

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

18 April 2017

Tuesday

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS
18 APRIL 2017

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast		PDI p.A15
NATIONAL NEWS			
2-3	DA warns traders on rice hoarding	Christine O. Aveñado	PDI p. A1
4-5	Rody tops TIME 100 'most influential' poll	Christina Mendez	The Phil Star p.1
ARMY RELATED NEWS			
6	Rody awards lieutenant killed in clash with ASG	Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos	Tempo p.2
7	Soldier killed by Sayyaf awarded Gold Cross medal	Llanesca T Panti	The Mla Times p.A3
8	Photo: President Duterte at the wake of 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr. in Batangas province		PDI p.A6
9	Photo: Fit and Ready	Jay Ganson	Mla Bulletin p.1
AFP RELATED NEWS			
10	Año vows to deliver 'lethal blow' on ASG	Nonoy E Lacson	Mla Bulletin p.13
11-13	'We will die for them'	Argyll Cyrus B Geducos	Mla Bulletin p.1
14	Pagkamatay ng 2 sa Bohol sisilipin	Francis T Wakefield	Balita p.2
15-16	AFP yields CPP gave accurate Bohol clash data	Mario J Mallari	The Daily Tribune p.1
17	Hunt on Abu Sayyaf bandits in Bohol clash	Ador Vincent S Mayol	PDI p.A6
18-19	20 Foreigners remain ASG hostages	Florante S Solmerin	Manila Standard Today p.A1
20	'Beheading fueling desire to crush Abus'	Michael Punongbayan	The Phil Star p.1
21	Abu, 2 kidnap suspects captured	Roel Pareño	The Phil Star p.8
22	No more war games in Balikatan	Francis T Wakefield	Mla Bulletin p.1
23	Balikatan saka na lang	Nenet L Villafania	Remate p.2
24	AFP magsasagawa na ng regular maritime patrols sa Benham Rise		Police Files p.2
25	Rody mulls Cabinet post for ex-AFP chief Cimatú	Christina Mendez	The Phil Star p.2
EDITORIAL			
26-27	Bandits in Bohol		PDI p.A10
ONLINE NEWS			
28	AFP condemns ASG for beheading kidnap victim	Lui Claudio	www.dwdd.com.ph
29	AFP to allocate 5% for Muslims in Recruitment	Lui Claudio	www.dwdd.com.ph
30	NPA claims responsibility for killing of Palawan disaster risk reduction head	Junfred Calamba	www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

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

18 April 2017



Page: 15

www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 18 2017 | TUESDAY

LAOAG CITY
24 - 33 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY
24 - 36 °C

BAGUIO CITY
16 - 24 °C

SBMA/CLARK
26 - 35 °C

METRO MANILA
26 - 34 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY
21 - 30 °C

LEGAZPI CITY
26 - 32 °C

ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY
26 - 32 °C

TACLOBAN CITY
25 - 31 °C

METRO CEBU
25 - 32 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO
24 - 31 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY
24 - 33 °C

METRO DAVAO
26 - 33 °C

LOW PRESSURE AREA
295 KM WEST-SOUTHWEST OF IRA ZAMBALES EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (As of 5:00 PM - Apr. 17, 2017)

SUNRISE
5:41 AM

SUNSET
6:10 PM

MOONRISE
11:55 PM

MOONSET
10:48 AM

FULL MOON
APR 11
2:06 AM

LAST QUARTER
APR 10
6:57 PM

LOW TIDE
10:47 PM
0.01 Meter

HIGH TIDE
1:43 PM
0.86 Meter

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

	APR 18	APR 19	APR 19	APR 20	APR 19	APR 20
METRO MANILA	25 - 35 °C	26 - 34 °C	21 - 31 °C	20 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 36 °C	25 - 36 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 31 °C
LAOAG	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	26 - 34 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 25 °C	17 - 25 °C	26 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 35 °C	25 - 35 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C		
TAGAYTAY						
LEGAZPI						
PUERTO PRINCESA						
ILOILO/BACOLOD						
METRO CEBU						
TACLOBAN						
CAGAYAN DE ORO						
METRO DAVAO						
ZAMBOANGA						

Watch PanahonTV on DZRH News Television from Monday to Friday at 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM, and via Pilipinas HD at 6:00 AM, 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM.

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

18 April 2017



Page: A1

DA WARNS TRADERS ON RICE HOARDING

STORY BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO

The government may raid warehouses owned by traders who hoard rice to create a shortage and file charges of economic sabotage against them, says Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol

A2

FROM A1

By Christine O. Avendaño
@10avendanoINQ

Traders who create a rice shortage may have to open their warehouses for inspection and face charges of economic sabotage if they are found hoarding the staple, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said on Monday.

Piñol issued the warning amid reports from some sectors of a looming rice shortage and rising prices if President Duterte would not allow the importation of rice, especially dur-

ing harvest season.

"[T]he moment I sense that there is an attempt on the part of rice traders to create a rice shortage I will recommend to the President the creation of a task force that would open up and inspect all warehouses all over the country and those found hoarding rice should be charged with economic sabotage," Piñol said.

After attending a Senate hearing, Piñol reiterated that the Department of Agriculture was not against rice importation as the country still had a shortfall of 500,000 to 800,000 metric tons (MT) every year despite an expected record harvest of 4.14

million MT in the first quarter.

But he said he had told the President that rice importation should not be timed during peak harvest as this would bring down the price of palay (paddy rice) and thus, mean low earnings for local farmers.

Piñol said groups saying there was a rice shortage were "fooling the Filipino people," noting that in February, the private sector already brought in 650,000 MT of rice and the National Food Authority (NFA), 250,000 MT.

Farmers are requesting the deferment of rice importation until after harvest time and according to Piñol, the govern-

ment can import rice when there is a need for it.

He also dismissed a US-based think tank report that inflation would rise with the no-rice importation policy. "How can a temporary deferment of importation cause inflation?" he asked.

The agriculture secretary insisted that his department was "sure" of its numbers, which he said were based on satellite data.

Piñol said if the NFA wanted to stock rice, he suggested that it procure palay, as this could be stored for over a year. In contrast, rice grains can go bad after six months in storage, he said.

But the NFA said it may not

be able to buy more palay as private traders were offering farmers higher prices.

Any rice shortfall, Piñol said, could be covered by the minimum access volume (the volume of rice allowed to be imported with a corresponding tariff as part of the government's commitment to the World Trade Organization).

Piñol has been accused of meddling in the rice importation program, the province of the multiagency NFA Council, which is chaired by Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco Jr.

The accusation came as NFA Administrator Jason Aquino de-

fied the NFA Council recommendation that any rice importation be done by the private sector. Aquino has insisted on a government-to-government importation of rice to replenish the country's rice stocks for the lean months even as this would further bloat the NFA debt.

Former Undersecretary Halmen Valdez of the Office of the Cabinet Secretary said that despite the NFA Council decision not to import rice because of an expected bumper harvest, Aquino went straight to Mr. Duterte requesting that the government-to-government importation be allowed. INQ

18 April 2017



Page: 1

Rody tops *TIME* 100 'most influential' poll

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Readers of *Time* magazine have chosen President Duterte as the world's most influential person, picking him over Pope Francis, Presidents Donald Trump of the US, Vladimir Putin of Russia and Xi Jinping of China as well as Microsoft's Bill Gates and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg.

An announcement by the magazine said Duterte topped the 2017 *TIME* 100 poll after he consistently led the survey, which closed Sunday night.

The poll asked readers who should be included in this year's *TIME* 100, an annual list of the world's most influential people.

It was not clear if Duterte was chosen as a positive influence. *Time* also picks a "Person of the Year" who has affected world events for better or worse. Among the controversial picks have been terrorist leader Osama bin Laden and Adolf Hitler.

Duterte has drawn international attention because of the

thousands of deaths linked to his war on illegal drugs

Malacañang nevertheless welcomed Duterte's selection by *Time* readers

"What makes President Rodrigo R. Duterte so admired by Filipinos and international leaders alike is his national agenda. He has prioritized public interest first and foremost, especially the needs and aspirations of the poor and common people," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said yesterday.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol debunked speculation that Malacañang could have manipulated

Turn to Page 8

Rody From Page 1

the *Time* online poll.

Piñol said Malacañang could not even conduct an effective media operation and information dissemination, much less manipulate a global poll of *Time* readers.

“Personally, as a former newsman myself, I think Malacañang’s handling of media operations is weak. I say that in all frankness. Their (communications group) operations are weak. They get left behind in releasing stories and even photos by independent media entities,” Piñol told reporters when asked whether Malacañang could have manipulated the *Time* poll.

In a report posted on the *Time* website, Duterte received five percent of the total “yes” votes in the poll.

Since taking office in June, Duterte has waged an aggressive war on drugs that has killed more than 8,000 people in the Philippines, the report quoted *Reuters* as saying.

The controversial anti-drug campaign has inspired grow-

ing opposition from human rights groups and some political leaders, including Vice President Leni Robredo.

Closely following Duterte in the *Time* 100 poll were Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Pope Francis, Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg – all of whom received three percent of the total “yes” votes.

US senator Bernie Sanders won the reader poll in 2016 while Russian President Vladimir Putin took the lead in 2015.

The official *Time* 100 list, which is selected by the magazine’s editors, will be announced on April 20.

Abella said that even without the distinction, Duterte would continue to be a hard-working government worker and faithful servant of the Filipino people.

“In positive terms, he has a simple three-point agenda: prosperity for all, restore trust in government, build a fair and equitable society,” Abella said without mentioning human rights issues that came with

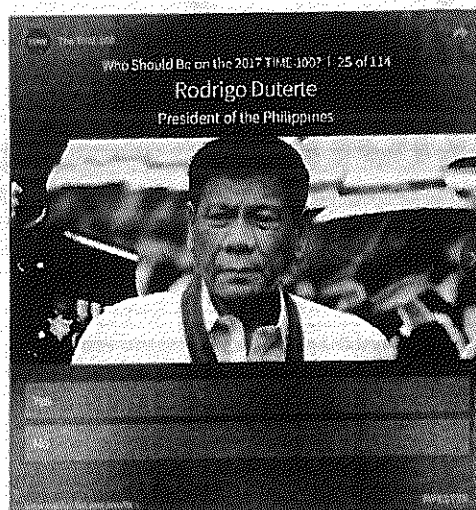


Photo show the voting page of the *TIME* 100 2017 readers’ poll.

Duterte’s hard stance against illegal drugs.

“Indeed, Filipinos find in the President a kindred spirit – a leader who acts for the common good,” he added.

In making his statement after attending a Senate hearing, Piñol explained why the Palace could not have manipulated the polls.

“There are no such operations (manipulations) because the basis of that statement is the fact that they cannot

even organize very well the media operations of Malacañang,” Piñol said. “How much more a popularity contest that has nothing to do with governance in the Philippines?”

He said he already raised his concerns with Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and Communications Secretary Martin Andanar.

Piñol lamented the media and other social media sites

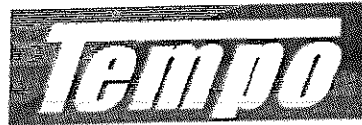
put too much emphasis on Duterte’s strong language and his brutal campaign against illegal drugs.

The skewed emphasis of the media, he said, comes at the expense of the other programs of Duterte that do not get enough publicity.

He said the support of the people for Duterte is genuine so it was not surprising for him to top the polls.

– With Paolo Romero

18 April 2017



Page. 2

Rody awards lieutenant killed in clash with ASG

President Duterte yesterday awarded a Gold Cross Medal to 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr. who was killed in an encounter with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Bohol last week.

Duterte visited the 23-year-old slain soldier's wake at his residence in San Jose, Batangas right after arriving at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from a week-long state visit to three countries in the Middle East during the Holy Week.

The commander-in-chief comforted Saldua's parents, Gina and Estelito, and his siblings. He provided them financial assistance and a cellular phone with his contact information.

"Kung may kailangan kayo, maski anong problema na hindi ninyo masolusyunan, tawagan ninyo lang ako," he told Saldua's family.

Batangas Gov. Hermitando Mandanas gave scholarships up to college to the three siblings of Saldua, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy Sinaglahi Class of 2015.

Meanwhile, Malacañang condemned the beheading of FB Ra-



PRESIDENT Duterte awards a medal to 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr., who was killed in an encounter with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Bohol last week, during a visit to his wake at their house in San Jose, Batangas yesterday. (Presidential photo)

mona 2 captain Noel Besconde by the ASG on Maundy Thursday in Sulu.

"We express our sincerest condolences to the bereaved family of FB Ramon 2 captain, Noel Besconde, who met untimely death in the hands of the kidnap-for-

ransom group Abu Sayyaf Group," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in a statement.

"We strongly condemn this senseless and coldblooded murder committed during the Holy Week," he added. **(Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos)**

18 April 2017

The Manila Times

Page: A3

Soldier killed by Sayyaf awarded Gold Cross medal

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has conferred a Gold Cross medal on the slain 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr. who was killed by the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf in a clash in Inabanga, Bohol six days ago.

The President recognized Saldua's sacrifice for the country upon his arrival from a weeklong state visit to the Gulf countries of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar.

He conferred Saldua's posthumous award in the latter's residence in San Jose, Batangas.

In a statement released by the Palace,

the President is said to have comforted the bereaved parents (Gina and Estelito) of the 23-year-old Saldua and the slain soldier's siblings.

The President provided the

Saldua family with financial assistance and a mobile phone through which the family could call him anytime about "problems" they may be facing.

Batangas Gov. Hermilando

Mandanas granted scholarships up to the college level to the three siblings of the fallen Saldua.

Saldua is a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Sinaglahi Class of 2015.

LLANESCA T. PANTI

18 April 2017



Page: A6

ANTITERROR CAMPAIGN



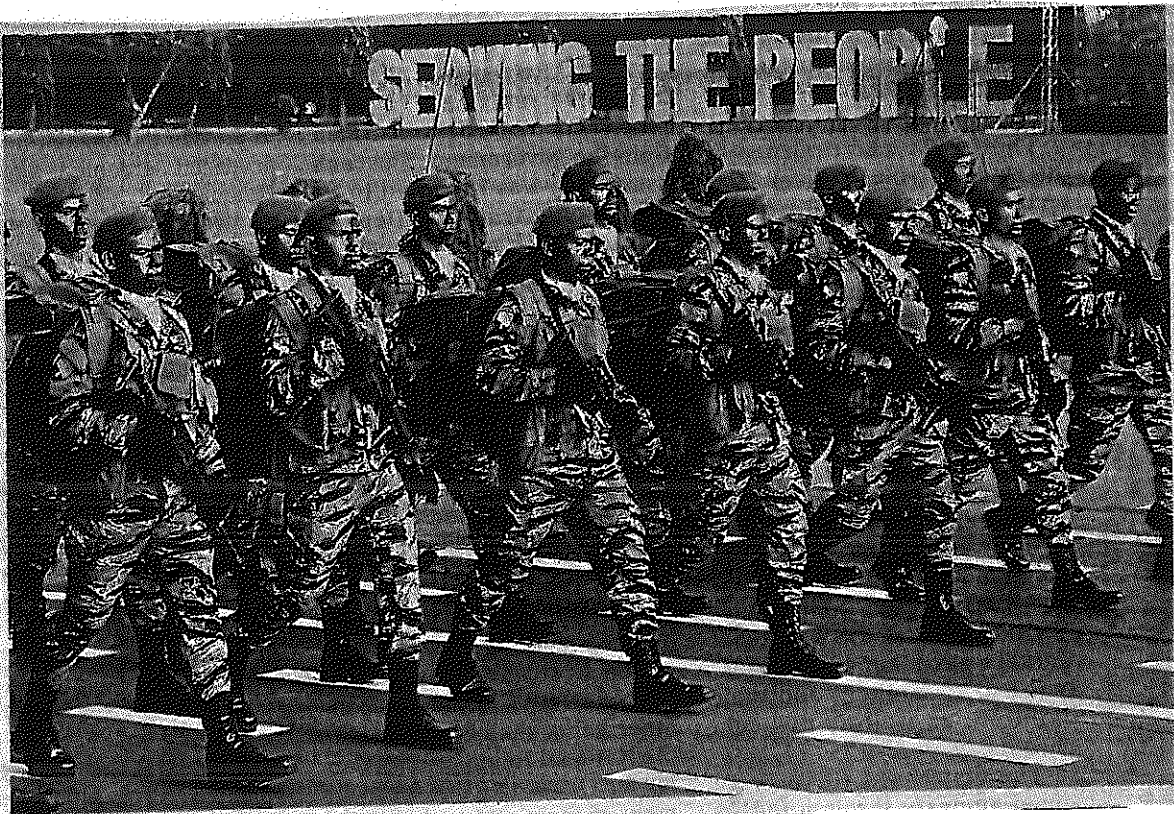
President Duterte at the wake of 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr. in Batangas province –MALACANANG PHOTO

18 April 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

FIT AND READY
- Soldiers in full battle gear march during the traditional military parade on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the Philippine Army in Fort Bonifacio in Tagulug City, Tuesday.
(Jay Ganzon)



18 April 2017



Page: 13

Año vows to deliver 'lethal blow' on ASG

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año yesterday condemned the beheading of Filipino boat skipper Noel Besconde by the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), and vowed that the military will “deliver the lethal blow against this band of terrorists and rescue the remaining kidnap victims.”

“We will never falter. We will not rest even a bit in our conduct of combat, intelligence, and civil-military operations to protect our people. We will exhaust all means—legal and moral— to bring this war against terrorists to conclusion,” Año said.

Besconder, skipper of F/B Ramona 2, was reportedly beheaded at about 2 p.m. last Maundy Thursday by followers of ASG-sub leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan in the forested areas of Barangay Tugas in Patikul, Sulu.

Besconder was one of three members of the F/B Ramona crew, who were abducted in the vicinity of the Celebes Sea last December 2016.

Año said he has directed the Joint Task Force-Sulu Commander

Brig Gen Cirilito Sobejana to locate the remains of Besconde and deliver it to his family so that he may be accorded a decent burial.

“We continue to call on every God-fearing resident of Sulu, Basilan, and other parts of Western Mindanao to help your AFP and other security forces to put a stop to this criminal and evil act of the ASG. They have no place in our civilized society,” Año emphasized.

This developed as police authorities in this city arrested Wednesday, an ASG member at Sampaloc Drive in the village of Talon-Talon.

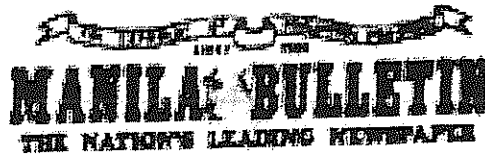
Arrested was Abdu Sahibul who authorities tagged as having been involved in the foiled kidnapping attempt on the brother of Zamboanga City Vice Mayor Cesar Iturralde.

Sahibul was arrested by policemen when they served him two search warrants at his residence on Sampaloc Drive, Talon-Talon, for prohibited drugs and firearms, explosives.

During the search, lawmen recovered two hand grenades, six large size sachets of shabu and drug paraphernalia.

The suspect is now detained at the PDEA headquarters, while the seized items were turned over to the police investigator.

18 April 2017



Page: 1

'We will die for them'

Duterte: Military assistance to Middle East is an expression of gratitude

By ARGYLL CYRUS S. GEDUCOS

President Duterte has assured Middle East leaders that the Philippines is ready to die for them should the need arise.

"Sabi ko, 'tutulong ako sa inyo bilang pagbayad sa anong ginawa ninyo sa kababayan ko. Magpapakamatay kami

[para] sa inyo.' (I told them that I will help them because of what they did for my countrymen. We will die for them)," he said.

"I will not elaborate on it but that is how it is. Yung pinakita mo sa akin na utang na loob, babayaran rin kita nang wala kang masabi sa akin (But the kindness you showed me, I will ►12

repay it with gratitude),” he said.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, when asked earlier about the President’s comment on the Filipino troops defending the Gulf states, said that “if required to, defending means a lot of— it can be echelon, meaning it could be exchange of information, it could be direct coordination.”

Despite expressing willingness to provide military assistance, Duterte wished that the states in the Middle East will not have any conflict despite the region being troubled.

“You know, it’s a very troubled world there. I hope it would not ramble on to the states which do not want trouble. And these are the three countries that I visited,” he said.

Yesterday, President Duterte stressed that his commitment to send military assistance to the Middle East is his way of repaying the region for hosting overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

“More than just anything else, I stressed the point that should the need arises, we will be there to help them,” he said in his arrival statement at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA-T1) before dawn Monday.

He, however, said he cannot talk about it to the public but only to the military but said this is one way of repaying the Middle East for giving jobs to one of the country’s national interests – the OFWs.

“I will go where the national interest is. And part of that really on a global scale, that is why I promised them we have even defense and security arrangement,” he said.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. had earlier explained that the Philippine troops will not fight in the Gulf states and that the assis-

tance extended will be in the form of training which is yet to be set up.

“This will probably take another six months to one year. This will be very selective and it will be probably be based on specialized courses or training,” Esperon said.

“There’s no such thing as a military operational deployment. Although in Bahrain, we are part of what we would call the Coalition Maritime Force. We send observers to that,” he added.

Most productive trip

Duterte also tagged his three-country swing to the Middle East during the Holy Week as his most productive trip since he took office.

He has just arrived from his week-long state visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Bahrain, and State of Qatar.

“Hindi ko masabi lahat kung anong pinag-usapan namin (I can’t disclose everything we’ve talked about) but the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar were very much, more than willing really to help the Filipinos.

During his trip to the Middle East, the Philippine government was able to sign at least 10 agreements with the three countries including agreements on labor, foreign cooperation, health, culture, and technical and vocational education.

The last of these agreements were the deal signed between the Philippines and Qatar on enhancing investment promotion and protection, healthcare, education, and cultural exchanges.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said one of these four agreement, Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement (IPPA), aims to facilitate the release of \$1 billion of Qatar’s sovereign wealth fund to various economic sectors in the country.

Aside from bilateral agreements, the President was also able to bring home 140 undocumented Filipinos or runaways from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who availed of the Kingdom's amnesty program for foreign workers since March, 2017.

He was also able to bring home US\$925 million in investment from Arabian, Bahraini, and Qatari businesses that will generate 26,000 jobs in the Philippines.

Duterte, meanwhile, explained how it was important to maintain more than just a good relation with the countries in the Middle East as the region is of "great importance" to the country.

"It is the home of the largest number of Filipino workers overseas. It is our partner for our conventional energy needs. It is an emerging source of broader two way-trade and investments," he said.

The President said that in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud agreed that it is in the interest of both our nations to uphold the welfare and well-being of Filipino workers.

"This is an area of partnership that we are keen on making greater strides," he said.

No discrimination

He also shared his observation about the very little amount of discrimination in the Middle Eastern countries he visited compared to other countries he's been to.

"Wala masyadong akong nakita [discrimination] unlike 'yung, itong the pretentious ones. Mahilig sa human rights 'yun naman pala sila, mga bigots (I have not observed any discrimination unlike those pretentious ones who push for human rights but are really bigots)," he said.

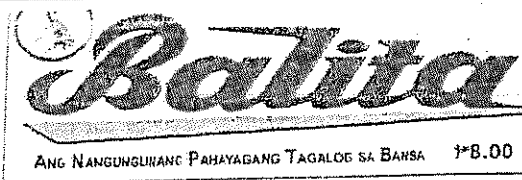
"But what I have sensed especially eh, doon (in the Middle East), nirerespeto ang tao (they respect people). There might have been some incidents but it can happen anywhere.

"Overall, all things being equal, wala akong masabi sa mga bayan na binita ko (I have nothing to say about the countries I visited)," he expressed.

He also compared how different the culture is in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia compared to that in Bahrain and Qatar.

"Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a bit more regimented because they follow every direction of Islam. Pero 'yung Bahrain at Qatar, wala (Unlike Bahrain and Qatar). You can move around and you can talk. You can sense that there is really a little of the freedom that the citizens enjoy which is shared by everybody," he said. (With a report from Genalyn D. Kabling)

18 April 2017



Page. 2

Pagkamatay ng 2 sa Bohol sisilipin

Sinabi kahapon ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na sinimulan na ng militar ang imbestigasyon sa napulat na kabilang ang dalawang sibilyan sa mga napatay sa engkuwentro sa Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sa Inabanga, Bohol nitong Abril II.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs Office chief Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, ikinagulat ng militar ang natanggap nitong impormasyon na dalawa sa anum na nasawi sa sagupaan ay mag-asawang sibilyan.

"Actually, we in the Armed Forces of the Philippines were surprised to find out of the report that there were two people not part of the Abu Sayyaf killed as a result of the combat operations by the military and the Philippine National Police," sinabi ni Arevalo sa mga mamamahayag sa press briefing sa Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City kahapon.

"What we in the AFP believes that when the operation was conducted there were no civilian

left in that area because the people there were already evacuated. It is clear to us as it is always in the case in our conduct of focused military operations that it will be surgical and will be focus in just one area and the target personality," dagdag ni Arevalo.

Ayon kay Arevalo, tatlo sa mga napatay na terorista ng ASG ang nakilala na.

"We cannot say that, there is a possibility that the Abu Sayyaf themselves killed the couple if they could have been suspected of being the one to have reported to the authorities the presence of the members of the Abu Sayyaf," sabi pa ni Arevalo.

Kinilala naman ni Capt. Jojo Mascareñas, Civil Military Operations officer ng 302nd Brigade, ang mag-asawa na sina Constancio at Crisenta Petalco.

Ang mga napatay na terorista naman ay sina Muamar Askali, alyas "Abu Ramu"; Edimar Isnain, alyas "Guruh Eddie"; at isang alyas "Abu Sufyan"

Francis T. Wakefield

18 April 2017



Page: 1

AFP yields CPP gave accurate Bohol clash data



Fallen The body of an alleged Abu Sayyaf leader lies on farmland in Inabanga, Bohol after a clash between government forces and Islamic militants. AFP

By Mario J. Mallari

It turned out that the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) has more updated intelligence data than the military when it claimed that civilians were among those slain and counted as members of the Abu Sayyaf group during a fierce firefight in Bohol that thwarted a raid of the bandits on a holiday resort.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday admitted two of those killed in the Bohol clash last week were a local couple, both senior citizens, who own

one of the houses where the Abu Sayyaf terrorists were engaged by government forces in Inabanga town.

The CPP was the first to identify the couple as Constancio and Crisente Petalco, residents of Barangay Napo, Inabanga town where the clash between government troops and Abu Sayyaf terrorists erupted last April 11.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP-Public Affairs Office chief, said investigations are now ongoing to determine why the couple remained in the conflict area during the firefight as he claimed the military ordered an evacuation. **Turn to page 3**

AFP yields CPP gave accurate Bohol clash data

From page 1

"It's too early for us to conclude...if they are members, if they are coddlers, they were held hostages, or they were actually killed by the Abu Sayyaf on suspicion that they have tipped off their presence to the military and the Philippine National Police (PNP) (these are) the subjects of the ongoing investigation," Arevalo said.

He stressed that the operation in Inabanga town was "surgical" and focused only on certain areas and targeted personalities.

"It is our belief in the AFP that when we conducted the operation, there were no more civilians left in that area because they have already evacuated," said Arevalo.

Arevalo, however, admitted that of the six slain in Inabanga, who were tagged earlier as Abu Sayyaf terrorists, only three were positively identified by the military as Abu Sayyaf members.

Capt. Jojo Mascarenas, civil military operations officer of the Army's 302nd Brigade, said Crisente is an aunt of Joselito Melloria, alias Abu Ali, who allegedly served as guide to the group of ASG sub-leader Muamar Askali, alias Abu Rami.

Askali was among the four positively identified Abu Sayyaf killed – the two others were a certain Abu Sufyan, one Edimar Isnain, alias Guruh Eddie.

"Accordingly, Cresinta was a relative (aunt) of Joselito Melloria alias Abu Ali who is believed to be the one who guided the other ASG members to the said place," said Mascarenas.

"Investigation is currently ongoing to determine the involvement of the couple with the terrorist group and their participation during the encounter," he added.

At the time of the encounter, Mascarenas said that the troops found the Abu Sayyaf terrorists swinging right inside the Petalco's house while the couple were inside.

Earlier on Friday, the CPP scored the

AFP and the PNP for the Bohol encounter, citing the killing of the Petalco couple.

The CPP claimed that the Philippine Air Force dropped nine bombs in Barangays Napo, Calenti and Banahao in Inabanga, forcing at least 1,200 local residents people to evacuate.

"The CPP joins the Filipino people in condemning the overkill military operations conducted by the AFP in Inabanga town which have endangered the lives of civilians," it said.

The CPP accused the AFP of "spinning fake news stories" after claiming that Abu Sayyaf terrorists traveled 300 kilometers by boat from Sulu to Bohol, unhampered by the whole AFP establishment, then upstream to a place unknown to them with only a general plan to target tourists.

"This story is a typical of the tall tales spun by the US Central Intelligence Agency and their cons pirators within the Philippine defense and security establishment," the CPP said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana lashed back at the CPP, accusing the communist group of being a fake organization for spreading false information regarding the Bohol clash.

AFP vows anew to wipe out Abus

The AFP added it will not be cowed by the brutal act against innocent people but instead will only motivate the soldiers to destroy the terrorists in reference to the Abu Sayyaf beheading of another captive.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año said the beheading of Noel Besconde has only driven government troops to deliver the "lethal blow" against the Abu Sayyaf.

"While the AFP condemns this gruesome murderer of this hapless kidnap victim, it all the more drives our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines to deliver the lethal blow against this band of terrorists and rescue the remaining kidnap victims," vowed Año.

"This terrorist group is all the more, by its recent barbarism, fueling the desire of the AFP to crush its beastly practice,

stop its kidnap-for-ransom activities, and restore peace in Western Mindanao," he added.

Besconde was beheaded on Maundy Thursday – apparently in retaliation for the killing of four Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Bohol, including sub-leader Muamar Askali, alias Abu Rami.

But Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the AFP's Joint Task Force Sulu, expressed belief that the ASG beheaded Besconde because he was already sickly and impeded the movement of the Abu Sayyaf.

Sobejana also said that the Abu Sayyaf wanted to get P3 million ransom from the victim's family but failed.

Besconde was the captain of FB Ramona 2 which was intercepted off Celebes Sea last December. He is the second Abu Sayyaf hostage to be beheaded under the Duterte administration – after German Juergen Gustav Kantner.

Año said that the 125,000-strong AFP will tirelessly pursue the Abu Sayyaf terrorists until they are destroyed as ordered by President Duterte.

"We will never falter. We will not rest even a bit in our conduct of combat, intelligence, and civil-military operations to protect our people. We will exhaust all means – legal and moral – to bring this war against terrorists to conclusion," said Año.

The AFP chief said he also instructed Sobejana to locate the remains of Besconde for the family to accord him decent burial.

At the same time, Año called on the peace-loving people of Western Mindanao to assist the AFP and stopping the evil ways of the ASG.

"We continue to call on every God-fearing resident of Sulu, Basilan, and other parts of Western Mindanao to help your AFP and other security forces to put a stop to this criminal and evil act of the ASG. They have no place in our civilized society," said Año. **Ted Tuvera, Joyce Ann L. Rocamora, Angie M. Rosales**

18 April 2017



Page: A6

HUNT ON FOR ABU SAYYAF BANDITS IN BOHOL CLASH

By Ador Vincent S. Mayol
@adorCDN

CEBU CITY—Government troops on Monday continued hunting down eight members of the Abu Sayyaf, a week after the bandit group entered the village of Napo in Inabanga town, Bohol province, and engaged them in a firefight.

A list released by the military and the police showed that those being pursued were Joselito "Alih" Milloria and Abu Sayyaf members known only as Richard, Asis, Ubayda, Poy, Dah, Saad and Amra.

Reports said Milloria, a native of Napo, served as a guide of the group on April 10. He left Napo several years ago when he married a woman who was said to be a daughter of an Abu Sayyaf leader in Mindanao.

Four Abu Sayyaf members were killed in the Inabanga clash. They were Muammar "Abu Rami" Askali, the group's leader; Abu Suyfan, its bomb expert; Edimar Isnan; and an unidentified man.

Their photographs were posted by the Inabanga local government on its Facebook page on Sunday.

"Stay alert and vigilant. Immediately inform authorities whenever you see these persons and other suspicious-looking men in your areas," read the

Facebook post in Cebuano.

The fatalities on the part of the government were 2nd Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr., Cpl. Meljun Cajaban, Sgt. John Dexter Duero, and SPO2 Rey Anthony Nazareno, a member of the Special Weapons and Tactics from Calape town.

Supt. Lorenzo Batuan, deputy director for operations of the Bohol police, said policemen were monitoring coastal areas while soldiers were scouring the mountains to look for the bandits.

Any information that may lead to the arrest of the suspects may be coursed through the military's hotline 0905-4551543.

In Batangas province, President Duterte went to the wake of Saldua in San Jose town on Monday morning and handed his family cash assistance, a plaque and a mobile phone which contained the President's number.

"The parents were told to contact the President should there be anything else they need," said Roderick Alvarez, village chief of Mojon-Tampoy.

He said Mr. Duterte also promised to give Saldua's siblings educational assistance.

He said the village passed a resolution recognizing Saldua, 24, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy in 2015, as a local hero. —WITH REPORTS FROM MARICAR

CINCO AND MARRAH RABE INQ

18 April 2017

Standard
TODAY

Page. A1

20 foreigners remain ASG hostages

By Florante S. Solmerin

THE Abu Sayyaf still holds 27 captives—20 foreigners and seven Filipinos—after beheading a boat captain last week, a spokesman for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Brig. Gen. Restituto

Padilla, said Monday.

“The foreigners are Indonesians and Malaysians and a Dutchman,” Padilla said.

On April 13, Noel Besconde, captain of the seized FB Ramona, was beheaded by the group of a certain ASG sub-leader Sad-

jawaan in Barangay Tugas, Patikul, Sulu, military officials said.

“Mr. Besconde was murdered by his ASG captors because he was reportedly ill and impeded their movement to evade the operating units that are hunting them,”

Next page

20...

From A1

a statement released by the Western Mindanao Command said.

In Camp Aguinaldo, AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año condemned the latest beheading.

"While the AFP condemns this gruesome murder of this hapless kidnap victim, it all the more drives our soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines to deliver the lethal blow against this band of terrorists and rescue the remaining kidnap victims," Año said.

"This terrorist group is all the more, by their recent barbarism, fueling the desire of the AFP to crush their beastly practice, stop their kidnap-for-ransom activities, and restore peace in Western Mindanao. We will never falter. We will not rest even a bit in our conduct of combat, intelligence, and civil-military operations to protect our people. We will exhaust all means—legal and moral—to bring this war against terrorists to conclusion," he added.

Año has ordered the commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu to locate the remains of Besconde so that he can be brought to his family and given a proper burial.

"We continue to call on every God-fearing resident of Sulu, Basilan, and other

parts of Western Mindanao to help your AFP and other security forces to put a stop to this criminal and evil act of the ASG. They have no place in our civilized society," Año said.

Last week, more than half a dozen terrorists were killed in series of gunbattles with government forces in Inabanga, Bohol. Three soldiers and a police officer were also killed.

Terrorists who survived the battles and escaped remain at large and are being hunted by government forces.

The ASG had started to penetrate some tourist spots in the Visayas looking for kidnap-for-ransom targets. Aside Bohol, the military and police have yet to give concrete reports about the presence of ASG terrorists in Cebu and Siquijor.

The Palace on Monday offered its condolences to the family of Besconde.

"We strongly condemn this senseless and coldblooded murder committed during the Holy Week. Local authorities and our security forces are exhausting all means to locate the captain's remains, as our troops continue to pursue this bandit group and hold them accountable for their crimes," said Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella.

"We call on all citizens throughout the archipelago

to remain vigilant, alert and watchful, and to cooperate with our security forces. Let us work against common criminals to make our communities safer and ensure a nation worthy of all Filipinos," Abella said.

Besconde was one of four members of the crew of FB Ramona who were abducted by the bandit group somewhere in Celebes Sea in December 2016.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs said Monday recent attacks by the Abu Sayyaf on a remote part of the central tourist island of Bohol would not affect the holding of trade meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the province.

Foreign Affairs spokesman Robespierre Bolivar said in a statement that the Asean meeting, which will be attended by 10-member state trade officials and Hong Kong and other representatives will push through despite the ASG attack that killed three soldiers and a policemen and six other armed men.

"We can confirm that the Asean meeting in Bohol will push through as scheduled, unless any new information dictates otherwise," Bolivar said.

Bohol is hosting the Asean-Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement meeting on April 18 to

22 in Panglao Island.

Bolivar said all relevant international delegates have confirmed participation in the meeting in Bohol.

"The Security Committee of our National Organizing Council is continuously working to ensure the safety and security of the meeting," Bolivar said.

Officials said that about 4,000 personnel from the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, emergency response units and various agencies will be deployed during the meetings for the Asean Summit, which is expected to draw about 200 delegates.

Bohol will be hosting several meetings for ministers, senior officials and technical working groups and these events are expected to be held throughout the year.

On April 26 to 29, Metro Manila will play host to the 30th Asean Summit, with the major event on the last day to be held at the Philippine International Convention Center.

The Philippines currently chairs the Asean Summit 2017 and it will also host the 31st Asean Summit on Nov. 10 to 14 in Clark, Pampanga.

The country's chairmanship coincides with 50th anniversary of the 10-nation organization. **With Sandy Araneta and Sara Susanne Fabunan**

18 April 2017



Page: 1

'Beheading fueling desire to crush Abus'

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The beheading of Noel Besconde on Maundy Thursday by the Abu Sayyaf has enraged Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año, who vowed to deliver a lethal blow to the bandit group's terrorist acts.

"This terrorist group, by their recent barbarism, are all the more fueling the desire of the AFP to crush their beastly practice,

Turn to Page 8

Beheading From Page 1

stop their kidnap-for-ransom activities and restore peace in Western Mindanao," Año said. "We will never falter. We will not rest even a bit in our conduct of combat, intelligence and civil-military operations to protect our people. We will exhaust all means – legal and moral – to bring this war against terrorists to conclusion."

Besconde was one of four FB Ramona 2 crewmembers the group abducted in the Celebes Sea last December and brought to Sulu as captives, just days after the AFP intensified its operations in known Abu Sayyaf lairs in the provinces of Basilan and Sulu and, more

recently, Bohol.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella called on the public to be vigilant and report information to the military and police.

"We strongly condemn this senseless and coldblooded murder committed during the Holy Week," Abella said, giving assurance that authorities and security forces are exhausting all means to locate the captain's remains. Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu, believes that Besconde was murdered by his captors in the vicinity of Barangay Tugas in Patikul, Sulu because he was ill and

thus slowed down the bandits' movements.

The group of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Hatib Sawadjaan is believed to be behind the murder.

Although a report said Sawadjaan executed Besconde after a failure to pay P3 million in ransom, the military said this was "unlikely" as the bandits are known to make public announcements and issue warnings and ultimatums.

"It all the more drives our soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines to deliver the lethal blow against this band of terrorists and rescue the remaining kidnap victims," Año said as he directed Sobejana to locate Besconde's remains so he could be brought to his family and accorded a decent burial.

The AFP, on orders of Presi-

dent Duterte, has only until June 30 to finish off the group.

Meanwhile, Duterte conferred a Gold Cross Medal on the slain 2Lt. Estelito Saldua Jr. at his residence in San Jose, Batangas yesterday, hours after arriving from his week-long trip in the Middle East.

He attended the wake of the 23-year-old soldier who was killed during combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf in Inabanga, Bohol on April 11.

Duterte comforted the bereaved parents, Gina and Estelito, and the siblings of the slain soldier, giving them financial assistance and a "direct line to the President" through a cellular phone that contains his contact details.

– With Christina Mendez, Roel Pareño, Lino de la Cruz

18 April 2017



Page: 8

Abu, 2 kidnap suspects captured

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Police and military security forces captured a Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf member and two other suspects in separate operations in this city and the Zamboanga peninsula, officials said yesterday.

Abu Sayyaf member Abdu Sahibul was captured during a raid last Wednesday by combined police, military intelligence forces and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on a search for explosives in the coastal village

of Sampaloc Drive, Barangay Talon-Talon.

Chief Insp. Edilberto Alvarez, chief of the City Police Intelligence Division, said the raid was conducted based on a search warrant issued by a local court.

Alvarez said Sahibul was reportedly involved in the foiled kidnapping of Armando Ituralde in October 2015 in Talon-Talon.

Recovered from the suspect were two fragmentation grenades and six large sachets of shabu and other drug paraphernalia.

Western Mindanao Com-

mand (Westmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr said the raid was part of efforts to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf.

In Zamboanga Sibugay, security forces captured two members of the kidnap-for-ransom group last Sunday.

Abdurahman Sakilan alias Bobong Sakilan, 28, and Pujik Ismael alias Pujik Sarahento, 21, both residents of Sitio Gangit, Barangay Mamagon, Naga town were taken by police in Ipil town, Chief Supt. Billy Beltran, Police Regional Office 9, director said.

Sakilan is facing murder charges while Sarahento has

been arrested for possession of explosives.

Beltran said the two suspects were involved in a series of kidnappings, highway robberies victimizing rural transit buses and passenger vans, carjacking, extortion and sea piracy.

The suspects were also tagged in the shooting of a senior military intelligence personnel in Kabasalan town and policemen in Naga town.

According to Beltran, Sakilan was also listed as a high-value target in the illegal drug operations on the provincial level.

18 April 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page:

No more war games in Balikatan

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

There will be no more war games or live fire exercises when the next Philippine-US Balikatan exercises opens in the second week of May this year unlike in the previous years.

Major Celeste Frank Sayson, Philippine Balikatan Public Affairs Officer,

said there were adjustments made for this year's exercises due to President Rodrigo Duterte's earlier pronouncements against having live fire exercises. Instead, the President wants that the Balikatan focuses on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and counter-terrorism.

"The Balikatan will open in ►9

No more war games... ◀1

the second week of May. There will be adjustments based on the President's earlier pronouncements that the focus should already be on HADR and counter terrorism," Sayson said.

"There will be no live fire exercises," he said, stressing that what will take place this May is not war games.

"We would like to emphasize that this year's Balikatan is not war games but HADR and humanitarian assistance projects where some already started in Leyte in the first week of April to meet deadlines on the culmination of the Balikatan exercises," he said.

Sayson said just like in the past, the exercises will be held in the National Capital Region, AFP Central Command (CenCom), and Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) areas.

Asked if Palawan will be a

venue, Sayson said it will not be.

Sayson said Subic Bay in Olongapo will be an automatic venue because that will be the offloading site of US troops.

Aside from focusing on humanitarian and relief efforts, Sayson said, the exercises will also have a component that deals with terrorism.

Asked how many troops will participate in the exercises, Sayson said he still doesn't have details on that.

Balikatan is the name for the annual military exercises between the Philippines and the US. It is a Tagalog word meaning "shoulder-to-shoulder."

The 10-day Balikatan exercises next month is the 32nd iteration of the exercises which has been the cornerstone of Philippines-United States military relations since the US bases in the Philippines closed in 1991.

18 April 2017



Pahina. 2

BALIKATAN SAKA NA LANG

IPAGPAPALIBAN ang taunang military exercises ng Philippine Army kasama ang grupo ng mga Amerikano sa isang buwan, ngunit nangako pa rin ng suporta ang US troops sa kabila ng lumalamig na relasyon ng bansa sa kanila sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni President Rodrigo Duterte.

Ito sana ang unang sampung araw na exercises sa ilalim ng pamumuno ni Duterte, ngunit kinansela muna ng America.

Kwestyunable sa ngayon ang 70 taong sanib-pwersa ng Kamaynilaan sa Washington.

Ang taunang military exercises na tinatawag na Balikatan ay gaganapin sana sa Mayo, na nakatutok sa counter-terrorism at disaster response ng Pilipinas laban sa mga militanteng Islam ng bansa. **NENET L. VILLAFANIA**

18 April 2017

POLICE FILES

Page. 2

AFP magsasagawa na ng regular maritime patrols sa Benham Rise

KINUMPIRMA ni AFP chief of staff General Eduardo Ano na kaniyang ipinag-utos ang pagpapadala ng barko ng Philippine Navy sa Benham Rise para magsagawa ng patrulya.

Partikular na tinukoy ni General Ano ang bagong Strategic Sealift Vessel ng Navy ang BRP Davao Del Sur na nakatakdang ideliver sa susunod na buwan ng Indonesian defense contractor.

Ang BRP Davao del Sur ang ikalawang Strategic Sealift Vessel ng Philippine Navy.

Bukod sa BRP Davao Del Sur, magpapatrulya rin sa Benham Rise ang barkong BRP Lanao del Sur.

Sinabi ni Ano na magkakaroon na ng regular maritime security

patrols ang Philippine Navy sa Benham Rise.

Inihayag din ni chief of staff na kasalukuyang sumasailalim sa sea trial ang BRP Davao del Sur na siyang sister ship ng BRP Tarlac na siyang pinakamalaking operational warship ng Philippine Navy.

18 April 2017



Page: 2

Rody mulls Cabinet post for ex-AFP chief Cimatu

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Apparently impressed by the discipline of military officers on the job, President Duterte is mulling the appointment of retired Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Roy Cimatu to a Cabinet post.

Cimatu is currently the Philippines' special envoy to the Middle East, where the President recently concluded a six-day trip to push for investments and take care of issues hounding over one million overseas Filipino workers.

Duterte, however, did not mention the vacancy Cimatu might fill up.

In a speech before the Filipino community in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Duterte said "another Ilocano" will join his Cabinet "one of these days," hinting that he was the one sent by the government during the time of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo when there were mass evacuations from the Middle East.

Duterte then named Cimatu

as the person he was referring to.

The Chief Executive also gave the former military general a pat on the back for doing his job well as special envoy to the Middle East.

In his arrival speech at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday, Duterte also noted Cimatu's role in enhancing relations with countries in the Middle East, which he described as "a region of great importance to our country."

"It is the home of the largest number of Filipino workers overseas. It is our partner for our conventional energy needs. It is an emerging source of broader two-way trade and investments," Duterte said.

As a sign of gratitude, Duterte said he has committed to help some Middle Eastern countries in case they need the Philippine government's help.

"More than just anything else, I stressed... that should the need arise, we will be there to help them," Duterte said.

Military training, not ME deployment

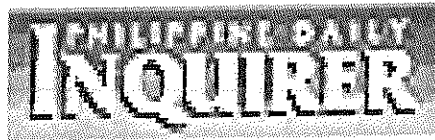
Meanwhile, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr also clarified Duterte's statement before a group of businessmen in Qatar that he would be ready to send Filipino soldiers to show the country's gratitude for their kindness to Filipinos working in the region.

Speaking on the sidelines of the visit, Esperon said the Chief Executive was referring to the training for Filipino military personnel in the Middle East.

Duterte said in various meetings in Bahrain and Qatar that he would deploy Filipino soldiers if requested by counterparts.

"This will probably take another six months to one year. This will be very selective and it will be probably based on specialized courses or training," Esperon said, adding that a memorandum of understanding would be crafted as a result of the President's talks with the respective leaders.

18 April 2017



Page: A10

Bandits in Bohol

Relatives and neighbors are adamant: Crisenta and Constancio Petalco were not members of the Abu Sayyaf. They had known the Petalcos all their lives; how could this elderly couple be bandits themselves? The dreaded bandit group is flush with millions of dollars in ransom money from scores of local and foreign kidnap victims, but Crisenta and Constancio Petalco lived spartan lives, tending to livestock and living in a tiny hut in remote Sitio Ilaya, Barangay Napo, Inabanga, Bohol.

The husband was 65 and the wife was said to be in her 70s, hunched and rendered frail by arthritis. When a band of 10 heavily armed men entered their village last week, prompting a fierce firefight with military and police that resulted in the evacuation of about 3,000 residents, Constancio "went back to get his wife who could not walk properly and was packing their things for the evacuation," according to a report in this paper. Apparently, the Petalcos were caught in the crossfire; after the gun battle, they were found lying dead outside their hut along with three suspected Abu Sayyaf members including the group's alleged leader, Abu Rami.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF

A

The military announced that all five dead people were members of the bandit group, but village residents insist otherwise in the case of Constancio and Crisenta Petalco. According to Capt. Jojo Mascariñas of the 302nd Brigade of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the couple were suspect because Joselito Melloria, the man seen by residents escorting the armed group into the village, was their nephew. Melloria, a former village resident, reportedly married a Muslim woman in Lanao, converted to the faith and became an Abu Sayyaf member. "Constancio is Melloria's uncle, so they had a relationship. We're still looking into what kind," Mascariñas has been quoted as saying.

Of course, any investigation would be too late. The Petalcos are dead, to much grief among their relatives and neighbors who have gone on Facebook to cry for justice and vent their protests at the military's claims.

Some other murky details surround the official narrative so far about the Abu Sayyaf's incursion in Bohol. One that stands out is the apparent lack of intelligence that allowed a group of armed men to set forth from their base in Indanan, Sulu, and turn up four days later in an island that's among the country's top tourist destinations. The military disclosed that it had, in fact, been told by "insiders" about the suspicious departure of the armed group from Sulu but that it didn't know their destination, and so had to do some cross-checking. The interception came too late—when the Abu Sayyaf had already made a beachhead in Bohol and civilians were bound to be affected by any operation.

The information from "insiders" appears to have reached American intelligence as well. On April 9, the US Embassy in Manila issued an advisory warning its citizens against travelling to "Central Visayas, which includes Cebu and Bohol provinces." But Malacañang, the police and the military all downplayed the travel warning. There was "no direct threat" to the region, said Chief Supt. Noli Taliño of the Police Regional Office 7 in Cebu City. Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Dino also called on the US Embassy "to substantiate the report in order to avoid confusion among the local citizens and foreign visitors alike."

The substantiation would come soon enough, in the form of an incursion and a gun battle that not only rattled a popular tourist hotspot and economic hub in the region, but also exposed the military's shortcomings in terms of timely intelligence, even as it was eventually able to neutralize the armed men's presence in Bohol. The AFP chief, Gen. Eduardo Año, is at least clear-eyed about the fatal gap in this case: The Philippines being an archipelagic nation, "we really need naval assets to conduct maritime security."

That, or more incidents like the one in Bohol, where the fighting and air strikes also killed three soldiers and a policeman, are bound to happen.

CRISENTA AND CONSTANCIO PETALCO LIVED SPARTAN LIVES, TENDING TO LIVESTOCK AND LIVING IN A TINY HUT IN REMOTE SITIO LAYA, BARANGAY NAPO, INABANGA, BOHOL

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF

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

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

NPA claims responsibility for killing of Palawan disaster risk reduction head

The New People's Army claimed responsibility for the killing of Palawan disaster risk reduction management office chief Gilbert Baaco, RGMA's Junfred Calamba reported on Monday.

*Inako ng mga rebeldeng NPA ang pagpatay sa PDRRMC officer sa Palawan. | via Junfred Calamba, RGMA Palawan @dzbb
7:53 PM - 16 Apr 2017*

Baaco was gunned down on Good Friday at his house in Barangay Barong Barong, Brooke's Point, Palawan, by an armed group.

According to Baaco's wife, Maria Victoria, two of the group members were women, and they were dressed in camouflage and carried high-caliber guns.

They said they were only after Baaco's guns, Maria Victoria said.

The group took two long firearms that belonged to Baaco, then escaped at the back of the house, the report said.

The 44-year-old Baaco had four gunshot wounds and was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

The Palawan disaster risk reduction management head—considered the right-hand man of Gov. Jose Alvarez—served the provincial government in several capacities, including heading its Rescue 165 program.

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

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

ONLINE NEWS

18 APRIL 2017

www.dwdd.com.ph

AFP condemns ASG for beheading kidnap victim

Posted by **Lui Claudio**

The AFP expresses its extreme indignation for the beheading of a Kidnap-for-Ransom Victim Mr. Noel Besconde by Terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group Sub Leader Sadjawaan on 13 April 2017 in the vicinity Brgy. Tugas in Patikul, Sulu.

Mr. Besconde, Filipino, was one of four members of the crew of FB Ramona who were abducted somewhere in the Celebes Sea last Dec 2016.

BGen Cirilito Sobejana, Commander of Joint Task Force Sulu believes that Mr. Besconde was murdered by his ASG captors because he was reportedly ill and impedes their movement to evade the operating units that are hunting them.

"While the AFP condemns this gruesome murder of this hapless kidnap victim, it all the more drives our Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines to deliver the lethal blow against this band of terrorists and rescue the remaining kidnap victims," declares AFP chief General Eduardo Año.

"This terrorist group are all the more, by their recent barbarism, fueling the desire of the AFP to crush their beastly practice, stop their kidnap-for-ransom activities, and restore peace in Western Mindanao.

"We will never falter. We will not rest even a bit in our conduct of combat, intelligence, and civil-military operations to protect our people. We will exhaust all means-legal and moral- to bring this war against terrorists to conclusion.

"Meanwhile, I have directed JTF Sulu Commander BGen Sobejana to locate the remains of the Mr. Besconde forthwith. I desire that his body be brought to his mournful family and be accorded a decent burial.

"We continue to call on every God-fearing resident of Sulu, Basilan, and other parts of Western Mindanao to help your AFP and other security forces to put a stop to this criminal and evil acts of the ASG. They have no place in our civilized society," concludes General Año

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

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

www.dwdd.com.ph

AFP to allocate 5% for Muslims in Recruitment

Posted by Lui Claudio

CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will in future recruitment, set aside five percent (5%) of the total number of applicants to come from Muslim Filipinos, Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, AFP Public Affairs Chief disclosed Saturday, April 8.

“The AFP Chief of Staff, General Eduardo Año ordered the allocation of a maximum of 5% of the total number of aspirants in the AFP either as Officers, Cadets, or Enlisted Personnel for our Muslim brothers and sisters,” Colonel Arevalo said.

At present, all recruitment quotas in the AFP have a 10% allocated to female soldiers while 5% are allotted for Indigenous People (IP), reinstatement, and special enlistment.

In the Philippine Army alone, this year’s quota is 3,600 for regular enlistment; 360 of which are dedicated to female applicants while 180 are either for IP, reinstatement, or special enlistment. If the new allocation will be implemented, another 180 will be dedicated to Muslim applicants.

The Philippine Air Force, on the other hand, has a quota of 600 for Enlisted Personnel and 80 for Military Officers while the Philippine Navy has 1,660 for Enlisted Personnel and 140 for Officers.

“With the specific number of recruits to be sourced from among Muslim applicants, we hope to be able to organize a battalion of Muslim soldiers. And in the long run, a Brigade or Division composed of Muslims. They will be appropriately deployed to areas where Islam is the predominant religion,” Colonel Arevalo said.

“The Muslim soldiers will comprise the units best deployable to Muslim communities because of their being abreast of the culture and knowledgeable of the sensitivities of the Islam religion,” Colonel Arevalo stated.

“Most of our Muslim brothers and sisters perceive the deployment of almost 100% Christian soldiers in their communities as invading or occupational forces. We hope to avoid this through the deployment of pure Muslim units in their communities,” Colonel Arevalo added.

“We desire an Armed Forces of the Philippines that shall represent a cross-section of our society. We would like to ensure that as we modernize, we would not be focusing our attention only in armaments and equipment but in empowering specific sectors within the AFP like women, Indigenous Peoples, and Muslims,” General Eduardo Año, AFP Chief of Staff said.

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