwork as they had given me the past four and a half years to the new commissioner," Mison said.

The ousted BI chief also expressed his gratitude to President Aquino for giving him the opportunity to serve in his administration.

"On my part, I did what I could to follow the straight path with much dedication expected from any public servant," Mison said.

Administrative and personnel matters, and not the controversies surrounding the escape of the Korean fugitive, were the first on the agenda of Geron when he reported to the agency's main office in Intramuros, Manila yesterday morning.

Mison

Geron

It was close to 10 a.m. when Geron arrived at the BI and called for a meeting with associate commissioners Abdullah Mangotara and Gilberto Repizo, executive director Eric Dimaculangan and the division heads.

Geron said he missed the opportunity to talk with Mison and would try to set up a meeting at the soonest possible time.

"I am extending my hand out to commissioner Mison. I would want to meet him, seek his advice because he is a good man. He is an officer and a gentleman. I received word about his statement and I am thanking him for the well wishes that he sent," he added.

Repizo, who had been at odds with Mison over some controversial cases including that of Chinese national Wang Bo, refused to comment on the change in leadership.

"We will just move forward," Repizo said.

Around lunchtime Geron was given a tour of the building.

"This is my first day here and I need to familiarize myself," said Geron. "The first order of the day is to review the personnel complement, staffing and budget."

Today he will meet members of the BI's employees union and plans to see firsthand the operations at the airports in the coming days. **– With Edu Punay, Evelyn Macairan**

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

08 January 2016

THE DAILY tribune

Page: 1

CONFLICT ENSUES WITH SOLGEN'S TACK

Comelec insists Poe lied in CoC

By Benjamin B. Pulta and Ted Tuvera

State lawyers representing the Commission on Elections (Comelec) asserted its findings that embattled presidential candidate Sen. Grace Poe lied about her citizenship and qualification to run in next May's elections which were contrary to a position taken by the Solicitor General on the same issue.

The Solicitor General is representing the Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET) in a petition for certiorari of Rizalito David on the body's decision to uphold the qualification of Poe as senator.

Turn to page 7

"(I)nconsistencies in Petitioner's (Poe's) declarations with respect to her residency in the Philippines are strong unmistakable indications of her intent and attempt to deliberately misrepresent a material matter in her COC (certificate of candidacy)," the Comelec through commissioner Rowena Guanzon said in the voluminous pleading.

Solicitor General Florin Hilbay in a separate pleading took a contrary position and sided with the majority opinion of the Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET) which ruled in favor of Poe's claim of being a natural-born Filipino citizen in a separate case also pending before the high court.

As a result of the conflicting views of the Senate and the Solicitor General, election lawyer Romulo Macalintal believes that the Comelec should represent itself in the disqualification cases against presidential aspirant Senator Grace Poe before the Supreme Court (SC).

Macalintal said the poll body is capable of defending its decision.

Comelec Chairman Andres Bautista had affirmed the poll body would represent itself before the High Court after the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) defended the decision of the Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET) favoring Poe as a natural-born Filipino.

The SET rulings contradict the poll body's decision disqualifying Poe as a presidential candidate. The SC set oral arguments on Poe's case on Jan. 19.

The Comelec insisted on its standing as a constitutional body not bound by the SET's findings in Poe's separate case.

As a rule, the Comelec has the final say on who can run for office including incidental matters before the proclamation of the winner in an election. After proclamation, election controversies are generally left to the courts and the electoral tribunals.

"The ruling of the SET however with respect to her citizenship does not negate and overturn, nor preclude, the finding made by the Comelec that Petitioner is not a natural-born Filipino," the Comelec said.

"The decision of the SET does not bind the Comelec. It is not a legal precedent. The SET ruling cannot circumvent nor does it preclude the Comelec from making a contrary conclusion based on applicable law and jurisprudence," it added.

Comelec asserts rules

"How can Comelec be then considered to have capriciously and whimsically exercised its discretion, when its decision was arrived at with due regard to its rules, after hearing, with full appreciation of the pieces of evidence present, and after a thorough study of the pertinent laws and jurisprudence?" read the poll body's comment.

In the December 23, 2015 ruling that Poe was contesting before the SC, the Comelec en banc junked Poe's petitions against the separate rulings of the First and Second Divisions canceling her COC for president.

The Comelec en banc voted 5-2 to uphold the First Division's decision disqualifying her from the 2016 presidential election based on questions of citizenship and residency raised by former Senator Francisco Tatad, political analyst Antonio Contreras and former law dean Amado Valdez.

The en banc, meanwhile, voted 5-1-1 upholding the decision of the Second Division on lawyer Estrella Elamparo's petition to cancel Poe's COC because of her failure to meet the constitutional

requirement of a 10-year residency for presidential candidates.

The Comelec also defended the petition filed by Tatad, saying despite being denominated a "petition for disqualification," the grounds he invoked were for the cancellation of Poe's COC.

The Comelec insisted it has jurisdiction to rule on the citizenship issue of Poe despite a July 18, 2006 order from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation that granted Poe and her children a reacquisition of Filipino citizenship.

The Comelec also reiterated its earlier position that Poe committed misrepresentation in the COC she filed for her 2016 presidential bid. It said Poe, a foundling from Iloilo, is not a natural-born Filipino because she could not show direct blood relationship to a Filipino parent.

"Unless Petitioner can show that a foundling with no known parentage or definitive blood relationship is an exception to the requirement of jus sanguinis, her claim that she is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines does not stand," said the Comelec.

"The provision of the 1935 Constitution is clear. The letter of the law is unmistakable. And it is settled in our legal system that where the law is clear and unambiguous, there is no room for construction, only application," it added.

The Comelec also said despite Poe's reliance on international law to defend her citizenship, "there is nothing however in international law which vests upon and commits to Petitioner the status of a natural-born Filipino citizen."

The Comelec said Poe's supposed intention to re-establish her domicile in the Philippines was belied by her frequent travels to the Philippines using a US passport from 2006 to 2010..

The Comelec said Poe's acts of transferring her children to Philippine schools and buying properties in San Juan and Quezon City to prove domicile could not be given weight because she did all of those while she was still a US citizen.

"Furthermore, she did not have, as she could not have had, permanent residency in the Philippines as of 24 May 2005 or on any date thereafter because she was then a non-Filipino citizen and therefore a foreigner," added the poll body.

The Comelec maintained that Poe only reacquired her domicile in the Philippines on August 31, 2006, when she registered as a voter in Brgy. Santa Lucia, San Juan City.

"To a great degree, Petitioner's 'honest mistake' excuse crumbles in the face of the fact that six (6) years and six (6) months computed from 2 October 2012, the date Petitioner filed her COC for Senator, is more or less around April 2006. Still, this does not match Petitioner's claim that she has been a resident of the Philippines since 24 May 2005," it said.

Not bound by SET ruling

The poll body also said that their decision on Poe's quizzed citizenship – if she's natural born or not – is not subject to the Senate Electoral Tribunal's (SET) decision which was favorable for Poe, where a quo warranto was filed seeking to unseat her from the Senate based on the issue of her citizenship and alleged lack of residency to hold elective government post.

The SET and the Comelec, after all, are separate constitutional bodies which serve different mandates and functions. Also, the cases filed in Comelec against Poe are different from the SET case.

"The ruling of the SET however with respect to her citizenship does not negate and overturn, nor preclude, the finding made by the Comelec that Petitioner is not a natural-born Filipino," the Comelec said.

"The decision of the SET does not bind the Comelec. It is not a legal precedent. The SET ruling cannot circumvent nor does it preclude the Comelec from making a contrary conclusion based on applicable law and jurisprudence," it added.

The Comelec also said that they are not buying Poe's claim of committing an "honest mistake", reiterating that she indeed made a material misrepresentation in her certificate of candidacy (CoC) for the elections.

"To a great degree, Petitioner's 'honest mistake' excuse crumbles in the face of the fact that six (6) years and six (6) months computed from 2 October 2012, the date Petitioner filed her COC for Senator, is more or less around April 2006. Still, this does not match Petitioner's claim that she has been a resident of the Philippines since 24 May 2005," it said.

Poe, the Comelec says, reacquired her domicile on August 31, 2006, when she registered as a voter in Brgy. Santa Lucia, San Juan City and that her claim of buying properties in the country and enrolling her children in Philippine schools earlier on is not sufficient to prove domicile.

"Furthermore, she did not have, as she could not have had, permanent residency in the Philippines as of 24 May 2005 or on any date thereafter because she was then a non-Filipino citizen and therefore a foreigner," the poll body said.

"These inconsistencies in Petitioner's declarations with respect to her residency in the Philippines are strong unmistakable indications of her intent and attempt to deliberately misrepresent a material matter in her COC," it added.

The poll body on December 24 released its decision voting to disqualify Sen. Poe – 5-2 in the first division and 5-1 in the second division – from the presidential race on the bases of her quizzed citizenship and alleged lack of residency.

Comelec can defend itself

"The Comelec, with the thousands of cases it has previously decided, is considered to have gained such special knowledge and expertise over matters falling within its jurisdiction, hence, there is no reason to doubt its competence and ability to defend itself," Macalintal said in a statement.

He noted how the members of the commission presented and extensively discussed their arguments on the four disqualification cases in the rulings in the Comelec's First and Second Divisions and the en banc.

"The Comelec, being the constitutional agency entrusted by the Constitution to enforce all laws relative to the conduct of the elections and decide all questions relating to the qualifications of all elective officials, knows all the facts and the laws in connection with Poe's cases," Macalintal said.

He added, "With Comelec arguing for itself, the court will get all answers and clarifications directly and precisely from the most official source and authority, that is the Comelec, who has all the facts and the laws related to Poe's cases."

Macalintal said that if ever the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) will represent the Comelec, it will also consult the latter regarding the cases.

"For sure, if these cases would be handled by the Solicitor General, the latter would consult and inquire from the Comelec all the circumstances behind Poe's cases to be able to prepare a well-grounded comment on Poe's petitions assailing the Comelec decisions," Macalintal explained.

08 January 2016

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Page: A 23

2 troopers hurt in N. Samar ambush

CATBALOGAN CITY – Two Army soldiers were wounded in an ambush by suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Palapag town, Northern Samar on Wednesday night.

The soldiers, numbering about 20, were patrolling in the hinterland of Barangay Bagacay when an improvised explosive device went off, according to Capt. Isagani Viernes, chief of the Army's 8th Infantry Division public affairs office.

The troopers of the 20th Infantry Battalion were tracking down two unidentified men.

The explosion was followed by a firefight that lasted a few minutes, Viernes said.

Cpl. Donnie Aton and Pfc. Bingbong Crisologo were rushed by their colleagues to the Northern Samar Provincial Hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile, in Samar, residents from 15 villages in Calbiga town left their homes for fear of being caught in the crossfire in the anticipated military offensives against the rebels.

The villagers are staying with their relatives in the town proper.

One evacuee who requested anonymity said the military asked them to evacuate, as they would launch the offensives in the boundaries of Calbiga, Basey and Eastern Samar.

The military denied the allegations, saying there would be no military operation in the areas. **– Ricky Bautista**

08 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 6

Paying permits to campaign is like killing Filipino soldiers – Army official

By **ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ**

DAVAO CITY – A senior military official in Mindanao has called candidates seeking elective posts in the upcoming elections in May not to give in to permit-to-campaign (PTC) demands being imposed by the New People's Army (NPA).

10th Infantry (Agila) Division commander Major General Rafael Valencia said paying PTC is like helping fund the dwindling NPA forces to regain lost ground and sow terror among communities.

And worst, funds accumulated by the NPA from PTC payments will enable them to improve their armaments to kill soldiers.

"Sa pagbayad ng PTC tinutulungan natin mapalakas ang humihinang pwersa ng NPA. Tinutulungan din natin sila para patayin ang ating mga sundalo," Valencia emphasized.

Business firms in the area suffered losses amounting to ₱246 million in extortion fees in 2015 alone, the East Mindanao Command (Eastmincon) reported. Most of the losses resulted from destruction of property when business firms refused to heed the demand of the communist rebels for "revolutionary tax" in exchange for a safe and smooth operation.

The Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP) particularly the Eastmincom recently condemned the NPA for their extortion activities-cum-campaign fees in the area.

"Ito ay revolutionary tax na pinapatupad nila sa kanilang kaaway na uri. They also consider the candidates and politicians as their enemies," Valencia stressed.

The official said the NPAs badly need these taxes to fund revolutionary activities and recruit new members after suffering heavy losses in previous military engagements. This is aside from the surrender of their comrades who wanted to live normal lives.

Election offense

In the same news gathering Wednesday, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) Davao region deputy director lawyer Marlon Casquejo said payment of PTCs can be a ground for the disqualification of candidates.

If there is a strong evidence that a certain candidate paid a PTC, the Philippine National Police (PNP) and any citizen in the area concerned can file a disqualification case before the Comelec office, Casquejo said because paying such PTC fees is considered an election offense.

Valencia further warned candidates who would pay PTCs to do it discreetly.

"They just make sure that when they give we would not be able to monitor them," Valencia stressed warning of consequences which he did not elaborate.

08 January 2016

Balita
Ang Nangungunang Pahayagang Tagalog sa Bansa ₱8.00

Page. 5

PARA N'YO KAMING PINAPATAY

Militar umapela: 'Wag magbayad ng permit to campaign sa NPA

Ni ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

DAVAO CITY – **Nanawagan ang isang mataas na opisyal ng militar sa Mindanao sa mga kandidato sa halalan sa Mayo na huwag pumayag sa permit-to-campaign (PTC) na ipinatutupad ng New People's Army (NPA).**

Sinabi ni 10th Infantry (Agila) Division commander Major General Rafael Valencia sa mga mamamahayag sa regular AFP-PNP press conference sa Ritz Hotel noong Miyerkules na ang pagbabayad ng PTC ay katumbas ng pagtulong sa pondo ng humihinang puwersa ng NPA upang makabalik sa labanan at muling maghasik ng takot sa mga komunidad.

Pinakamalala rito, aniya, ang mga pondo na maiipon ng NPA mula sa mga ibinayad sa PTC ay magbibigay sa kilusan ng kapangyarihan na palakasin ang kanilang mga armas para pumatay ng mga sundalo.

"Sa pagbabayad ng PTC tinutulungan nating mapalakas ang humihinang puwersa ng NPA. Tinutulungan din natin sila para patayin ang ating mga sundalo," diin ni Valencia.

Kamakailan ay kinondena ng Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP), partikular na ang Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom), ang pangongolekta ng NPA ng PTC sa lugar, na katumbas ng pangingikil.

Ang extortion activities ng NPA na ipinapataw din sa mga negosyante ay nagdulot ng tinatayang P246 milyong pinsala sa mga negosyo sa silangang Mindanao noong 2015, iniulat ng EastMinCom.

Sinabi ni Valencia na ang mga PTC ay ipinatutupad ng mga rebelde sa kanilang mga kalaban bilang revolutionary tax.

"Ito ay revolutionary tax na ipinatutupad nila sa kanilang kaaway na uri. They also consider the candidates and politicians as their enemies," paliwanag niya.

Sa parehong press conference, sinabi ni Commission on Election (Comelec) Davao region deputy director Atty. Marlon Casquejo na ang pagbabayad ng PTC ay maaaring maging batayan para sa disqualification ng mga kandidato, dahil maituturing itong isang election offense.

06 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 9

AFP vows sustained peace, development campaign

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

BUTUAN CITY – The peace and development initiatives vigorously carried out by the field units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) "will continue without let up," particularly in conflict-torn, far-flung communities, Lt. Col. Rey Pasco, commanding officer of the Army's 4th Civil Military Operations Battalion (4th CMOB) stressed yesterday.

Aside of the peace and development program being implemented the "bayanihan" way, security was also strengthened especially in lumad communities, he said.

"After the long Yuletide break, our indigenous peoples (IP) Army soldiers were also deployed again to their respective tribal communities to continue the education program through the Alternative Learning System and other livelihood program to uplift the native's living condition," said Col. Pasco, in an exclusive interview with the Manila Bulletin.

Aside from the 401st, 402nd, 403rd Infantry Brigades, Task Force Diamond and all operational control units of the AFP 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division (4th ID) spread all over Northeastern and Northern Mindanao regions, the "bayanihan" approach is also fully supported by the local government units (LGUs), concerned line agencies of the government and non-government organizations, he said.

"Due to the peace, development and security program of the AFP, many regular fighters of the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines have been enlightened by the program and returned to the fold of the government last year," Pasco said.

More than 200 armed NPA fighters yielded to various units of the 4th ID and to LGUs, while at least 3 top CPP-NPA officials were also captured due to the peace and development program of the government, claimed Col. Pasco.

In 2015, a total of 126 NPA rebels were captured or killed during combat operations while 269 assorted firearms and several war materials including subversive documents with high intelligence value were seized during 226 combat operations.

Pasco added that field units of the 4th ID is also assisted LGUs in road development, establishment of water and lighting systems and other social development programs.

9

www.bomboradyo.com

2 sundalo, sugatan sa pinasabog na IED ng NPA sa Northern Samar

By Bombo Tacloban

TACLOBAN CITY - Nag-iwan ng dalawang sundalong sugatan ang ginawang pag-aatake ng pinaniniwalaang miyembro ng New People's Army (NPA) sa tropa ng kasundaluhan sa Barangay Bagacay, Palapag, Northern Samar.

Napag-alaman na pinasabugan ng rebeldeng grupo ang sasakyan ng mga militar na nagresulta sa pagkasugat ng mga ito.

Kinilala ang mga sugatan na sina Cpl. Donnie A. Aton, at Pfc. Bingbong Crisologo.

Kaagad naman isinugod sa Northern Samar Provincial Hospital ang mga sundalo matapos magtamo ng malubhang tama sa ulo at iba't-ibang parte ng katawan mula sa fragment ng improvised explosive device (IED).

Una rito, umabot sa 10 minuto ang palitan ng putok sa pagitan ng mga kasundaluhan at mga NPA.

www.inquirer.net

Cafgu member killed in NPA attack in Camarines Sur

By: Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

LUCENA CITY – A member of the government's paramilitary group was shot dead by suspected New People's rebels in Balatan town in Camarines Sur early on Thursday.

Major Angelo Guzman, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), said Jaime Rabino, a member of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (Cafgu), was attending a fiesta dance party in his village, Barangay Sagrada, at around 1 a.m. when four armed men approached and shot him at close range.

Guzman said the victim died on the spot. After the shooting, the suspects fled on foot towards the mountainous area.

Guzman said Solcom was saddened by Rabino's killing as Cafgu members, like soldiers, spend most of their time away from their families and only get to go home on certain occasions.

"This was the only time they have to spend with their families and loved ones after rendering service to the communities," Guzman said in a statement.

He said Army soldiers were dispatched to track down the rebels.

www.dwdd.com.ph

COWARDLY ATTACK // CAFGU Shot in CAMSUR

By: Alvin Santiago

NPA 4CAMP GUILLERMO NAKAR, Lucena City (DWDD) – A member of the CAFGU Active Auxiliary (CAA) was shot by four (4) unidentified armed men believed to be NPAs in Brgy Sagrada, Balatan, Camarines Sur at 1:00 a.m of January 7, 2016.

The victim was identified as CAA Jaime Rabino, a resident of said barangay. He was attending a benefit dance in connection with the Barangay Fiesta Celebration when four (4) men approached and fired multiple gunshots that caused his immediate death.

After the incident, the suspects fled on foot towards the mountainous area of the barangay. "We are saddened by the attack on our CAA on Off Duty status considering this is the only time they have to spend with their families and loved ones after rendering 15 days of service to the communities," said SOLCOM Spokesperson Major Angelo S. Guzman.

SOLCOM reminded all troops to be extra vigilant against NPA attacks in all their movements may it be operational, administrative or personal. Troops were also sent to track down the perpetrators. ***PAO SOLCOM / MCAG***

08 January 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: BG

AFP gives itself big pat on the back

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri yesterday declared that the military did well last year and said this year, it is facing bigger challenges, including the national and local elections in May.

"The year 2015 has been a memorable year for the entire Armed Forces of the Philippines...We made good on many of our goals," said Iriberri during the joint DND-AFP traditional New Year's call in Camp Aguinaldo.

Iriberri said the military made "great strides" in the implementation of its modernization program. New assets were delivered last year, including two FA-50 fighter jets from the Korea Aerospace Industries.

He said the AFP is determined to "continue to win the peace and protect the gains that have been made," in keeping with the Internal Peace and Security Plan Bayanihan which is the military's blueprint in winning the peace, and which was launched in January 2011.

Iriberri also said the military is dedicating its "energies and efforts" to ensure a peaceful electoral exercise in May.

He warned soldiers against involvement in partisan political activity in the coming elections, saying they should be prepared for punishments if they do so.

Involvement in partisan political activity could mean separation from the service, said AFP spokesman Col. Restituto Padilla.

Iriberri said the military would also intensify operations against private armed groups which he said pose a threat to the peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections.

On defeating the communist insurgency at the end of the year in line with IPSP Bayanihan, Iriberri said, "That is our challenge."

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

05 January 2016

THE DAILY tribune

Page: 4

AFP claims it has accomplished goals for 2015, vows to sustain momentum this year

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday claimed it has accomplished its goals for 2015 as it vowed to sustain the momentum this year.

In his message during the traditional New Year's Call at Camp Aguinaldo, AFP chief of staff Gen. Hernando Iriberri said the military's accomplishments have made the difference in various communities and the transformation program continued to gain its momentum.

"Our record is solid, our hopes are high, and our force is strong, let us stay focused on our organizational and operational target, pouring heart and soul into doing our duty as proud and capable members of the AFP," Iriberri said.

"The task of protecting our people and our state may be as daunting as it is noble but let us draw inspiration from the support of our government and our fellowmen, with all that we have accomplished in 2015 there is even more that we must get done in 2016," he added.

The AFP chief admitted the primary challenge for the 125,000-strong military organization is still combating insurgency through its internal peace and security plan (IPSP) Bayanihan which will end this December.

"The main mission with the IPSP Bayanihan is really to win the peace so I just wanted to emphasize that by 2016 because based on the timeline we must win the peace by the end of 2016...that's our objective, we must be able to declare the entire country as peaceful," Iriberri said.

Asked how realistic is the campaign to finish insurgency by end of the year, Iriberri replied "that is a goal and we have been trying our best to attain it."

The AFP chief stressed that defeating insurgency by end of the year is a self-imposed target under IPSP Bayanihan which was launched in 2011.

Iriberri said there will be a command conference today at Camp Aguinaldo to assess its score in combating insurgency for 2015.

"We will assess, evaluate our performance and if we need to make some adjustments, we will make adjustments," Iriberri said.

Mario J. Mallari

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

08 January 2016

The Manila Times

Page: 18

AFP AIMS TO 'WIN' PEACE IN 2016

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is poised to intensify operations against all threat groups, particularly the communist New People's Army (NPA), even as it seeks to "win" peace this year.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin on Thursday said in the remaining days of the Aquino Administration, one of the goals of the military is full implementation of Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) or Oplan (Operation Plan) Bayanihan, which is strongly opposed by leftist organizations describing it a "grand psywar scheme and continuing violence against the people."

"*Yung ating* IPSP *Bayanihan kailangang ipagpatuloy natin upang sa ganun ay ma*-accomplish *natin yung* mission *nating talunin na yung mga* threats *sa* security *ng gobyerno* [We need to continue our IPSP Bayanihan so that we can accomplish our mission to defeat the threats to the security of the government]," Gazmin told reporters after the traditional New Year's call at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City (Metro Manila).

Gen. Hernando Iriberri, AFP chief of staff, said the main mission of the operation plan is to win peace.

"So I just wanted to emphasize that by 2016 because based on the timeline of IPSP Bayanihan, we must win the peace, that's the timeline of IPSP Bayanihan by the end of 2016, we must be able to declare the entire country as peaceful," he added.

The AFP, Iriberri said, is trying its best to accomplish the mission.

The AFP chief disclosed that a command conference was scheduled from Friday to assess and evaluate the military's performance and find out if there is a need to make adjustments.

"If we need to make some adjustments, we will make adjustments. But we will try our best and that will be my challenge to all our ground commanders, to attain our goals and it has been there since 2010 when, as I said, when IPSP Bayanihan was crafted, it was a self-imposed goal with the Armed Forces and it is incumbent upon us to give our best, to do our best to attain that goal, and that is our challenge," he said.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

05 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 8

Stay apolitical, Iloilo police urged as election period nears

By **TARA YAP**

ILOILO – As the country gears for the election period, police officers in this province are being urged to stay apolitical.

Iloilo Governor Arthur Defensor Sr. made this appeal to Iloilo Provincial Police Office (IPPO) chief, Senior Supt. Roderick Alba when the latter called on the Governor last New Year's Day.

Defensor specifically asked the police in the province's 42 towns and one component city – Passi - not to allow themselves to be used by local politicians.

Alba assured Defensor that his appeal will be conveyed to all IPPO units and police stations.

Meanwhile, Alba said the IPPO is closely coordinating with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in preparation for checkpoints to be conducted as the election gun ban starts on January 10. The election period also official starts on that day.

Alba said he has directed IPPO units to conduct intensified checkpoints as early as January 9.

The Police Regional Office in Western Visayas (PRO-6) has also ordered all units in other provinces in the region to beef up its operations in implementing the January 10-June 8 election gun ban.

Chief Superintendent Bernardo Diaz, PRO-6 director, said checkpoints will be conducted in key cities and towns of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, and Iloilo provinces.

Meanwhile, the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in Negros Occidental will conduct its first Provincial Joint Security Coordinating Conference with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) today - two days before the January 10-June 9, 2016 election period.

To be discussed will be security measures for the May 9 elections, including identification of election areas of concern depending on the PNP and AFP's assessment and recommendation, to be approved by the poll body.

Comelec-Negros Occidental Supervisor Jessie Suarez said the meeting at the Bacolod Pavilion Hotel will be attended by Negros Occidental Police Provincial Office officer-in-charge, Senior Supt. Samuel Nacion; Col. Francisco Delfin, Commander of the Philippine Army (PA)'s 303rd Infantry Brigade; and the battalion commanders and chiefs of police of towns and cities in the province.

Suarez said the final list of election areas of concern will be released by the Comelec Regional Office, based on what will be agreed in the Regional Command Conference.

"So far," he said, "in Negros Occidental, we don't see any areas of concern."

There will be two categories in determining such areas of concern.

Under Category 1, the history of violence will be noted in the area in two consecutive elections and its difference with Category 2 is the presence of insurgency.

Also areas where there is intense political rivalry, history of election-related violence involving the same persons in the election will be put under Category 1.

Category 2 areas have presence of armed elements or a mix of one and two.

Suarez, meanwhile clarified that for this election, despite the creation of the new Negros Island Region (NIR), the Comelec in Negros Occidental is still under Region 6, and their counterpart in Negros Oriental also still under Region 7 despite the creation of the Negros Island Region.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

08 January 2016

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Page: 1/6

Gazmin to soldiers: Remain non-partisan

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin yesterday reminded soldiers to be neutral a month before the campaign period for the 2016 polls starts.

In a speech delivered before the military's New Year's call in Camp Aguinaldo, Gazmin said being non-partisan is part of the military's mandate.

"As guardians of democracy, we must remain apolitical and dedicated to our mandate, as it is the price we pay for our sworn duty," Gazmin said.

"We resolve to continue to build upon our accomplishments, and work for the professionalization of our bureaus, agencies, units and offices," he added.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri warned that servicemen who engage in partisan politics would be punished.

"Those who will be involved in partisan politics will have to face the consequences of their actions. We are serious on that and we don't want anyone, any soldier, airman, sailor or marine to be involved in any partisan politics this coming elections," Iriberri said.

The Philippine National Police (PNP), for its part, activated its National Security Task Force Secure and Fair Elections (NSTF-SAFE) to ensure orderly and honest elections in May 2016.

PNP chief Director General Ricardo Marquez personally led the planning and drawing up of security measures for the national elections.

– With Cecille Suerte Fe-

January 2016

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Page: 1

Mamasapano probe: Noy not afraid to face truth

By AUREA CALICA

As senators prepare to resume investigation into the Mamasapano tragedy, Malacañang said yesterday President Aquino and his officials are ready to face the truth, the pursuit of which they have never evaded.

In a press briefing, Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. reiterated that in the many investigations conducted related to the incident, administration officials had always cooperated.

"It only shows that in all opportunities, the government faced and is facing the truth

Turn to Page 8

Mamasapano From Page 1

and that is the important thing about the incident in Mamasapano," Coloma said.

The Senate is set to reopen the Mamasapano investigation on Jan. 25, the first anniversary of the incident.

Coloma said there had been exhaustive discussions on the issue during the various probes conducted by the Senate itself, the Philippine National Police-Board of Inquiry, the House of Representatives, the Commission on Human Rights, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Department of Justice, which filed charges against those allegedly responsible for the brutal killing of 44 members of the Special Action Force.

Coloma also said the reopening of the Mamasapano investigation at the Senate should not affect the passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law.

The government aims to have the BBL passed to fully push forward the peace process in Mindanao.

"It is also the legislators' duty to uphold the process while performing other duties such as conducting investigations," Coloma said.

The BBL is one of the casualties of the Mamasapano incident due to the MILF's involvement in the carnage.

The SAF members were on a mission to capture or immobilize wanted terrorists.

"The most important thing in all of these is to find out the truth and serve justice (to the SAF 44)," Coloma said.

"In all opportunities, the government had been honest and truthful. All questions were faced and answered," he said.

Coloma said President Aquino himself addressed the nation several times to answer the questions involving the Mamasapano operation.

New developments

In September, Coloma said Aquino himself announced that there were new developments regarding the Mamasapano issue and that within the same week, they were tackled.

Coloma was apparently referring to the so-called alternative truth or version of the incident wherein the SAF 44's accomplishment of the mission to kill Malaysian terror suspect Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan was put in question.

But Aquino himself declared later that based on evidence, there was no doubt the SAF commandos were indeed the ones who neutralized Marwan.

The President maintained he was not given accurate information to make the correct decisions when the operation to arrest Marwan and another suspected international terrorist, Abdul Basit Usman, was carried out. Usman was killed in another operation in May last year.

The President was taken to task for allowing then suspended PNP chief Alan Purisima to lead the operation along with then SAF commander Director Getulio Napeñas. Aquino said he asked the two to coordinate the operation with authorities, including the military, but was disobeyed.

Aquino also said his side of the story must be considered even as he noted that he was responsible for all police and military operations being the commander-in-chief.

The Office of the Ombudsman absolved Aquino of any liability related to the Mamasapano operation while charges were recommended against Purisima, Napeñas and other police officials.

Not at fault

The draft of the House report on the matter also said the President was not at fault because the officials on the ground lied to him about what was really going on during the operation.

But the Senate found the President "ultimately responsible" for the incident while the Board of Inquiry said he broke the chain of command, which the Palace disputed by stating that Aquino's orders to coordinate the mission were disregarded and the police, being a civilian organization, did not follow such a rule.

Napeñas had admitted he did not coordinate the operation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) because there might be leaks.

Both the PNP and AFP said they learned from the incident since the military was accused of delaying the deployment of troops to help the SAF operatives being attacked by members of the MILF, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and a private armed group.

The Palace said it would not dwell on the possible motivations of the senators, particularly Grace Poe and Juan Ponce Enrile, in pushing for the reopening of the Mamasapano investigation.

No effect on BBL

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the resumption of the Mamasapano probe should not interfere in the legislative work of the Senate, particularly in efforts to have the BBL passed.

Drilon said that he would not stand in the way of the desire of Enrile to reopen the investigation if the intention is to bring further clarity to the incident.

"If reopening the Mamasapano will allow our esteemed colleague Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile to ask questions that he deemed are important to ferret out the truth, then we support it," Drilon said.

"But given the upper chamber's extremely tight working schedule, I am really hoping that the additional hearings will not affect the Senate's work on its continuing legislative priorities," he added.

Drilon noted that the Senate has a lot of important matters to deal with when it resumes session on Jan. 18 such as the BBL and the proposed salary hike for public sector workers.

With the campaign period for the May elections also coming up, the Senate has very little time left to accomplish all pending matters.

"When we resume our plenary sessions on Jan. 18, we have only about nine full session days left before we again adjourn our sessions on Feb. 5," Drilon said.

"I am hopeful that reopening the Mamasapano probe will not draw time, attention and energies away from our lawmaking duties," he added.

"The Mamasapano incident had created an immense political storm that seriously affected the peace process which we had hoped would end decades of armed conflict in that part of the country," Drilon said.

Justice elusive

Lawmakers from the Bayan Muna party-list group said yesterday the reopening of the Senate investigation into the Mamasapano incident should pin down the accountability of President Aquino and finally give justice to the victims of the carnage.

"The ghost of Mamasapano will continue to haunt the Aquino administration until such time President Aquino himself and the US government are found primarily culpable for the bungled anti-operations in Maguindanao," Reps. Neri Colmenares and Carlos Isagani Zarate said.

"We welcome this Senate move led by Sen. Grace Poe to reopen the investigation on the bloody Mamasapano operations. More than revealing new pieces of evidence, however, we also hope that the investigation will finally provide justice for the victims," Colmenares said.

– With Delon Porcalla, Alexis Romero, Paolo Romero, Marvin Sy, Michael Punongbayan, Jess Diaz

06 January 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B1

Former SAF chief welcomes Mamasapano probe reopening

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

THE former head of the PNP's Special Action Force yesterday said the reopening of the Mamasapano investigation at the Senate is a welcome move, contrary to how his former bosses in Malacañang see it.

Retired Director Getulio Napeñas said in a radio interview he believes Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who moved for the reopening of the investigation, has fresh evidence to present before the Senate committees.

He expressed hope all questions pertaining to the incident will now be answered.

Malacañang on Wednesday said as far as it is concerned, there is nothing new to find out about the incident in which 44 SAF commandos were killed by members of the Moro Islamic Lib-

FORMER

eration Front, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and other armed groups in Mamasapano town, Maguindanao during an anti-terrorist operation on January 25 last year. It said the Aquino administration had been forthright.

The issue was investigated jointly last year by the Senate committees on public order and illegal drugs and on peace and unification. A committee report said President Aquino was "ultimately responsible" for the operation which it said was poorly planned and poorly executed. The report recommended the filing of charges against Napeñas and former PNP chief Alan Purisima.

Napeñas said he is very much willing to attend the resumption of the probe which starts on January 25, the first anniversary of the killing.

Napeñas lambasted the Senate findings, saying the operation was not poorly planned and poorly executed because the target of the operation, Malaysian bomber Zulkifli bin Hir alias Marwan, was killed.

"Ginawa namin yan para makuha si Marwan tapos sasabihin ng mga nasa gobyerno, including ang Pangulo (Aquino) na poor planning and poor operations. We have been doing special operations for so long ... and yet sasabihin nila poor planning, poor execution overnight, for a few days na nagimbestiga sila," he said.

The Senate rules committee recently ruled in favor of Enrile who has said he gathered information about the incident while he was in detention at the PNP General Hospital. Enrile returned to the Senate in August last year after being allowed to post bail.

The Mamasapano incident caused friction between the AFP and the PNP, on Napeñas' allegations that the military did not provide timely assistance to the policemen who were then under attack by the MILF and other armed groups.

Top military officials vowed to cooperate with the Senate probe.

"As far as the re-opening of the Mamasapano investigation is concerned, we submit to the wisdom of the Senate," said AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri.

Iriberri said he is not worried about the supposed new evidence.

"Our commanders have already voiced out and already conveyed whatever information that should be given to the public pertaining to that incident. Their testimonies in the (initial) investigation were quite long. So I don't know if there will be a change (in their testimonies)," he said.

Maj. Gen. Edmundo Pangilinan, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, said he is open to new round of grilling by the senators. In the investigations, Pangilinan had been emotional in refuting Napeñas' allegation that the military did not help the policemen.

At the House, the committees on public order and safety and on peace, reconciliation and unity are yet to come up with a report on its joint probe last year.

Rizal Rep. Romeo Acop, vice chair of the public order panel chaired by Negros Occidental Rep. Jeffrey Ferrer, said the panel has yet to draft a committee report almost a year after the joint panel opened its hearing.

He belied reports that a draft report absolving President Aquino of any liability is already being circulated for the committee members' signatures.

The panel held one hearing in February last year and two in April.

Ferrer, who was quoted in radio reports as saying that a draft report is already out, did not reply to text inquiries. – *With Victor Reyes, Wendell Vigilia, JP Lopez and Jocelyn Montemayor*

08 January 2016 BusinessMirror Page. A1

CHINA, MILITARY DEAL ON TABLE IN PHL-U.S. TALKS IN MID-JANUARY

CHINESE Defense Minister Liang Guanglie (left) shakes hands with his Philippine counterpart Voltaire T. Gazmin at the Defense Headquarters in Quezon City in this May 23, 2011, file photo. Guanglie's visit came amid renewed tension in the disputed Spratly Islands, which are claimed by China, the Philippines and four other Asian countries and territories. AP/AARON FAVILA

By Rene Acosta

CHINA'S presence in the West Philippine Sea and a military deal would be on the agenda in a meeting between Filipino and defense officials next week.

The bilateral meeting scheduled on January 12 will be held among Defense Secretary Voltaire T. Gazmin and Foreign Secretary Albert F. del Rosario, and their two US counterparts. The meeting's announcement came on the heels of Beijing's landing of a civilian aircraft in the Fiery Cross Reef.

The landing drew diplomatic protests from Vietnam and the Philippines and scathing remarks from the United States, with an accompanying appeal to China not to step up the heightening tension in the West Philippine Sea, traditionally called the South China Sea. The Philippines has accused China as the source of this tension, after the world's second-largest economy started reclaiming reefs within the Philippine-claimed territory.

"We will talk about our bilateral relations. [The goal is] to enhance our relations. And probably one of the subject matters would be the South China Sea," Gazmin said on Thursday, after receiving top military officials for the traditional New Year's Call event, organized jointly by the Department of National Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Gazmin said they would also discuss the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Edca). This agreement calls for increased rotational visits of American forces and the storage of US military assets and equipment in selected bases of the AFP in Central Luzon and in Palawan.

Continued on A2

According to defense officials, the Edca has been conceived as a part of the defense and security strategy of the Philippines. It is currently under review by the Supreme Court, after several groups—even the Senate—called the agreement unconstitutional. The Senate maintained that the deal needed its concurrence.

"The area of common concern right now is the passage of the Edca. This is what they [the US] are also awaiting, and so we don't know yet what is going to happen," Gazmin said. "It is still very premature to talk about the Edca."

McCain, Manila

THE face-to-face meeting between the US and the Philippines comes at a time when both countries are struggling hard to contain China's assertiveness in the South China Sea, which was lately reinforced by Beijing's landing of a civilian aircraft in the Fiery Cross Reef.

Military officials said the landing could be a prelude to the stationing of Chinese military aircraft in that reef, thus, cementing China's military position in the West Philippine Sea, which the US and its allies wanted to remain open to international navigation.

Hawkish US Sen. John McCain reacted to China's latest action, while also criticizing the US over its sputtering freedom of navigation patrol in the region, believing the reason Beijing was becoming bolder is because US ships and aircraft are irregularly present in the West Philippine Sea.

McCain was reported to have been surprised why there was no sustained US patrols in the international waters that Beijing claims is China's.

Gazmin tossed to the Department of Foreign Affairs the matter of taking action over China's latest exercise in the West Philippine Sea.

Building capability

GAZMIN said the military is continuing to build its capabilities for territorial defense. "We are continuously preparing our defenses to be able to defend our territory. [Such preparations are] not directed to any country for that matter," he said.

On the other hand, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando Iriberri said the military is following the government's track in resolving the territorial dispute with China.

"We have followed the track, the three tracks of diplomatic, political and legal. That's why we have filed our arbitration. That is the track we are following," he said.

Iriberri further explained the AFP "is only a part of the entire government bureaucracy and government organization." So whatever will be the decision, whatever national policies that will be imposed or be given by our national political leaders, we will follow."

Meanwhile, Gazmin said the military is also closely following the developments and even tension between South Korea and North Korea, which was heightened by the reported nuclear testing by Pyongyang this week.

Likewise, we are keeping abreast with the developments between Saudi Arabia and Iran, he added.

Helicopter sighting confirmed

THE military confirmed on Thursday that a helicopter, which volunteers claimed was from China, hovered above Pagasa Island, while 48 members of the Kalaayaan Atin Ito, led by former Marine Capt. Nicanor Faeldon, were there for a peaceful protest against Beijing.

The confirmation was made by the Armed Forces Western Command commander Vice Adm. Alexander Lopez during the New Year's Call made by top military officials, headed by Iriberri, on Gazmin.

However, the military commander was still cautious in his reply, especially when military reporters asked him whether the aircraft was a Chinese military or even owned by China, which has troops in reefs it has reclaimed in the West Philippine Sea.

Lopez said the helicopter could have been used by fishermen in the area, but he was certain the chopper was not from the Western Command.

Earlier, the volunteers claimed that a Chinese military helicopter made fly byes while they were on Pagasa Island, where they stage a six-day peaceful protest trough a voyage around the reefs and islets, in response to Beijing's occupation and continued development in the country's territory.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295ccc

08 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 4

Gazmin, Del Rosario set for talks with US counterparts

By AARON B. RECUENCO

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario will meet with their United States counterparts to discuss bilateral relations, specifically relating to security.

"Probably, one of the subject matters would be the South China Sea," said Gazmin.

He said the meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry and US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter will be held next week, adding that they are set to leave for the US in the coming weekend.

The regular meeting between the two countries occurred as China further made their presence felt in the disputed areas in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

Recently, China made a test flight in the airstrips they made in the disputed areas, a move protested by Vietnam and the Philippines.

Asked what the Philippine government's response is to China's test flight and concerns that the area will be used by the Chinese as their military facility, Gazmin said Manila's effort to improve the territorial defense capability of the country is on going.

"We are continuously preparing our defenses to be able to defend our territory, and not directed to any country for that matter," said Gazmin.

Recently, two of the 12 fighter jets bought by the Philippines in South Korea arrived in the country, with the Department of National Defense allocating millions arm them.

Aside from military modernization, Gazmin said they are continuously pushing for the passage of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the United States even if its constitutionality is yet to be decided by the Supreme Court.

08 January 2016 Malaya The National Newspaper Page: B6

PH, US to hold '2+2' meet

BY VICTOR REYES AND JP LOPEZ

DEFENSE Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario will meet their US counterparts next week, with the South China Sea dispute as potential top agenda.

Gazmin said the "2 + 2" meeting with US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and US Secretary of State John Kerry will take place on Tuesday in Washington.

"That's my speculation, that might be one of the subject matters," said Gazmin. He said he has yet to see the meeting's agenda though the meeting had been planned long ago.

Gazmin said the passage of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which allows the US military to preposition forces and assets in the Philippines, is a common concern for the two governments but did not say if the agreement will be discussed in the meeting.

The two governments signed EDCA in April 2014. It's implementation was however put on hold, pending a Supreme Court decision on the petitions lodged by various groups on the constitutionality of the agreement.

Gazmin described as an "aggressive" act China's recent test flight on its newly-established runway at the Fiery Cross Reef, one of the seven reefs in the South China Sea where the Chinese had conducted land reclamation.

Gazmin said it was early to judge the Aquino administration in its approach in the South China Sea dispute amid the test flight.

He asked the public to wait for the decision of the international arbitral court on the case lodged by government against China's nine-dash-line claim.

In a separate interview also in Camp Aguinaldo, AFP Western Command chief Vice Adm. Alexander Lopez said China had completed land reclamation in four reefs, referring to Cuarteron, Gaven, Johnson South, and McKennan reefs.

Lopez said China's land reclamations are still ongoing in three other reefs, namely Fiery Cross, Mischief and Subi reefs. He said the Chinese are still putting up "vertical" structures and facilities in the artificial islands.

At the Department of Foreigh Affairs, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario said a diplomatic protest is being readied over two successive test flights undertaken by China over the Fiery Cross Reef.

Del Rosario and visiting British Foreign Minister Philip Hammond expressed concern over the "aggressive moves" of China to assert its military control over the West Philippine Sea.

"We are very concerned about the fact that China had already flown their flights to Fiery Cross Reef and we are also concerned that there are plans to do more," Del Rosario said in a joint press conference with Hammond.

China has said its test flights would determine if the newly-built air strip adheres to civil aviation standards.

The aircraft took off from the Meilan Airport of Haikou, capital of Hainan Province, at 10:21 a.m. and landed at the airfield on Kagitingan Reef of the Kalayaan group of islands at 10:46 a.m. China calls the reef Yongshu Jiao.

06 January 2016 The Manila Times Page: A2

Sea, air freedoms non-negotiable – UK

BRITISH Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond on Thursday said any attempt to restrict air and sea travel in the disputed West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) would be viewed as a "red flag."

China said it landed three planes over Fiery Cross Reef in recent days, prompting protests from rival claimants Vietnam and the Philippines, and raising fears it could impose military controls in the area.

"Freedom of navigation and overflight are non-negotiable. They are red flags for us," Hammond told a joint news conference with his Filipino counterpart, Albert del Rosario, in Manila.

Hammond, whose Manila visit followed a trip to China, did not elaborate on what action would be taken if the "red flag" was raised, other than to say Britain would continue to assert its right to sail in the area.

Del Rosario said he was worried that, with the test flights, China was laying the groundwork for the declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), similar to the one it declared in the East China Sea that riled Japan.

"If this is not challenged, China will take the position that the ADIZ could be imposed and whether this is done in terms of a de facto basis or whether it is official, this will be deemed as unacceptable to us," he added.

Vietnam, another claimant in the South China Sea, has also condemned the test flights as a violation of its sovereignty.

China has alarmed its rivals with its massive reclamation and construction of facilities on disputed reefs.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying last Saturday said after announcing the first test flight that it was "civilian" in nature.

The Philippines has asked a United Nations-backed tribunal to void China's claim over almost the entire South China Sea.

It expects a decision this year.

China did not participate in the arbitration hearings at The Hague as it maintained that sea disputes should be resolved bilaterally.

"Win or lose, we will abide by the rule of law and we expect China to do the same," Del Rosario said.

Hammond said Britain will not take sides on the dispute but appealed to claimants to resolve their differences under international law.

"We recognize the tribunal and we will recognize the decision of the tribunal," he added.

During his visit, Hammond will meet with President Benigno Aquino 3rd to discuss growing strategic partnership between the UK and the Philippines as global and regional challenges threaten security and prosperity, including global efforts to tackle extremism.

He will also meet Filipino business leaders to discuss the Asean economic community and the opportunities and challenges in boosting trade and investment on both sides. **AFP**

VIP Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario welcomes United Kingdom Foreign Minister Philip Hammond at the Department of Foreign Affairs. PHOTO BY CESAR DANCEL

08 January 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

UN to punish NoKor

Security Council calls Pyongyang's nuke test a threat to int'l peace, security

UNITED NATIONS (AFP/PNA/Xinhua) – The United Nations (UN) Security Council agreed Wednesday to roll out new punitive measures against North Korea (NoKor) after its shock announcement of a hydrogen bomb test triggered global concern and condemnation.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday called the nuclear test conducted by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) "deeply troubling (and) profoundly destabilizing" while members ▶2

of the UN Security Council called it "a clear threat to international peace and security" after an urgent meeting.

Although officials and experts were highly skeptical of the claim it was a sophisticated H-bomb, the latest test provided unnerving proof – if proof were still needed – of North Korea's commitment to developing an advanced nuclear weapons capability.

With backing from China, Pyongyang's sole major ally, the 15-member council strongly condemned the test and said it would begin work on a new UN draft resolution that would contain "further significant measures."

UN diplomats confirmed that talks were under way on strengthening several sets of sanctions that have been imposed on secretive North Korea since it first tested an atomic device in 2006.

"I demand the DPRK cease any further nuclear activities," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, echoing international condemnation of the test voiced not just by the North's traditional adversaries like the United States and South Korea, but also allies like China.

The censure and sanctions threats had a familiar ring, given similar outrage that greeted the North's previous tests in 2002, 2009 and 2013, and some voices stressed the need to find a strategy that combined coercion with negotiation.

Time to engage?

"A priority must be to find ways to both further pressure North Korea to limit its nuclear weapons capabilities and engage it diplomatically," said

David Albright, president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security.

But in South Korea, the response was uncompromising, with President Park Geun-Hye calling for a strong international response to what she called a "grave provocation."

On Thursday, Defense Minister Han Min-Koo pledged that Pyongyang would "pay the price" for its latest provocation.

In a phone call with his US counterpart Ashton Carter, Han said the two sides had agreed to work on customized deterrent strategies and to push ahead with annual joint military drills that Pyongyang regularly condemns as rehearsals for invasion.

In announcing that it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb, North Korea said it had "joined the rank of advanced nuclear states" like Russia, France and the United States that also boast thermonuclear devices.

The order to test was personally signed by leader Kim Jong-Un, with a handwritten message to begin 2016 with the "thrilling sound of the first hydrogen bomb explosion."

Acquisition of a working H-bomb – with a destructive power that dwarfs the fission bombs it has tested in the past – would represent a massive leap forward in the North's nuclear weapons capability.

Skepticism

But experts said the explosive yield from Wednesday's test – initially estimated at between six and nine kilotons – was far too small.

"The initial analysis that has been conducted... is not consistent with North Korea's claim of a successful hydrogen bomb test," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said.

"There is nothing that has occurred in the last 24 hours that has caused the United States government to change our assessment of North Korea's technical and military capabilities."

After meeting behind closed doors, the UN Security Council "strongly condemned" the underground test and described it as a "clear threat to international peace and security."

US Ambassador Samantha Power called for a "tough, comprehensive and credible package of new sanctions" to make clear to Pyongyang that there are "real consequences" to its actions.

Japanese Ambassador Motohide Yoshikawa said he will be pushing for "a series of measures under chapter 7" of the UN charter, which provides for enforceable sanctions.

Spotlight on China

All eyes at the UN will now be on China, a veto-wielding council member, to see just how far it will go in tightening the sanctions grip on its recalcitrant neighbor.

While Beijing has restrained US-led allies from stronger action against Pyongyang in the past, it has shown increasing frustration with its refusal to suspend testing.

But China is unlikely to take strong action in response to North Korea's claimed test of a hydrogen bomb, according to experts who say Beijing prefers the devil it knows to the uncertainty that could follow a confrontation.

07 January 2016 THE PHILIPPINE STAR Page: 9

'China should be challenged on flights to island'

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The Philippines denounced yesterday Chinese test flights to an artificial island in the disputed South China Sea, warning that if China is not challenged it will likely impose an "unacceptable" air defense zone over the area.

China landed two test flights on an island it has built in the South China Sea on Wednesday, four days after its first landing on the 3,000-meter runway on a reef in the Spratly Islands.

"We're very concerned about the fact that China had already flown their flights to Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef and we're also concerned that there are plans to do more," Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario told a news conference.

"We believe that the other concern we have is that if this is to happen and if this is not challenged, we'll have a situation where China will take the position that an air defense identification zone (ADIZ) could be imposed, whether this is done in terms of a de facto basis or whether it is official. Of course this would be deemed as unacceptable to us," he said.

China declared an ADIZ over the East China Sea in 2013, where it has overlapping claims with Japan. The United States criticized it as dangerous and provocative.

Under the ADIZ, all aircraft are supposed to report flight plans to Chinese authorities, maintain radio contact and reply promptly to identification inquiries. US, Japanese and South Korean military aircraft have breached the zone without informing China.

Del Rosario said the Philippines would protest to China about its flights.

"These are provocative actions which we need to think about and we need to take positions on," he said.

China claims almost the whole of the South China Sea, through which more than $5 trillion of world trade passes every year, and has been increasingly assertive in staking its claim.

Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan and the Philippines have rival claims to parts of the sea, which is believed to have rich deposits of oil and gas.

The runway at the Kagitingan Reef is one of three China has been building for more than a year by dredging sand up onto reefs and atolls.

The US has criticized China's construction of the islands and worries that it plans to use them for military purposes. China says it has no hostile intent.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said freedom of navigation and overflights were non-negotiable.

"They are the red line for us," Hammond told the same news conference with Del Rosario in his visit in the Philippines as part of a three-country tour of Asia that included China.

"We, as an international maritime and trading nation, enjoy freedom of navigation and overflights in the South China Sea. We expect to continue to exercise those rights," Hammond said.

Hammond, whose Manila visit followed a trip to China, did not elaborate on what action would be taken if the "red flag" was raised, other than to say Britain would continue to assert its right to sail in the area.

"We've been very clear throughout that we don't take any position on the competing claims but we do believe that disputes of this nature should be resolved in accordance with established principles of international law and Britain will recognize the decision of the tribunal," Hammond said, referring to the case filed by the Philippines before the UN Arbitral Tribunal questioning China's assertion over some of the disputed islands in the South China Sea.

Diplomatic protest

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Monday the Philippines intends to file a diplomatic protest against China over the test flight over Kagitingan Reef.

Manila also accused Beijing of raising tensions anew in the South China Sea.

Vietnam also protested China's action, saying it is a serious infringement of the sovereignty of Vietnam on the Spratly Islands and asked China not to repeat the flight.

Japan also expressed concern over China's test flight on a newly built airfield on reclaimed land.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said such acts "don't contribute to the peaceful settlement of the dispute" and "should be avoided."

China rejected Vietnam's protest over the flight test on a new airstrip on the man-made island in the South China Sea, saying it is part of China's territory.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said the flight is to test whether the airfield facilities in the artificial island can meet civil aviation standards.

The Philippines has asked a United Nations-backed tribunal to void China's claim over almost the entire South China Sea. It expects a decision this year.

China did not participate in the arbitration hearings at The Hague as it maintained that sea disputes should be resolved bilaterally.

"Win or lose, we will abide by the rule of law and we expect China to do the same," Del Rosario said.

Hammond, who was in Beijing for a two-day official visit before he traveled to Manila, emphasized that freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea are "non-negotiable" for the UK.

"I just came from Beijing and we had this discussion in Beijing. I think you're probably right that China has rejected this process. It doesn't recognize the process," Hammond said.

Del Rosario and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin are scheduled to meet their counterparts in the US to discuss the prevailing regional concerns this weekend.

Gazmin said they would be meeting with US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and US Secretary of State John Kerry.

"We will talk about our bilateral relations, to enhance our bilateral relations and probably one of the subject matters would be the South China Sea," Gazmin said.

High on the agenda at the 2+2 meeting is the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which allows the return of US troops on increased rotation basis and the storage of logistics in the country.

– Reuters, Jaime Laude

06 January 2016

STAR

Page: 3

158 Pinoys rescued near Sabah

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Some 158 Filipinos, including 12 injured victims, were rescued Wednesday off an island near Sabah after a Malaysian vessel sank last Wednesday, according to a security official.

Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said the victims were on board the *M/V Juhari*, a Malaysian-registered vessel, when it sank at about 8:30 p.m.

A report from their Malaysian counterpart said the vessel left Bongao, Tawi-Tawi bound for Semporna, Sabah when it accidentally rammed a barge and sank near Bum-bum.

Tan said Malaysian authorities rescued all 158 passengers after receiving distress calls.

According to Tan, there was no reported fatality in the mishap, but 12 of the victims were injured and brought to the Semporna hospital for treatment.

ONLINE NEWS

08 JANUARY 2016

www.philstar.com

DND reminds soldiers to be apolitical during May polls

By Alexis Romero

MANILA, Philippines - Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin on Thursday reminded soldiers to remain apolitical a month before the campaign period for the 2016 polls starts.

In a speech delivered before the military's New Year's call in Camp Aguinaldo, Gazmin noted that being nonpartisan is part of their mandate.

"As guardians of democracy, we must remain apolitical and dedicated to our mandate, as it is the price we pay for our sworn duty," Gazmin said.

"We resolve to continue to build upon our accomplishments, and work for the professionalization of our bureaus, agencies, units and offices," he added.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri said soldiers who engage in partisan politics would be punished.

"Those who will be involved in partisan politics will have to face the consequences of their actions. We are serious on that and we don't want anyone, any soldier, airman, sailor or marine to be involved in any partisan politics this coming elections," Iriberri said.

"This has been my marching order in all the units that I visited and I have also emphasized the punishment for those who will violate that policy," he added.

Military officials previously said that soldiers who side with candidates or political groups would be discharged from the service.

Some military officials have been tagged in previous controversies about alleged election rigging.

In 2005, some generals were accused of manipulating the 2004 poll results after their names were mentioned in the infamous "Hello Garci" recordings.

The audio files allegedly detailed the mechanism to rig the vote canvassing to ensure the victory of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The so-called Garci tapes contained wiretapped conversations between a woman believed to be Arroyo and a poll official believed to be then Commission on Elections commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

The woman was asking the election official if she could win by more than one million votes.

Meanwhile, Iriberri lauded his troops for their accomplishments last year and vowed to work to ensure a peaceful 2016 elections.

"We have emerged victorious amidst challenges that helped shape us into a better organization. The commitment and sacrifice of our soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines that made these possible gave us very good reasons to welcome the year 2016 with high hopes," the military chief said.

"For this year we are determined to continue to win the peace and protect the gains that have been made, we just also dedicate our energies and efforts to ensure a peaceful electoral exercise come may 2016," he added.

Iriberri said the task of protecting the Filipinos and the state was "noble" but "daunting."

"There is even more that we must get done in 2016. Our record is solid, our hopes are high, and our force is strong. Let us stay focused on our organizational and operational target, pouring hearth and soul into doing our duty as proud and capable members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines," he said.

www.inquirer.net

Gazmin reminds military personnel to remain apolitical

By: Frances Mangosing

With the next presidential elections a few months away, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin reminded military personnel to remain apolitical as part of their duty.

"2016 will bring forth new challenges, and we will continue to make these challenges. As guardians of democracy, we must remain apolitical and dedicated to our mandate as it is the price we pay for our own duty," he told officers present at the AFP-DND New Year's Call at Camp Aguinaldo on Thursday.

It was also his last New Year's Call as defense chief.

During the 2004 elections, high-ranking military officers allegedly played a role in rigging votes in favor of former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"That's not during our time so that's why we're reminding them of their responsibility to be apolitical," Gazmin said.

He said soldiers should not allow themselves to be used by political parties or politicians as the start of the official campaign period is on February 9.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri, meanwhile, is also hopeful for peaceful elections in May.

"For this year, we are determined to continue to win the peace and protect the gains that have been made; we just also dedicate our energies and efforts to ensure a peaceful electoral exercise come may 2016," he said in his speech.

www.pna.gov.ph

DND to acquire 7,000 rounds of 25mm HEI-T

The Department of National Defense (DND) is in the market for 7,000 rounds of 25mm high-explosive incendiary-tracer (HEI-T).

This project, according to a bid bulletin published at the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System, has a budget of PHP64,610,000 which will be sourced from "FY 2015 General Appropriations" and "Philippine Army Appropriation CY 2015".

The 25mm HEI-T round is the ammunition used to arm the PA's 25mm automatic cannons.

Delivery of the items is required within 180 calendar days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed.

Bidders should have completed, within the last five years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a single largest similar completed contract equivalent to at least 25 percent of the contract price.

The DND Bids and Awards Committee will hold a pre-bid conference on Jan. 15, at 10:00 a.m. at its BAC Conference Room, Basement, DND Building, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Opening of bids is set on Jan. 28, 10:00 a.m. at the same venue.

www.pna.gov.ph

Great strides made in AFP modernization - Iriberri

Great strides have been made in the military's modernization, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Hernando DCA Iriberri said during his New Year's call speech Thursday.

The event took place at the Commissioned Officers' Club in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

New Year's call is the annual visit of ranking military officials and their wives to the incumbent AFP chief.

"The year 2015 has been a memorable year for the entire AFP as we marked 80 good years, we made good on many of our goals, our accomplishments have made the difference in the communities we serve, our men and women have been recognized for their dedication and heroism, our transformation journey continues to gain a momentum and in results we have taken great strides in (the) modernization our force(s), " Iriberri said.

He was referring to the acquisition of many new assets for the AFP which include the South Korean-made FA-50PHs, AgustaWestland attack AW-109E helicopters, Bell 205 combat utility helicopters, Airbus Military C-295 transport aircraft, new M-4 rifles and refurbished armored personnel carriers.

Having these assets on hand will greatly enhance the capability of the AFP to defend and protect the country's vast territories.

And in the same vein, the AFP has also emerged victorious in many security challenges which also helped in turning the military into a better organization, he added.

Iriberri stressed this was made possible by the many sacrifices of our soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines.

"(These sacrifices) gave us very good reasons to welcome the year 2016 with high hopes," the AFP chief added.

"Hence for this year, we are determined to continue to win the peace and protect the gains that have been made, we just also dedicate our energies and efforts to ensure a peaceful electoral exercise come may 2016, and last but not the least we must sustain the momentum of transformation and innovation," Iriberri concluded.

www.bomboradyo.com

'AFP 'di worried sa bagong ebidensiya kaugnay sa Mamasapano encounter'
By Bombo Anne Soberano

Hindi nababahala ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) kaugnay sa may bagong ebidensiyang ilalabas kaugnay sa madugong enkwentro sa Mamasapano encounter na ikinasawi ng 44 na miyembro ng SAF troopers.

Ayon kay AFP Chief of Staff General Hernando Iriberri na kanila ng ipinauubaya ang wisdom ng imbestigasyon sa senado at siniguro ang kanilang kooperasyon at suporta sa nasabing pagdinig.

Aniya, sa ngayon wala pang natatanggap na subpoena o imbistasyon ang AFP maging ang ilang personalinad ng militar para dumalo sa nasabing pagdinig na nakatakda sa January 25,2016 kasabay sa paggunita ng unang taong anibersaryo ng Mamasapano encounter.

Tumanggi namang mag komento ni Iriberri kaugnay sa umanoy bagong ebidensiya, aniya mas mabuti hintayin na lamang ilabas ito.

Pahayag ni chief of staff na nagbigay na ang AFP ng pahayag para sa kanilang panig kaugnay sa Mamasapano incident.

Pagbibigay-diin nito na karapatan ng senado na buksan muli ang imbestigasyon dahil ini-exercise lamang nito ang kanilang legislative power.

Sinabi ni chief of staff na walang dahilan para sila ay maging worried kaugnay sa may bagong ilalabas na ebidensiya, aniya nagbigay na ang mga commanders ng kanilang pahayag o testimonies.

Tiniyak ni Iriberri na ang militar ay isang apolitical party at kailanman hindi ito magpagamit sa anumang political party.
Giit nito na gagawin ng militar ang kanilang trabaho.

Samantala, tiniyak naman ng pambansang pulisya na hindi maaapektuhan ang kanilang relasyon sa militar ngayong bubuksan muli ang imbestigasyon ng Mamasapano encounter na naging dahilan sa pagkakaroon ng lamat ng kanilang relasyon noon na umabot pa sa punto na nagbatuhan pa ang mga ito ng akusasyon dahil sa kawalan ng koordinasyon.

www.dwdd.com.ph

INTENSE OPERATIONS // AFP scores anew in Sulu vs ASG

By: Alvin Santiago

SULU (DWDD) – The Armed Forces of the Philippines, particularly troops from Joint Task Group Sulu, intensified its focused military operation and have scored anew against the bandit group Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) recovering firearms and other equipment in Patikul town, Sulu yesterday afternoon.

According to Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, Joint Task Group Sulu commander, his men were conducting operations against ASG bandits at Sitio Tambang, Barangay Timpook, Patikul when they chanced upon a group of bandits resulting in an undetermined number of the bandits killed and wounded while no losses were reported among government troops.

Among the items seized an M-14 automatic rifle and a magazine containing 19 rounds; an empty M-16 magazine; three ICOM VHF transceivers; a bandolier, one pair of binoculars, and a laser red dot (vertical hand grip) for a M-4 rifle.

BGen Arrojado added that pursuit operations are still ongoing. JTGS / MCAG