

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

01 April 2017

Saturday

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 1 2017 | SATURDAY

EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (As of 5:00 PM - Mar. 31, 2017)

LAOAG CITY 23 - 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO CITY 22 - 32 °C
BAGUIO CITY 15 - 24 °C
SBMA/CLARK 23 - 34 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 23 - 29 °C
METRO MANILA 23 - 33 °C
LEGAZPI CITY 25 - 31 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 26 - 31 °C
TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 28 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 32 °C
METRO CEBU 24 - 29 °C
GAGAYAN DE ORO 23 - 29 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 30 °C
METRO DAVAO 24 - 32 °C

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:52 AM	6:08 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
9:18 AM	10:23 PM
NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
MAR 28 10:55 PM	APR 4 2:39 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
8:16 PM	12:37 PM
0.66 Meter	0.91 Meter

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

	APR 2	APR 3	APR 4	APR 5
METRO MANILA	24 - 33 °C	23 - 32 °C	19 - 28 °C	19 - 29 °C
TAGAYTAY			19 - 28 °C	19 - 29 °C
TACLOBAN			24 - 29 °C	23 - 28 °C
TUGUEGARAO	21 - 31 °C	22 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 30 °C
LEGAZPI			24 - 31 °C	24 - 30 °C
GAGAYAN DE ORO			23 - 29 °C	24 - 30 °C
LAOAG	23 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA			25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
METRO DAVAO			24 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 24 °C	16 - 25 °C	25 - 30 °C	25 - 29 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD			25 - 30 °C	25 - 29 °C
ZAMBOANGA			24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	23 - 29 °C	23 - 26 °C
METRO CEBU			23 - 29 °C	23 - 26 °C

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10 NPA rebels, 2 soldiers killed in Quezon clash

By **CHRISTINA MENDEZ**
and **JAIME LAUDE**

More than two hours of fighting between the military and the New People's Army (NPA) in General Nakar town in Quezon province left at least 10 rebels and two soldiers dead Thursday.

Sergeant Franklin Peralta and Corporal Ruben Pauig were injured and airlifted to the AFP Medical Center in Quezon City for treatment.

Maj. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, said the clash started at around 2 p.m. at Sitio Pahimunan in Barangay Lumutan after members of the 80th Infantry Battalion engaged around 30 NPA rebels.

Of the 10 rebels, two were women. They all have yet to be identified.

The government lost Sergeants Nelson Zamora and Bernard Rosete.

In General Santos City, the rebel group torched two hauling trucks, a motorcycle and building of Amadeo Phela Resources, a banana export firm.

Over in Eastern Visayas, the Army lost an undetermined

number of firearms after the NPA attacked and overran an outpost in Northern Samar also the other day.

Davao Oriental also reported a 20-minute skirmish in Barangay Tagbinunga, Mati City that left one rebel dead and two soldiers wounded.

In Manila, the NPA held a lightning rally yesterday at the historic Mendiola bridge, shouting slogans and encouraging the youth to join the revolution with spokesperson Liliosa Sumilang saying they are getting stronger because of the support from the youth sector.

But even when the NPA is conducting more attacks in a bid to show its strength, the Philippine government still hopes to reach an agreement for a bilateral ceasefire in the fourth round of peace talks in the Netherlands set to start next week.

Chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III said President Duterte and National Democratic Front emissary Fidel Agcaoili are both interested in obtaining a bilateral ceasefire to end the hostilities.

"The first agenda item that

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Members of the Communist Party of the Philippines-Metro Manila march along Recto Avenue in Manila to celebrate the 2nd CPP Congress and urge the people to join the New People's Army.

EDDO GUMBAN

we will tackle starting April 2 will be the issue of a bilateral ceasefire agreement. So very close, I think we should concentrate on this more important agreement because this is where we will be assured of the

lowering or ending of hostilities," Bello said.

A bilateral ceasefire would give the government assurance on the parameters and terms of reference of the agreement.

Although optimistic, Bello

said both government and communist negotiating panels would be facing difficult issues, including forced collection of revolutionary taxes and definition of buffer zones.

The government panel is

composed of former secretary Nani Braganza, former commissioner Rene Sarmiento, former regional state prosecutor Antonio Arellano and lawyer Angging Librado – a barangay chairman.

Bello said both groups would also tackle the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) – seen as the most important document that aims to resolve the historical and structural inequalities in Philippine society.

He described CASER as the heart and soul of the peace process as it would tackle issues of social justice, extreme poverty of people, corruption in government and injustice.

Unless these root issues are addressed, he added, the fighting would continue in the country as he gave assurance that the military would keep to its role of protecting the nation as the NPA tries to intensify its campaign so it could negotiate from a position of strength during the talks. – With Ed Amoroso, Jose Rodel Clapano, Rey Galupo, Gerry Lee Gorit, John Unson, John Paul Jubelag

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INQUIRER

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MISTAKEN FOR ABUS?

SOLDIERS BLAMED FOR DEATHS OF BASILAN PLANTATION WORKERS

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Residents of a village in Mohammad Ajul town in Basilan province have blamed government soldiers for the deaths of three rubber plantation workers, two of them minors, whose bodies were hastily dumped in a grave there on Sunday.

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez, commander of the Western Mindanao Command, promised to look into allegations that soldiers from the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion shot and killed cousins Radzmie, 14; Jemar, 16; and Gaggil, 20, all surnamed Jama.

Villagers, who asked not to be identified due to security concerns, said the victims could have been mistaken for Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Witnesses later led the victims' families to their relatives' gravesite. On Monday, members of the Jama family posted photos of the victims on Facebook and sought help so soldiers allegedly behind their deaths could be punished.

Galvez said he did not receive a report of an encounter in Candiis. He also said he was not aware of a military operation there on Sunday.

"I heard there was a group complaining about the supposed incident in Candiis. We will look into this (complaint)," he said.

Galvez said as far as he knew, the only engagement in Basilan on Sunday took place on Mt. Matangal, not in Candiis.

Amirah Lidasan of the Moro organization, Suara Bangsamoro, said civilian deaths in military operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and Sulu provinces should be investigated.

"Again, based on unfounded accusations and poor intelligence reports, civilians, including minors, are killed in military operations," she said.

Lidasan said the victims of the Candiis incident added to the growing list of civilians allegedly killed by soldiers.

—JULIE ALIPALA INQ

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INQUIRER

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18 die in Quezon, Mindoro clashes

Firefights between gov't troops, NPA erupt days before peace talks resume

At least 15 communist rebels and three government soldiers were killed in separate clashes in Quezon and Oriental Mindoro provinces on Thursday, military and police reports said.

Also on Thursday, a mother and her three daughters were wounded when New People's Army (NPA) rebels attacked a military detachment in Silvino Lobos town in Northern Samar.

The clashes erupted a day after the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), celebrated its 48th founding anniversary. These also happened as the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines were preparing to resume peace negotiations in The Netherlands next week.

In Quezon, Lt. Col. Randolph Cabangbang, commander of the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion in the northern section of the province, said two government soldiers were killed and three others were wounded after a firefight with NPA rebels in

General Nakar town.

Cabangbang said about 40 Army soldiers were on combat patrol at 2 p.m. on Thursday when they clashed with more than 30 NPA rebels in Barangay Lumutan. The firefight went on for two hours.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesperson, said the encounter was initiated by the military.

Ten rebels were killed, two of them believed to be women fighters, he said.

Cabangbang said the military deployed K-9 units to find out where the rebels buried their dead.

The remains of the two soldiers were taken to a funeral parlor in Tanay town in Rizal province.

Two of the wounded soldiers were taken to the V. Luna military hospital in Quezon City.

In Oriental Mindoro, military operations continued on Friday after the four-hour gun-battle between government sol-

diers and rebels in Bulalacao town that left six dead.

Army Capt. Chris Cuenca of the Philippine Army's 203rd Brigade said at least five NPA rebels were killed in the clash that started at 8 a.m. on Thursday.

Military reports said a soldier was killed, but his identity was withheld pending the family's permission to release his name.

Army officials believed the NPA rebels had planned to attack a military detachment in Barangay Benli, a Mangyan community, in Bulalacao. Fighting erupted about 3 kilometers from the detachment.

Padilla said the NPA attacks that occurred after the CPP agreed to return to the negotiating table might be a sign that its leadership was losing control of its forces on the ground.

The attacks, he said, could also be part of the insurgents' projection of power, so they could "negotiate from a position of strength."

In Northern Samar province,

a 31-year-old mother and her three daughters were wounded after their house was hit by a bomb after NPA rebels attacked a military detachment in Silvino Lobos town on Thursday.

Genalyn Tulin and her daughters—Ruby Jean, 2; Danica, 10; and Jujilyn, 12—had shrapnel wounds and were taken to the Northern Samar Provincial Hospital in the capital town of Catarman.

Tulin said they were sleeping in their house, which was a few meters away from the detachment, at 4 a.m. when they were awakened by bursts of gunfire.

She said they scampered for safety but fragments of the bomb hit her and her children.

In Manila, nearly 100 CPP members and supporters, most wearing red shirts with red kerchiefs over their faces, marched on Friday near Malacañang in a show of force before Sunday's resumption of peace talks with the government. —DELFIN T. MAL-LARI JR., MARICAR CINCO, RACHEL ARNAIZ, PHILIP C. TUBEZA AND AP INQ

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2 soldiers hurt in another Maguindanao bomb attack

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao - Two infantrymen were slightly injured in a clash with outlawed armed men in Maguindanao whom they caught laying down an improvised explosive device yesterday morning, the Army here said.

Capt. John Arvin Encinas, speaking for the 6th Infantry "Kampilan" Division, said the soldiers only sustained minor injuries and are out of danger.

"Pursuit operation is going on in two Maguindanao towns," Encinas said.

He said elements of the 40th Infantry Battalion were conducting road security patrol in the boundary of Shariff Aguak and Shariff Saydona at around 6 a.m. Friday when they saw outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic

Freedom Fighters (BIFF) a few meters away from the troops' location.

While verifying what the men were doing at the roadside, the soldiers were fired upon by about 15 armed men hiding in the bushes. It triggered a 20-minute clash between 14 soldiers and about 15 armed men.

Encinas declined to reveal the number of BIFF casualties in the skirmishes.

On Thursday morning, Army Sgt. Michael Mabezza, driver of KM450 military truck and member of the 38th Infantry Battalion, was injured when the BIFF set off a roadside bomb in Barangay Labu-Labu, Datu Hofer town in Maguindanao. **PNA**

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Gov't won't declare own ceasefire

By **Leila B. Salaverria**
@LeilasINQ

The government will not declare a unilateral ceasefire ahead of the resumption of peace talks with communist rebels next week, peace panel chair Silvestre Bello III said.

Bello said what President Duterte wants is a bilateral ceasefire agreement that has a greater chance of leading to the silencing of guns between the two warring sides.

"Right now, there is no rea-

son to declare a unilateral ceasefire because our President is more interested in obtaining a bilateral ceasefire agreement," Bello told a press briefing in Malacañang.

"He only has one marching order: get me a ceasefire agreement," he added.

With no ceasefire in place, military operations will be normal, he said.

"They have to do their work as protectors of our people, maintain peace and order, everything will be like that. There

would be no activities beyond that," he said.

Since the government won't declare a unilateral ceasefire, he does not see the communist rebels pushing through with their earlier plan to declare their own ceasefire.

The Communist Party of the Philippines had planned to declare a unilateral ceasefire no later than Friday and had expected the government to do the same.

But Bello does not consider the absence of a government ceasefire as an obstacle to the ne-

gotiations, which he said would focus on forging a mutual deal with the communists to silence their arms.

"I think we should concentrate more on this more important agreement because this is where we will be assured of the lowering or ending of hostilities," he added.

The goal is to come up with the bilateral ceasefire agreement during the talks in the Netherlands next week, which would have to hurdle the contentious issues of buffer zones

and the communist rebels' collection of revolutionary taxes, he said.

Another key component to the success of the deal is the choice of the referee.

The government had been under the impression that the Norwegian government would be the third party facilitator, but it was now reluctant to take on the role because of its experience as referee for the peace process between the Colombian government and the FARC rebels, said Bello.

For the Philippine peace talks,

he said Switzerland, Canada, Australia and other countries he did not name were willing to take on the role as third party facilitator, he said.

Bello also said the President's earlier demand for the communist rebels to release their hostages and stop collecting revolutionary taxes were not conditions, but just possible terms in the bilateral ceasefire agreement.

"The President is aware that in these talks, we are governed by the Hague Joint Declaration," he added. INQ

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Make or break talks

Gov't, NDF panels eye bilateral truce as they resume negotiations

By ROCKY S. NAZARENO
and ANTONIO COLINA IV

No less than a bilateral ceasefire agreement – a truce that will truly hold and be binding for both sides – will be at the top of the agenda when the Philippine Government (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) return to the negotiating table tomorrow (April 2) at the Radisson Blu Palace Hotel in the seaside town of Noordwijk in The Netherlands.

While neither side has declared a unilateral ceasefire as agreed upon in the backchannel talks in Utrecht, The Netherlands, last March 10-11, there have been

some forms of goodwill that have been exchanged.

Yesterday, GRP Peace Panel chairman Silvestre Bello III announced that NDF consultant Ariel Arbitrario, who was arrested and was detained at the Compostela Valley Provincial Jail after the peace talks bogged down last February, was already released and had, in fact, left for Noordwijk Thursday night.

The NDF had also said that the New People's Army (NPA), the local communist movement's armed component, would order a unilateral ceasefire before March 31.

But Bello said the government may not be inclined to declare its own unilateral ceasefire just yet.

The government would rather forge a bilateral ceasefire pact with the communist rebels, Bello said.

"Right now, there is no reason to declare a unilateral ceasefire because our President is more interested in obtaining a bilateral ceasefire agreement," Bello said in a Palace press briefing.

"So I don't think (the NPA) will declare (a unilateral ceasefire) if we will not declare. In fairness, the chairman of the NDF panel (Fidel Agcaoili) has been asking me that we should jointly declare a unilateral ceasefire. But if they feel that we are not prepared to declare one, then I don't think they will proceed with

►8

Make or break...

◀1

the declaration (of their own) unilateral ceasefire," he said.

"I think we should concentrate more on this more important agreement because this is where we will be assured of the lowering or ending of hostilities. At the same time, we are assured of the parameters and the terms of reference of the agreement. Kaya mas importante 'yun, mas mahalaga po 'yun," he said.

'Talk and fight'

But with no ceasefires declared, Bello admitted that the peace talks will resume "in a state of armed conflict."

As such, Bello noted that propaganda and attacks from the NPA will continue even while the talks are underway in Noordwijk.

"Incidents like that should be expected. Unless a unilateral ceasefire is declared by them, we should expect incidents like that to happen, even if the talks are ongoing," he said.

"Siyempre (Of course), we are in a negotiation. When you negotiate, you negotiate from the position of strength. Mayroon silang lakas na dapat sagutin (They have to be accountable to their forces)," Bello added.

This "talk and fight" situation has only underscored the need for both sides to reach an agreement for a bilateral ceasefire, which had been asked for by President Duterte.

Duterte had earlier said that he expected nothing less than a "signed bilateral ceasefire agreement" from the resumed peace negotiations.

It could help that Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza and NDF Senior Adviser Luis Jalandoni will be coming from England where they attended a forum earlier this week on the challenges facing Colombia, which had recently ended a long-drawn conflict with a peace agreement with PARC rebels.

In separate interviews, Dureza and Jalandoni said they were "optimistic" that the fourth round of talks could result in the signing of a first-ever bilateral ceasefire agreement in Noordwijk.

As it is, the talks under the Du-

terte administration has progressed beyond what more than 40 rounds of negotiations over five past Presidents could achieve.

The peace talks were derailed early February when both sides withdrew unilateral ceasefires that seemed to be holding since the start of the negotiations in August last year.

What pricked the fragile truce was an incident in Makilala, North Cotabato, last January 21 which resulted in the deaths of a New People's Army (NPA) rebel and eight government troops.

Ironically, the incident happened on the same day that the GRP and NDF, in the third round of the talks in Rome, Italy, hammered out a vital agreement on the supplemental guidelines for the Joint Monitoring Committee which shall oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

That proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back, as the NPA withdrew its order for a unilateral ceasefire on February 10, with the Duterte following suit as mayhem had already broken out with both sides suffering dozens of casualties in just a week's time.

So infuriated was Duterte over the escalation of attacks by the NPA that he ordered an "all-out war" against the insurgents.

But that was until back channel talks in Utrecht, The Netherlands, last March 10-11 put the negotiations back on track.

Also slated in the fourth round will be the continuing discussions on the Comprehensive Agreement on the Socio-economic Reforms (CASER), which is considered the heart and soul of the peace negotiation.

CASER addresses such contentious issues such as agrarian reform, national industrialization, and foreign policy.

There are five pillars that form the foundation of the talks, namely, CASER, CARHRIHL, the Agreements on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), Political Constitutional Reform (CAPCR),

and Cessation of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces (CACHDP).

On these, only the JASIG and CARHRIHL have been signed in previous talks.

"If we can (reach an agreement on CASER), we can almost say that we have achieved peace," Bello said.

12 killed in Quezon clash

While peace talks are about to resume, at least 10 New People's Army (NPA) rebels and two Philippine Army soldiers were killed in a two-hour firefight in General Nakar, Quezon, last Thursday.

Lt. Col. Randolph Cabangbang, commander of the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion, disclosed that two soldiers were slain while two other troopers were wounded in the encounter that happened at about 2 p.m. Thursday.

Cabangbang said his troops were scouring Sitio Pahimuan, Barangay Lumutan, General Nakar, when they encountered around 30 NPA rebels from the Narciso Antazo Aramil Command.

He said that based on information sent by the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) Regional Police Office, at least 10 rebels were killed during the heavy firefight.

The military official said the soldiers were dispatched to the area after getting information on the presence of NPA rebels.

Troops also seized from the encounter site a grenade rifle, a number of ammunitions, and empty shells.

The AFP spokesman, Air Force Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, had earlier said troops all over the country will continue operations against communist rebels in the absence of any directive from President Duterte declaring a ceasefire with the Reds.

Padilla also expressed sadness over the latest Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) directive ordering its members to step up their recruitment of educated youth and workers. He said the CPP directive runs counter to the NDF peace panel's earlier pronouncement of wanting peace to succeed through negotiations with the government. (With reports from Genalyn D. Kabling and Francis T. Wakefield)

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Cash awards, other benefits announced for killed, wounded military and police

By **CARLO A. CHAVEZ**

The government will give cash rewards of up to P500,000 and other benefits for police officers and soldiers killed or wounded in action or operations in a move aimed at boosting the morale of the country's law enforcers.

The Comprehensive Social Benefits Program (CSBP) for Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) personnel killed or wounded in action was rolled out by the Department of the Interior and Local Gov- ▶ **12**

Cash awards, other... ◀1

ernment (DILG) and the Department of National Defense (DND), in cooperation with the Office of the President (OP) and supporting agencies.

In his message at the launching of the program at the Atrium Hotel in Pasay City, DILG Secretary Ismael D. Sueno called on soldiers and policemen to be brave in carrying out their duties from the barangay level upwards.

"As long as you follow the rule of law, and follow the oath of your office, I repeat what the President has said: 'Huwag kayong matakot, I will support you,'" Sueno said.

Special Finance Assistance (SFA)

will be granted to those killed in action or operations in the amount of P500,000. Those wounded in action or operation with total permanent physical disability will get P250,000. Those with major and minor injuries will get P100,000.

There will also be shelter assistance to the families of those killed and those wounded with total permanent physical disability – P450,000; health care assistance through coverage of premiums of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) at P2,400 a year; maintenance medicines provided by the Department of Health for qualified beneficiaries of those killed or

wounded; and educational assistance through annual stipends for up to two children or other beneficiaries of those killed or wounded with total permanent physical disability.

Aiding in the implementation of the new aid program the KIA/WIA One-Stop Assistance Program Management Office at the DILG-Napolcom Center.

Sueno said that in addition, the President intends to start a trust fund for those killed and wounded in action or operation beginning at P1 billion, with more added each year.

"The President knows the risks these military and police personnel take and the sacrifices that they have given for us; so he wants to give back to the spouses and the children," he added.

Including 22 ranking officials of the communist movement.

Shortly after terminating the government unilateral ceasefire, Rody called the NPA a terrorist group during the wake of two soldiers slain in an ambush by communist guerillas and thereafter ordered an all-out war against the rebels.

This happened after the communist movement found new momentum through a rebuilding that involved new faces in its hierarchy and stepped up recruitment in the countryside using the unilateral ceasefires in both government and the military as shield.

The massive recruitment was known to the government but the unilateral truce prevented the military from stopping the communist operations.

With the resumption of military operations and the all-out war order, the NPA was back on the defensive and its political parent CPP, is now offering to declare a unilateral ceasefire.

Rody who has learned fast from experience the past nine months of dealing with the communist movement, is not immediately reciprocating, saying that he wants a bilateral ceasefire put in paper instead.

Last Wednesday, Rody said in a speech in Oriental Mindoro said he can even grant amnesty to all political prisoners if the bilateral ceasefire is signed.

Rody is ratcheting up pressure on the CPP ahead of the resumption of peace negotiations in the Netherlands on April 2 to 6.

The CPP that has a long history of using the negotiating table to its benefit, apparently trying to exploit Rody's desire for a peaceful resolution of the communist rebellion by consolidating its forces that apparently will be realized with the release of its cadres.

In the celebration last Wednesday of its 48th anniversary, the NPA said it had infused new blood with a new set of young members to its central committee.

The CPP added it held its historic Second Party Congress from October 24 to November 7, 2016, the first national party congress it had in five decades.

"Drawing lessons from the Party's rich history, the Second Congress presented a clearer picture of the strategy and tactics for taking advantage of the insoluble and worsening crisis of the world capitalist system, the strategic decline of US imperialism and the chronic crisis of the domestic ruling system in order to advance the protracted people's war towards complete victory," the CPP said.

Neither the CPP nor the NPA mentioned anything about a desire to make peace with the government.

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'Morong' 43 police, military officers want raps dismissed

The Sandiganbayan has postponed the arraignment of military and police officers tagged in the alleged illegal arrest of 43 health workers in Morong, Rizal in February 2010 pending the resolution of their motion to dismiss the cases.

In an 11-page joint motion filed before the seventh division of the anti-graft court, retired Lt. Gen. Jorge Segovia, retired Maj. Gen. Aurelio Baladad, Brig. Gen. Joselito Reyes, Col. Cristobal Zaragoza, Superintendents

Marion Balonglong and Allan Nobleza and Maj. Jovily Cabadang said the cases were defective in form.

"Not even the ombudsman and this honorable court can agree as to the true nature of the offenses being prosecuted," the motion read.

The respondents said the complaints against them are "duplicitous for alleging more than a single offense."

The respondents are facing eight counts each of violation

of Republic Act 7438, which defines the rights of those arrested, detained or under custodial investigation.

The cases stemmed from their alleged refusal to allow the health workers, dubbed as the "Morong 43," to confer with a lawyer. The health workers later claimed they were tortured in jail.

The health workers were suspected to be communist rebels undergoing training on explosives. – Elizabeth Marcelo

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2 warships deployed in Benham dock at Poro Point

By JUN ELIAS

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union – Two of the Philippine Navy warships deployed to Benham Rise have docked at the Poro Point seaport here to get logistical support.

The *BRP Ramon Alcaraz* and *BRP Sultan Kudarat* arrived early Thursday and are expected to go back to Benham Rise on Monday, officials said.

"We are here to fill up our logistic requirements like fuel, food and others, and are standing by for new directives from main headquarters. We are going back to Benham Rise," said Commander Jeff Rene Nadugo, the commanding officer of *Alcaraz*.

In the meantime, *Alcaraz* will be open for public viewing on Saturday and Sunday, he said.

Nadugo said they are taking their provisions from the naval forces of Northern Luzon at Poro Point.

Nadugo said the two vessels went on patrol to check

the situation in Benham Rise.

Alcaraz has started patrolling Benham Rise, the 13 million-hectare undersea region and biodiversity hot spot east of Luzon.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana had ordered the Navy to send ships to patrol Benham Rise after a Chinese survey ship was spotted in the area for three months last year.

Lorenzana said the Navy would deploy the *BRP Gregorio Velasquez* to conduct a hydrological survey of the area.

In 2009, the Philippines lodged a full territorial claim to Benham Rise with the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

The claim was granted in 2012, with Benham Rise as an extension of the Philippines' continental shelf, located some 350 nautical miles off Aurora province in the country's eastern seaboard.

Lawmakers are studying the proposal made by Sen. Sonny Angara to create the Benham Rise Development

Authority to oversee the protection and exploitation of resources in the area.

Citing scientific studies, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said the area is a rich source of methane gas hydrates that can be used for the country's future energy requirements.

"We have the talent and knowledge and skill. Academic is full of very intelligent people. The problem is we don't have the equipment and the resources to buy (research vessels)," Gatchalian told *CNN Philippines*.

He said research vessels used by China, Japan and Korea – which are considered the top countries in terms of maritime science – cost anywhere from P1.5 billion to P5 billion.

"Research really brings in knowledge and value. So if you can merge their equipment and our talent then we can jointly conduct exploration in that area," Gatchalian said.

He reiterated the Philippines has only sovereign

rights, not sovereignty, over Benham Rise. This means foreign vessels can pass through the area, or even conduct basic research, under the doctrines of freedom of navigation and innocent passage.

However, it is only the Philippines that can allow deeper exploration and exploitation of resources in the area.

During last Wednesday's hearing at the Senate, officials told lawmakers that what the Chinese research vessel did in its three-month expedition over Benham Rise last year remains a mystery.

It was also learned the vessel did not have permit to conduct research activities from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. revealed President Duterte ordered the "protection" of the resources in Benham Rise following two meetings of the Cabinet security cluster.

Former national security adviser Roilo Golez said the

country is now facing maritime security challenges on two fronts borne out of China's incursions in the West Philippine Sea and Benham Rise.

Golez pointed out Benham Rise should be protected and secured, being part of the country's maritime domain.

The former Paranaque City congressman and naval officer dismissed China's claims of innocent passage of their survey ship in the area.

The government has an obligation to secure and protect Benham Rise, being part of the country's maritime domain, he said.

"Defending Benham Rise is mandatory under Article 12, Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution. This is not an option but mandatory because the Constitution is very clear and I quote: the state shall protect the nation's marine wealth in its archipelagic waters and exclusive economic zones," Golez said.

Golez said China's maritime and territorial claim to almost

the entire South China Sea, as well as its activities in Benham Rise, formed part of Beijing's sustained power projection in the Asia-Pacific region.

This power projection has already started from Beijing's first island chain in the South China Sea and onward toward the Western Pacific where it is planning to put a second island chain.

He said these activities by Beijing are now being monitored by Japan and the US, as well as other countries in the region.

Beijing's deployment of its survey ship at Benham Rise last year could be part of its long-range construction plan of the second island chain in the Pacific, Golez said.

He said the Philippines could contribute in stabilizing the security by not only deploying naval ships to conduct maritime patrol at Benham Rise, but also sending the survey ship *BRP Gregorio Velasquez*. - With **Paolo Romero, Jaime Laude**

01 April 2017



Page: 6

E D I T O R I A L

In sheep clothing

Rody can be credited for his guile in turning the table on the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) as the government now has the upper hand in the current peace negotiations with communist groups.

The CPP was the first to withdraw its unilateral ceasefire last February citing the government's failure to live up to its commitments in the talks, including the release of some top-ranking communist cadres.

This was after the release of the Tiamzon couple, Benito and Wilma, who are the chairman and the secretary general of the CPP, respectively and captured after costly Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) operations.

The CPP and its armed wing, New People's Army (NPA) were also demanding that the government pull out the military from areas where they claim to have influence on these territories.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana rejected this, saying that the claimed NPA-influenced areas are where the extortion activities of the communist movement called revolutionary taxation were widespread.

The NPA, immediately after the CPP ended the ceasefire with the government ceasefire still up, launched attacks on military installations.

Rody shortly after lifted the unilateral truce was the first to declare during his state of the nation address (Sona) last July.

Rody showed good faith in initiating the ceasefire but it gave him little leverage power as the CPP-NPA-National Democratic Front (NDF) started to demand outrageous terms such as the release of up to 300 so-called political prisoners

including 22 ranking officials of the communist movement.

Shortly after terminating the government unilateral ceasefire, Rody called the NPA a terrorist group during the wake of two soldiers slain in an ambush by communist guerillas and thereafter ordered an all-out war against the rebels.

This happened after the communist movement found new momentum through a rebuilding that involved new faces in its hierarchy and stepped up recruitment in the countryside using the unilateral ceasefires in both government and the military as shield.

The massive recruitment was known to the government but the unilateral truce prevented the military from stopping the communist operations.

With the resumption of military operations and the all-out war order, the NPA was back on the defensive and its political parent CPP, is now offering to declare a unilateral ceasefire.

Rody who has learned fast from experience the past nine months of dealing with the communist movement, is not immediately reciprocating, saying that he wants a bilateral ceasefire put in paper instead.

Last Wednesday, Rody said in a speech in Oriental Mindoro said he can even grant amnesty to all political prisoners if the bilateral ceasefire is signed.

Rody is ratcheting up pressure on the CPP ahead of the resumption of peace negotiations in the Netherlands on April 2 to 6.

The CPP that has a long history of using the negotiating table to its benefit, apparently trying to exploit Rody's desire for a peaceful resolution of the communist rebellion by consolidating its forces that apparently will be realized with the release of its cadres.

In the celebration last Wednesday of its 48th anniversary, the NPA said it had infused new blood with a new set of young members to its central committee.

The CPP added it held its historic Second Party Congress from October 24 to November 7, 2016, the first national party congress it had in five decades.

"Drawing lessons from the Party's rich history, the Second Congress presented a clearer picture of the strategy and tactics for taking advantage of the insoluble and worsening crisis of the world capitalist system, the strategic decline of US imperialism and the chronic crisis of the domestic ruling system in order to advance the protracted people's war towards complete victory," the CPP said.

Neither the CPP nor the NPA mentioned anything about a desire to make peace with the government.

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ONLINE NEWS

01 APRIL 2017

www.dwdd.com.ph

1 NPA killed, 2 soldiers hurt in Mati encounter; 2 other NPA surrenders

Reported by Luis Claudio P. Aragon / 01 April 2017

MAWAB, COMPOSTELA VALLEY PROVINCE – Combined troops of 28th and 66th Infantry Battalions engaged in a firefight with members of the NPA in Brgy Tagbinunga, Mati City, Davao Oriental (DOR) on Thursday, March 30. Two soldiers were hurt while troops recovered the dead body of an unidentified NPA rebel while a rebel who escaped from the encounter site gave himself up to another group of soldiers. On the same day, a minor female NPA member returned to the folds of law through the 701st Infantry Brigade stationed in Sitio Magay, Brgy Don Martin Marundan, Mati City.

The soldiers engaged in a 20-minute firefight a group of 40 NPA rebels belonging to Pulang Bagani Company (PBC) 6 in Sitio Bukadan of Brgy Tagbinunga. An IED explosion injured Pfc Jouie Oliveros and Pfc Anatoly Lechoncito who both suffered shrapnel wounds. The wounded soldiers were immediately airlifted to Camp Panacan Station Hospital, Davao City while the cadaver of the NPA rebel was brought to Padilla Funeral, Mati City.

An NPA member named Ricardo R. Bisaya alias Jonas, who is from Tarragona, DOR and was part of the group encountered by the troops surrendered to 28IB at Brgy Don Salvador Lopez, Mati City a few hours after the encounter. He averred that he surrendered for fear of his life after seeing several of his comrades hit during the encounter.

Reports have also reached 28IB that a number of families from the three Barangays of Don Salvador Lopez, Buso and Tagbinunga of Mati City have evacuated into safer areas. The Local Government Unit of Mati City, police and military are closely working together to facilitate and provide the immediate needs of the affected families.

Meanwhile, in a separate report from 701st Infantry Brigade, a minor female NPA identified by her alias as Shena, 14 and medic of PBC 6 returned to the folds of law. It may be recalled that her mother Leonila appeared before the Davao City media and appealed for the NPA to return her daughter who was recruited to join the rebel group last January 2017.

Major General Rafael Valencia, 10ID commander, lauded the bravery of the soldiers, prayed for the fast recovery of the wounded soldiers and expressed his support for the peaceful resolution of the armed conflict. "The 48 years of insurgency have only brought miseries to the Filipino people," he added. "It is now time for the communists to abandon the armed struggle and pursue their political objectives through peaceful means," MGen Valencia concluded.

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www.dwdd.com.ph

UPDATE | 25 more firearms seized in continuing focused military operations in Sulu Province

By [Lui Claudio](#) | [March 31, 2017](#) | [View Comments](#)



File Photo – firearms in Capual Operations

Camp Navarro, Calarian, Zamboanga City — Soldiers of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion under the Joint Task Force Sulu seized seven more firearms following a clash with an unknown Lawless Group at Brgy Capual, Omar Municipality, Sulu Province at 2 pm yesterday (March 30, 2017).

The members of the Scout Ranger Company led by CPT Rusell Bawat, while on blocking position encountered an estimated ten (10) armed Lawless elements who engaged the soldiers in a 20-minute firefight. As a result, the lawless elements withdrew leaving behind seven firearms and assorted ammunition.

After scouring the immediate vicinity, the rangers recovered high-powered firearms and ammunitions. As of 1:30 in the afternoon today, March 31, 2017, a total of twenty-five (25) firearms were recovered by the troops.

"We have pushed these bandits out of their comfort zones, and we intend to keep it that way," says Col Cirilito Sobejana, the Commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu-based in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu.

"We will continue to have them running until we get them and their firearms," Col Sobejana added.

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FOCUSED OPERATIONS | Seven more firearms seized in Sulu Province

By Alvin Santiago | [View Article](#) | [Print Article](#)

Headquarters Western Mindanao Command, Camp Navarro, Calarian, Zamboanga City (DWDD) – Soldiers of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion under the Joint Task Force Sulu seized seven more firearms following a clash with an unknown Lawless Group at Brgy Capual, Omar Municipality, Sulu Province at 2pm yesterday (March 30, 2017).

The members of the Scout Ranger Company led by CPT Rusell Bawat, while on blocking position encountered an estimated ten (10) armed Lawless elements who engaged the soldiers in a 20-minute firefight. As a result, the lawless elements withdrew leaving behind seven firearms and assorted ammunition.

After scouring the immediate vicinity, the rangers recovered the following High Powered Firearms (HPFAs) and ammunitions: one (1) M16 with SNs: RP 897526; three (3) M14 w/ SNs: 1108615, 1016529, 496574; two (2) M1 Garand w/ SNs: 2171440, 2950559; one (1) M203 GL w/ SN: 09893; five (5) M14 ammo magazines; ten (10) M16 ammo magazines; seven (7) M1 Garand clips; one hundred (100) rounds 7.62 ctdg; fifty (50) cal 30 rds; and, six (6) 40mm rounds.

"We have pushed these bandits out of their comfort zones, and we intend to keep it that way," says Col Cirilito Sobejana, the Commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu based in Busbus, Jolo, Sulu.

"We will continue to have them running until we get them and their firearms," Col Sobejana added. **4CRG / MCAG**

www.philstar.com

NPA rebels burn 2 trucks of banana firm in GenSan

By [John Unson](#) (philstar.com) | Updated March 31, 2017 - 4:45pm



In this Nov. 23, 2016 photo, a red ribbon is tied to a firearm of a New People's Army guerrilla at a rebel encampment tucked in the harsh wilderness of the Sierra Madre mountains. AP/Aaron Favila, File photo

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GENERAL SANTOS CITY, Philippines - Communist rebels set on fire two hauler trucks of a banana exporting firm in an attack in Barangay Sinawal here before dawn Thursday.

Barangay officials had told responding police probers that the atrocity was perpetrated by a band of about 50 New People's Army (NPA) guerillas led by Alvin Casamorin, also known as Commander Rayray.

The rebels, who arrived on separate vehicles in Barangay Sinawal, immediately barged into the processing plant there of the Amadeo Banana Company, disarmed security guards and immediately burned two large trucks parked nearby.

Superintendent Romeo Galgo Jr., spokesman of the Police Regional Police-12, said the NPAs immediately escaped after the arson attack bringing with them the firearms of the firm's security guards.

The NPAs used gasoline in burning the two trucks, according to police investigators.

The rebels were last seen fleeing towards the border of Gen. Santos City and South Cotabato province.

www.inquirer.net

4 civilians hurt as NPA rebels raid gov't post in N.Samar

By: Frances Mangosing - Reporter / @FMangosingINQ

INQUIRER.net / 09:29 PM March 31, 2017

More than 150 New People's Army rebels overran a military detachment in Northern Samar on Thursday, seizing high-powered firearms and injuring four civilians.

The rebels attacked the militia detachment in Barangay Geparayan, Silvino Lobos early Thursday, a day after the 48th anniversary of the NPA, the 8th Infantry Division said in a statement issued on Friday.

The rebels burned the detachment and seized government firearms – an M60 machine gun; an R4A3 carbine, four M1 carbines; five M1 Garand rifles, and one Harris handheld radio.

The government troops were outnumbered. At the time of the attack, there with less than 20 soldiers and members of the Citizens Armed Force Geographical Unit (Cafgu).

Stray bullets affected a nearby community, wounding Genaiyn C. Tulin, 31; Joceiyn Tulin, 12; Danica Tulin, 10; and Ruby Jane Tulin, 2.

The 8th Infantry Division launched pursuit operations shortly after the attack, according to 1st Lt. Cherry Junia, public affairs officer of the unit. /atm

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www.interaksyon.com

Cordillera NPA urge public to report extortionists posing as rebels

By: Aldwin Quitasol, InterAksyon.com

March 31, 2017 2:32 PM



InterAksyon.com

The online news portal of TV5

BAGUIO CITY, Philippines -- Communist rebels in the Cordillera region urged communities in Abra province to report persons posing as members of the New People's Army to extort money so they can be arrested and punished.

The Antonio Licawen Operational Front, the NPA unit operating the quad-boundary of Benguet, Abra, Mountain Province and Ilocos Sur said in an open letter that it had first received reports of the extortionists' activities in the last quarter of 2016 and continued to get information since the beginning of this year.

"*Dadakkel a kantidad ti kikkikilen dagitoy kadagiti mabiktima da. Agpangpangta da pay a no saan nga agbayad dagiti mabiktima da ket patayen da isuda* (They are extorting large sums of money from their victims. They even threaten to kill their victims if they will not pay)," the rebel command said.

ALFOC spokesman Salaknib Monteverde said the extortionists' targets received identical letters saying: "*Mangited kayo iti kastoy a kantidad ti kuarta gaputa kasapulan mi ti agas para iti kadua mi nga nasugatan iti labanan. I-envelop yo ken bungonen yo iti newspaper santo ikabil iti sirok ti rangtay weno basuraan iti kastoy nga oras* (You must give this amount of money because we need it for the medicines of our comrade who was wounded in an encounter. Put it in an envelope and wrap it with newspaper then place it under the bridge or if not in the trash bin within the hour)."

He said among the latest victims of the scam were Tubo Vice Mayor Johnny Gattud and Budget Officer Antonio Alfonso.

The rebel spokesman said they are working to identify the perpetrators even as he added they suspect military, police or militia personnel.

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Explaining why, he said: "*Suspetsado a dagus ti namuspusan da a nagkolekta kadagiti nakikil da. Idi i-deliver ti emisaryo ni Gattud ti umuna a bayad ba, waiting shed nga asideg iti detachment ti nangpasardengan da iti lugan ti emisaryo ken nagibilinan da nga pangibatianna ti kuarta, Sintido komon ti mangiladawan a ti saan a mabuteng iti disso nga asideg ti detachment a pangibatiyan iti kuarta ket adda mismo iti detachment (Their manner of collecting the extortion money very obvious. When the emissary of Gattud delivered his advance payment, the extortionists advised him to alight from his vehicle near a detachment and leave the money there, common sense will show that a person who is not afraid to order that extorted money be left near a detachment is himself inside the detachment).*"

In the case of Adolfo, he said, it was hard to believe any rebel would expose himself and collect money from the town treasurer in Barangay Dilong, which has a heavy presence of soldiers and militiamen.

Monteverde acknowledged that the rebels do collect revolutionary taxes from foreign and local businesses and landlords operating within guerrilla zones and "using the resources of the Filipino people," as well as access and permit to campaign fees from candidates during elections, as part of exercising their political power.

He said they send formal letters bearing the logo of the concerned NPA command to those being taxed and conduct negotiations diplomatically, never through threats.

Monteverde urged victims of the extortionists to "bring the matter to a unit of ALFOC so that we can discuss the matter and come to a solution on how we can identify and catch these people who are posing as NPAs. Then we can give these criminals appropriate disciplinary action."

www.dwdd.com.ph

TRADOC conducts Combined Arms Training Exercise

Posted by Lui Claudio on March 29, 2017 at 6:50 AM



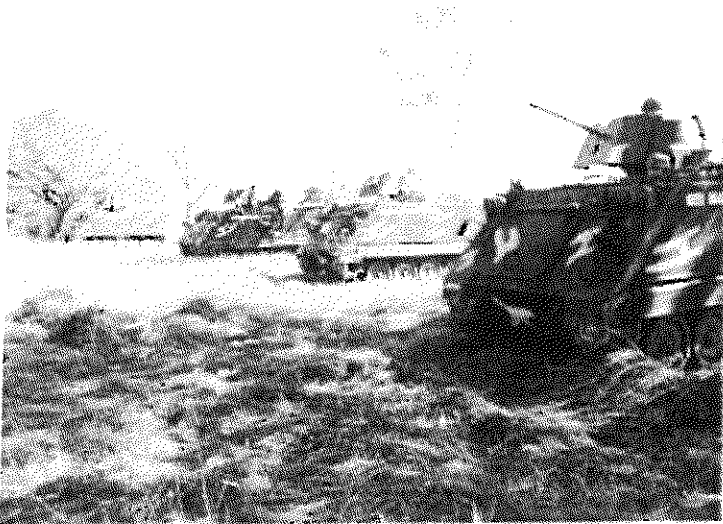
Capas, Tarlac- The Philippine Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), conducted a thirteen-day Combined Arms Training Exercise (CATEX) to sustain the war fighting competencies of soldiers held at Fort Ramon Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija which ended on March 29, 2017.

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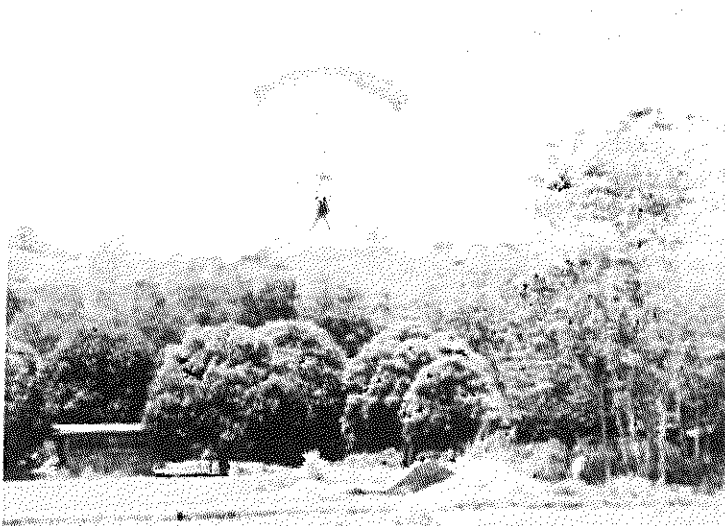
Three hundred eighty-nine (389), officers and six hundred eighteen (618), enlisted personnel who are students of different career courses from various schools under TRADOC took part the CATEX. In addition, 161 Candidate Soldiers from 7th Division Training School, 7th Infantry Division, Philippine Army also participated the exercise.

TRADOC has institutionalized the said exercise as part of the curriculum for all officers and enlisted personnel career courses as the Philippine Army capacitates soldiers to operate in a joint inter-agency, inter-governmental and multi-national environment.



The exercise includes military operation in urban terrain; battle drills and situational exercises; field training exercises; live fire exercises of 105 howitzers and mortars; and command post exercise. Philippine Navy students also took their part in the exercise while the Philippine Air Force performed close air support, troops insertion and casualty evacuation exercises.

TRADOC Commander Brig. Gen. Casiano C. Monilla congratulated the exercise directorate and participants for a job well done. He emphasized the significance of interoperability and soldier's competency in combined arms operations.



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"As maneuver leaders, you should be able to integrate capabilities from other AFP branches into operations", Brig. Gen. Monilla said.

Brig. Gen. Monilla commended the officers and men of TRADOC, concerned schools and units such as Combat Arms School; Combat Support School; Combat Service Support School; Army Leadership Development Center; The Armor School; The Intelligence School; and Tactical Operations Group 3, Philippine Air Force for their active involvement throughout the CATEX.

The CATEX is in compliance with the directive of higher headquarters geared to infuse in each and every participant realistic scenarios measuring their preparedness facing real life combat.

www.pna.gov.ph

AFP finds it ironic that rebels are talking about peace, yet planning to recruit more fighters

MANILA, March 31 (PNA) -- The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said that it finds it very ironic that the New People's Army (NPA) are talking about peace negotiations and yet are planning to recruit more fighters to boost their ranks.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Government Republic Philippines negotiating panel are scheduled to start around round of negotiations in The Netherlands by April.

"It is very ironic that they are planning peace negotiations with the government and yet they are announcing that they are planning to boost the number of their armed components by recruiting more fighters," said AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

This could complicate the peace process as more fighters in the field could trigger more clashes with government troops.

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Padilla said this pronouncement by NPA smacks of the apparent disconnect between their units in the ground and political leadership.

And despite this lack of coordination, the AFP spokesperson said they are willing to go the extra mile so that President Rodrigo Duterte's vision of a just and a lasting peace will be realized.

"But let us remember that each process of attaining that long, just and lasting peace is a slow process that demands a lot of meticulous steps, so we are very supportive of that, we are willing to go the extra mile and we're willing to do our part to make that successful," he added.

Last February, the government was forced to cancel the peace talks and the ceasefire after the NPAs conducted a series of unprovoked attacks against military units nationwide, killing six troopers and abducting three others, aside from destroying millions of pesos worth of property. (PNA)

/PRIAM F. NEPOMUCENO

www.dwdd.com.ph

Top Military Doctor Bows Out

Posted by Lui Claudio on Tuesday, 27 March 2019 at 12:04 PM



CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City – After serving 30 years in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Commander of the AFP Medical Center (AFPMC), Brigadier General Mariano Mejia will bid farewell to the military profession Friday, March 31 in a ceremony at the AFP Grandstand.

Lieutenant General Mayoralgo Dela Cruz, The Inspector General, AFP will preside over the retirement ceremony and testimonial parade this afternoon in honor of BGen Mejia and his outstanding accomplishments.

"As Commander of the AFP Medical Center, BGen Mejia took on the challenge of bringing the unit into greater heights by ensuring the highest quality of healthcare services to all AFP personnel," said Colonel Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Office Chief.

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Colonel Patrick De Leon, the current Deputy for Administration, AFPMC will serve as Acting Commander, AFPMC.

Conserving AFP's Fighting Strength

"In line with the ongoing military operations against terrorist groups and other security threats, BGen Mejia through the First Forward MEDICS provided Personnel, Medical, and Logistic Support to bring about its mandated function of conserving the fighting strength of our troops," Colonel Arevalo added.

Under BGen Mejia, the AFPMC deployed Forward Medical and Surgical Rotators to Military Hospitals in Zamboanga City, Cotabato City, and Jolo, Sulu. The teams consist of Medical Corps and Nurse Corps Officers who augmented the medical services in military treatment facilities.



Aside from medicines, equipment was also sent to Camp Teodulfo Station Hospital in August 2016. A fully-equipped Field Ambulance KM 451 and a Mobile Surgical/Laboratory/Diagnostic Van were flown via C130 aircraft to Jolo, Sulu.

Seasoned Military Doctor

Brigadier General Mejia first assumed the highest position in the AFPMC in an Acting capacity on August 8, 2016. He held this position concurrently as The Surgeon General, AFP. He officially became the Commander, AFPMC on December 9, 2016.

Aside from being a brilliant military doctor, he is also a Scout Ranger and was assigned to different military treatment facilities particularly in Visayas and Mindanao.

Among BGen Mejia's previous positions were Commanding Officer at Camp Nakar Station Hospital, Southern Luzon Command in 2007; Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo Station Hospital in 2008; Philippine Army General Hospital in 2009; and as the Army Chief Surgeon in 2012.

An adopted member of Philippine Military Academy "MATIKAS" Class 1983, BGen Mejia's is a Diplomate, Fellow and Former National Chancellor of the Pathology of Philippine Academy Specialists, Inc.; completed the Chemical Defense Course at the Australian Royal Army Engineers New South Wales; and a Senior Executive in National Security from National Defense College of the Philippines.

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"The AFP leadership salutes BGen Mejia for his remarkable service to the organization and his dedication in leading the AFP Medical Center in providing better healthcare and medical services to our troops, especially those in the field who continue to risk their lives to protect our country," General Eduardo Año, AFP Chief of Staff said.

www.interaksyon.com

WATCH | Air Force to use 2 more new FA-50s for Mindanao, territorial defense

By: Kaye Imson, News5 | InterAksyon.com

March 30, 2017 11:08 PM



News5 videograb of the newly arrived Korean-made FA-50.

InterAksyon.com

The online news portal of TV5

MANILA - Two FA-50 light fighter jets were delivered to the Philippine Air Force on Wednesday, bringing the eight the total number now with the military.

The Korean-made, brand-new planes will be used in Mindanao and for territorial defense, the PAF said.

Part of the latter are the routine patrols over the West Philippine Sea and, east of Isabela, the Benham Rise where a Chinese survey vessel stayed three months in late 2016 till January 2017, triggering an alert from the Department of National Defense.

In 2016, President Duterte had remarked that he was not so impressed with the FA-50's capability, and said the money spent to buy the planes would go to waste because the units are only good for fly-bys.

What can an FA-50 really do?

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The webpage of FA-50 manufacturer Korean Aerospace Industries describes it as an advanced jet trainer or lead-in fighter trainer that can also be used for combat.

The design was basically lifted from the US' F-16 fighter jet.

For combat purposes, the FA-50 has a built-in modern Gatling gun. It can also be fitted with a missile and bomb like the Sidewinder and Maverick being used in the US. One Sidewinder costs \$370,000; and one Maverick costs \$130,000. Depending on the quality, there are cheaper missiles and bombs in the market.

Reporters asked the PAF if the FA-50s now in the country are already fitted with these, and the reply was neither to confirm nor deny.

"We can tell you that *pero sabi nga ni Tom Cruise di ba sa Top Gun*, " I can tell you that but then that's classified. If I tell you, then I'm gonna have to kill you," a half-joking Col. Gerald Anton, commander of the Air Defense Wing, said.

Can the FA-50 measure up in terms of operational range - or the distance it can reach in order to engage in combat and then return to homebase?

The makers of the FA-50 said it can log 1,150 miles or 1,851 kilometers round trip.

If the FA-50 were based in Palawan, that's 745 kilometers away from the Spratlys.

A round trip would mean 1,500 kilometers-- meaning, for patrol purposes, it can be used.

Meanwhile, Benham Rise is about 500 kilometers away from the nearest PAF base, in Clark, Pampanga, or well within the operational range.

Given these, did President Duterte have a point in dismissing the FA-50 offhand? They are new fighter jets, have the requisite combat range and, in terms of actual combat, the PAF said they have had their "baptism of fire" in Mindanao, where the government in recent months continued to battle lawless groups.

For the Air Force, therefore, it was worth acquiring what they call their "fighting eagle," because it can deliver a lot of capabilities and power defense capabilities; and, given the right armaments and ammunition, it can perform well as a fighter jet.

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SEMINAR | Philippine Navy Strategic Sail Plan 2020 CGEA, Quezon City

Project Director: Alvin Santiago (NPAO / MCAG)

CGEA, Quezon City (DWDD) – Blazing the trail of transformation and good governance requires the sustained enhancement of the organization's capacity to create, implement, and assess its strategy for development.

Today, the Philippine Navy commences its second Strategic Planning Seminar that will train its new pool of strategic planners as it sets to craft a new vision and strategy for 2028 and even beyond.

For the second time, the Seminar is conducted in partnership with the National Defense College of the Philippines. NPAO / MCAG



Rear Admiral Gaudencio Collado Jr AFP, the Chief of Naval Staff, officially opens the PN Strategic Planning Seminar 2017.



The second batch of new strategic planners who will undergo the 3-day Philippine Navy Strategic Planning Seminar 2017.

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

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



Captain Ernesto Baldovino, the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff for Education and Training, is the lead staff for the Philippine Navy Strategic Planning Seminar 2017, together with the Center for Naval Leadership and Excellence, Philippine Navy and the Office of Naval Strategic Studies.



The current Deputy Director General of the National Security Council, retired Rear Admiral Vicente Agdamag, gives the first lecture on the draft National Security Policy 2017-2022.

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