

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



ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

17 January 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.

NEWS HEADLINES

17 January 2017

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

8 MEN AS RICH AS HALF OF THE WORLD

And poverty segregation. Duterte urges leaders to do more than pay lip service to the growing gap between the very rich and the poor. If not, it warns, public anger against this inequality will continue to grow and lead to more seismic political changes.

INQUIRE WITHIN

WHAT can we do for now to put order in Laguna Lake? **PHOTO**

HOW did PH reset to China's militarization of islands? **PHOTO**

WHICH chocolate bar is good for you - and your diabetes? **PHOTO**

Historic cockfighting event at RWAP's world-class center

Terno fashion with Miss U bets

2 street children vow ballet world

Phl protests China weapons systems on islands

Onday-type torrents submerge CDO

Senators urge Duterte: Shut up on martial law

Self-rated poverty at record low in 2016

Speaker cool to excise tax on fuel

Laason eyes probe of guns with same serial numbers

PCSO expands STL operations

The Manila Times

Do we even know what questions to ask?

SENATE LEADER SAYS MARTIAL LAW THREAT MAY TO BE PRESENT SOONEST

Duterte 'all bark, no bite' - Recto

'Misreporting' of President's martial law remarks hit

SWS: Self-rated poverty at new record low

In reform, bad habits die hard

'Amid killings, don't allow fears to reign'

Data found in SD cards confirm poll fraud - Marcos camp

Non-interference in Asean impossible, experts say

Daily Tribune

RESISTANCE HIGHEST IN CAPITAL AT 81%

Pulse poll: 74% buck need for military rule

Palace withdraws Lenti invitation for *Vin d'honneur*

SSS row shifts to premium hike

Classified US intel report: Russia gathered compromising info on Trump

No useful benefit to raise China's legal deficit in Asean meet - Yasay

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

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Republic of the Philippines
 Department of Science and Technology
**PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND
 ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA)**
 Weather Division
 ISO 9001:2008 Certified
 Registry No. 01 100 1534769

WFS-02
 Rev.1/05-06-2016

24-Hour Weather Forecast and Extended Weather Outlook for Selected Cities:

ISSUED AT : 5:00 PM 16 JANUARY 2017
 VALID BEGINNING : 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

CITIES	24-Hr Weather, Winds and Sea Condition Forecast from 5 PM today until 5 PM tomorrow		Extended Weather Outlook Duration: 5 PM until 5 PM of the following day			
	16 JAN		17 JAN	18 JAN	19 JAN	20 JAN
	Metro Manila	23 °C 30 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast Manila Bay: Moderate to Rough	23 °C 30 °C	22 °C 29 °C	22 °C 29 °C
Tuguegarao City	21 °C 27 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast	21 °C 27 °C	20 °C 27 °C	20 °C 28 °C	22 °C 29 °C
Laoag City	21 °C 31 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 29 °C
Baguio City	13 °C 22 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast	13 °C 22 °C	12 °C 22 °C	12 °C 21 °C	13 °C 21 °C
SBMA(Olongapo) / Clark Zone (Angeles City)	24 °C 30 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast Subic Bay: Moderate to Rough	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 29 °C	23 °C 29 °C	23 °C 30 °C
Tagaytay City	20 °C 28 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast	20 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C
Lipa City	23 °C 28 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast	23 °C 28 °C	23 °C 28 °C	23 °C 29 °C	23 °C 30 °C
Legazpi City	23 °C 27 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	24 °C 27 °C	25 °C 27 °C	25 °C 28 °C	24 °C 28 °C
Puerto Princesa City	24 °C 27 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	25 °C 29 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C
Iloilo City / Bacolod City	25 °C 27 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast to Northwest Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	25 °C 27 °C	25 °C 28 °C	25 °C 29 °C	25 °C 29 °C
Metro Cebu	24 °C 26 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast to Northwest Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	24 °C 27 °C	24 °C 28 °C	24 °C 29 °C	24 °C 30 °C
Tacolban City	24 °C 26 °C	Moderate to Strong: Northeast to Northwest Coastal Waters: Moderate to Rough	24 °C 27 °C	24 °C 27 °C	24 °C 28 °C	24 °C 28 °C
Cagayan de Oro City	24 °C 28 °C	Light to Moderate: Northeast to Northwest Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate	24 °C 29 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C
Valencia City	21 °C 30 °C	Light to Moderate: Northeast to Northwest	20 °C 30 °C	20 °C 31 °C	19 °C 31 °C	19 °C 31 °C
Metro Davao	26 °C 33 °C	Light to Moderate: Northeast to north Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate	26 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 33 °C
Zamboanga City	24 °C 30 °C	Light to Moderate: Northwest Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C

LEGEND:

	Clear Skies		Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshower and/ or Thunderstorms		Occasional Rains		Rains with Gusty Winds
	Partly Cloudy Skies		Cloudy Skies with Rainshower and/ or Thunderstorms		Monsoon Rains / Rains		Stormy
	Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshower		Light Rains				

PREPARED BY: SFD
 WFFC BIR Road Diliman Quezon City

END OF FORECAST

CHECKED BY: JS6

Tel/Fax: +6329271541



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
 Department of Science and Technology
**Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and
 Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)**
Weather Division
 ISO 9001:2008 Certified
 Registry No. 01 100 1534769

WFS-02
Rev 1/05-06-2016

24- HOUR PUBLIC WEATHER FORECAST

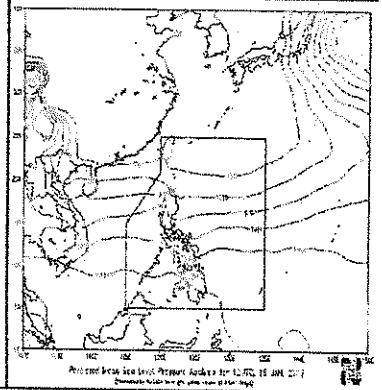
ISSUED AT: 5:00 PM 16 JANUARY 2017

VALID BEGINNING: 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

SYNOPSIS: AT 4:00 PM TODAY, THE LOW PRESSURE AREA (LPA) WAS ESTIMATED BASED ON ALL AVAILABLE DATA IN THE VICINITY OF KABASALAN, ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY (7.8°N, 122.8°E). TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT AFFECTING VISAYAS.

FORECAST: CLOUDY SKIES WITH MODERATE TO OCCASIONALLY HEAVY RAINS AND THUNDERSTORMS WHICH MAY TRIGGER FLASHFLOODS AND LANDSLIDES WILL BE EXPERIENCED OVER VISAYAS AND THE REGIONS OF NORTHERN MINDANAO, ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA AND THE PROVINCE OF PALAWAN. CLOUDY SKIES WITH LIGHT TO MODERATE RAINS AND ISOLATED THUNDERSTORMS IS EXPECTED OVER THE REST OF MINDANAO, BICOL REGION AND THE REST OF MIMAROPA REGION. CLOUDY SKIES WITH LIGHTS RAINS WILL PREVAIL OVER CAGAYAN VALLEY AND PROVINCES OF AURORA AND QUEZON. PARTLY CLOUDY TO CLOUDY SKIES WITH ISOLATED LIGHT RAINS WILL PREVAIL OVER METRO MANILA AND THE REST OF LUZON.

MODERATE TO STRONG WINDS BLOWING FROM THE NORTHEAST WILL PREVAIL OVER LUZON AND COMING FROM THE NORTHEAST TO NORTHWEST OVER VISAYAS. THE COASTAL WATERS OVER THESE AREAS WILL BE MODERATE TO ROUGH. ELSEWHERE, WINDS WILL BE LIGHT TO MODERATE COMING FROM THE NORTHEAST TO NORTHWEST WITH SLIGHT TO MODERATE SEAS.



PAGTAYA: MAULAP NA KALANGITAN NA MAY KATAMTAMAN HANGGANG SA KUNG MINSAN AY MALAKAS NA PAG-ULAN AT PAGKIDLAT-PAGKULOG NA MAARING MAGDULOT NG MGA PAGBAHA AT PAGGUHO NG LUPA ANG MARARANASAN SA KABISAYAAN AT MGA REHIYON NG HILAGANG MINDANAO, ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA AT LALAWIGAN NG PALAWAN. MAULAP NA KALANGITAN NA MAY MAHINA HANGGANG SA KATAMTAMANG MGA PAG-ULAN AT PULU-PULONG PAGKIDLAT-PAGKULOG ANG INAASAHAN SA NALALABING BAHAGI NG MINDANAO, KABIKULAN AT SA NALALABING BAHAGI NG REHIYON NG MIMAROPA. MAULAP NA KALANGITAN NA MAY MAHINANG MGA PAG-ULAN ANG IIRAL SA CAGAYAN VALLEY AT MGA LALAWIGAN NG AURORA AT QUEZON. BAHAGYANG MAULAP HANGGANG SA MAULAP NA KALANGITAN NA MAY PULU-PULONG MAHIHINANG MGA PAG-ULAN ANG IIRAL SA KAMAYNILAAN AT SA NALALABING BAHAGI NG LUZON.

KATAMTAMAN HANGGANG SA MALAKAS NA HANGIN MULA SA HILAGANG-SILANGAN ANG IIRAL SA LUZON AT MULA NAMAN SA HILAGANG-SILANGAN HANGGANG SA HILAGANG-KANLURAN SA KABISAYAAN. ANG MGA BAYBAYING DAGAT SA MGA LUGAR NA ITO AY MAGIGING KATAMTAMAN HANGGANG SA MAALON. SA IBANG DAKO, ANG HANGIN AY MAGIGING MAHINA HANGGANG SA KATAMTAMAN MULA SA HILAGANG-SILANGAN HANGGANG HILAGANG-KANLURAN NA MAY BANAYAD HANGGANG SA KATAMTAMANG PAG-ALON NG KARAGATAN.

EXTREMES OF TEMPERATURE AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY FOR THE 24-HR PERIOD ENDING AT 4:00 PM TODAY AND RECORDED AT PAGASA WEATHER STATION, SCIENCE GARDEN, DILIMAN, QUEZON CITY:

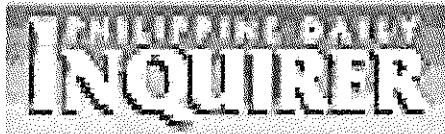
MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE: 1:00 PM TODAY 30.0 °C	MAXIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY: 6:00 AM TODAY 88 %	
MINIMUM TEMPERATURE: 6:00 AM TODAY 23.5 °C	MINIMUM RELATIVE HUMIDITY: 1:00 PM TODAY 54 %	
TIDAL PREDICTION ALONG MANILA BAY (COURTESY OF NAMRIA)	ASTRONOMICAL INFORMATION OVER METRO MANILA	
HIGH TIDE TOMORROW: 12:44 AM 1.01 METER	SUNSET/ SUNRISE	MOONRISE/ MOONSET & ILLUMINATION
LOW TIDE TOMORROW: 8:32 AM -0.05 METER	SUNSET TODAY: 5:47 PM	MOONRISE TODAY: 9:25 PM
HIGH TIDE TOMORROW: 2:58 PM 0.38 METER	SUNRISE TOMORROW: 6:25 AM	MOONSET TOMORROW: 9:58 AM
	SUNSET TOMORROW: 5:47 PM	ILLUMINATION TODAY: 88%

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND QUERIES, PLEASE CALL AT TELEPHONE NUMBER 927-1335 OR LOG ON TO WWW.PAGASA.DOST.GOV.PH.

PREPARED BY: SFD

CHECKED BY: JSG

17 January 2017

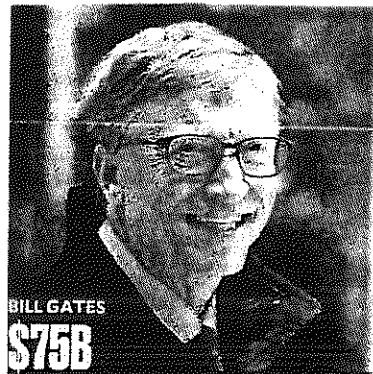


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8 MEN AS RICH AS HALF OF THE WORLD

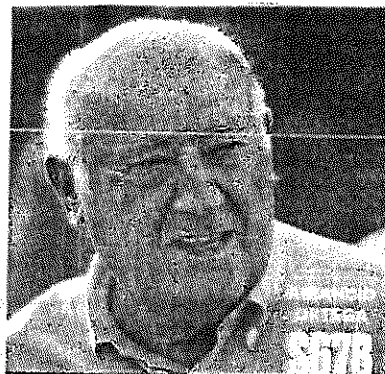
STORY BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Antipoverty organization Oxfam urges leaders to do more than pay lip service to the growing gap between the very rich and the poor. If not, it warns, public anger against this inequality will continue to grow and lead to more seismic political changes **A14**




BILL GATES
\$75B

He cofounded Microsoft in 1975, growing it into the world's biggest software firm and helping make computers a household item.



AMANCIO ORTEGA
\$67B

He cofounded clothing retailer Zara in 1975, and the chain, part of Ortega's Inditex group, now has 7,000 shops worldwide.



WARREN BUFFETT
\$60.8B

He began investing as a teenager in the 1940s and gradually grew his firm, Berkshire Hathaway, into a well-diversified investor.



CARLOS SLIM HELU
\$50B

The Mexican tycoon derives his fortune from a major ownership in America's largest telecom multinational worth \$42 billion.



JEFF BEZOS
\$45.2B

The founder and CEO of online store Amazon.com helped revolutionize the retail industry by popularizing online shopping.




MARK ZUCKERBERG
\$44.6B

He cofounded Facebook while a 19-year-old student at Harvard in 2004. The company has become globally popular, outstripping rivals like Twitter.



LARRY ELLISON
\$43.6B

The fortune of this founder and chair of software giant Oracle comes from his 27-percent stake in the \$160-billion firm.



MICHAEL BLOOMBERG
\$40B

He founded the eponymous financial information provider in 1981 and made it lucrative, selling data terminals to financial services firms.

8 men as rich as half of the world

FROM A1

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND—The gap between the superrich and the poorest half of the global population is starker than previously thought, with just eight men, from Bill Gates to Michael Bloomberg, owning as much wealth as 3.6 billion people, according to an analysis by Oxfam released on Monday.

Presenting its findings on the dawn of the annual gathering of the global political and business elites in the Swiss ski resort of Davos, antipoverty organization Oxfam says the gap between the very rich and the poor is far greater than just a year ago.

The organization is urging leaders to do more than pay lip service to the problem.

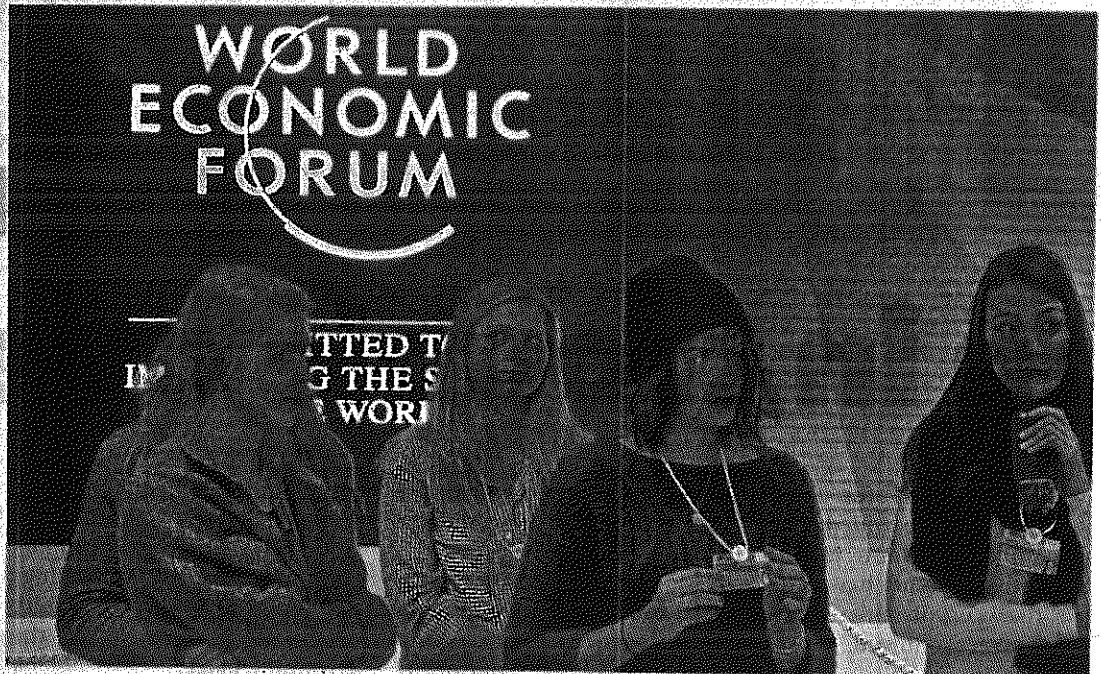
Seismic political changes

If not, Oxfam warns, public anger against this kind of inequality will continue to grow and lead to more seismic political changes akin to last year's election of Donald Trump as US president and Britain's vote to leave the European Union.

"It is obscene for so much wealth to be held in the hands of so few when 1 in 10 people survive on less than \$2 a day," said Winnie Byanyima, executive director of Oxfam International, who will be attending the meeting in Davos.

"Inequality is trapping hundreds of millions in poverty; it is fracturing our societies and undermining democracy," Byanyima said.

The same report a year earlier said that the richest 62 people on the planet owned as much wealth as the bottom half of the population.



DAVOS MEET—Staff members are briefed at the congress center where the World Economic Forum will take place in Davos, Switzerland. —AP

But Oxfam has revised that figure down to eight following new information gathered by Swiss bank Credit Suisse.

Oxfam used Forbes' billionaires list that was last published in March 2016 to make its headline claim.

Richest 8

According to the Forbes list, Microsoft founder Gates is the richest individual with a net worth of \$75 billion.

The others, in order of ranking, are Spanish founder of fashion house Inditex Amancio Ortega, financier Warren Buffett, Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim Helu, Amazon boss

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**It is obscene
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survive on less
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Winnie Byanyima
Oxfam International
executive director

Jeff Bezos, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg, Oracle's Larry Ellison and Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York.

Oxfam outlined measures that it hopes will be enacted to help reduce the inequality.

They include higher taxes on wealth and income to ensure a more level playing field and to fund investments in public services and jobs, greater cooperation among governments on ensuring workers are paid decently and the rich don't dodge their taxes.

And business leaders should commit to paying their fair share of taxes and a living wage to employees.

'Do the right thing'

Max Lawson, Oxfam's policy adviser, urged billionaires to "do the right thing," and to do "what

Bill Gates has called on them to do, which is pay their taxes."

The ability of the rich to avoid paying their fair share of taxes was vividly exposed last year in the so-called Panama Papers, a leaked trove of data that revealed details on offshore accounts that helped individuals shelter their wealth.

"We have a situation where billionaires are paying less tax often than their cleaner or their secretary," Lawson told The Associated Press (AP). "That's crazy."

It's because of this kind of inequality that trust in institutions has fallen sharply since the global financial crisis of 2008, according to Edelman, one of the world's biggest marketing firms.

Trust crisis

In its own pre-Davos survey of more than 33,000 people across 28 markets, Edelman found the largest-ever drop in trust across government, business, media and even non-governmental organizations.

CEO credibility is at an all-time low and government leaders are the least trusted group, according to the survey.

The firm's 2017 Trust Barometer found that 53 percent of respondents believe the current system has failed them in that it is unfair and offers few hopes for the future, with only 15 percent believing it is working.

That belief was evident for both the general population and those with college education.

"The implications of the glob-

al trust crisis are deep and wide-ranging," said Richard Edelman, the firm's president and CEO.

"It began with the Great Recession of 2008, but like the second and third waves of a tsunami, globalization and technological change have further weakened people's trust in global institutions. The consequence is virulent populism and nationalism as the mass population has taken control away from the elites," he said.

Media echo chamber

Edelman highlighted how "the emergence of a media echo chamber" that reinforces personal beliefs while shutting out opposing views has magnified this "cycle of distrust."

According to the survey, search engines are trusted more as an information tool than traditional news editors, 59 percent to 41 percent.

"People now view the media as part of the elite," Edelman said. "The result is a proclivity for self-referential media and reliance on peers. The lack of trust in media has also given rise to the fake news phenomenon and politicians speaking directly to the masses."

He said business may be best placed to help improve trust.

Companies need to be transparent and honest with their employees about the changes taking place in the workplace, improve skills and pay fairly, he said.

The online survey was conducted between Oct. 13 and Nov. 16, 2016. —AP

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Senators urge Duterte: Shut up on martial law

By PAOLO ROMERO

It's a cure worse than the disease, and if he doesn't mean it, he should stop talking about it.

Senators yesterday warned President Duterte against making threats to declare martial law, saying it could not be used against the drug menace, is contrary to the sentiments of Filipinos and could drive away tourists and investors.

Over the weekend, Duterte warned that he would place the country under martial rule if the drug menace became "virulent" and no one could stop him, not even the oversight powers of Congress and the Supreme Court.

Presidential Communications Office chief Martin Andanar slammed the "misreporting" of the statement and said Duterte did not intend to declare martial law.

"President Duterte should just shut up on these martial law threats and just govern our country the way any responsible leader should," Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV said yesterday.

Sen. Franklin Drilon cautioned Duterte against making statements that cause fear and tension among the people, and defended the media over the accusation of "misreporting" Duterte's statement.

Turn to Page 12

Senators From Page 1

Drilon pointed out that the 1987 Constitution only allows the declaration of martial law upon the concurrence of two requisites: one, when there is actual invasion or rebellion and two, when public safety requires it. And these two requisites must be present.

Senate Minority Leader Ralph Recto pointed out that "there is no basis to declare martial law."

"Rebellion has been tamed. No foreign army is steaming toward our shores to invade us. And as the President himself likes to brag, crime is down and the people are safe in their homes and communities. And as to the real enemies of the people – joblessness, hunger, poor social services – these can-

not be suppressed by the armed forces," he added.

Recto stressed that martial law is a cure worse than the perceived disease. "At a time when we project stability to reel in tourists and investors, a martial law declaration will show the opposite... how unstable we are."

Recto also advised Filipinos to get used to the "theatrical bombast" of Duterte, whose "bluster should be likened to a dog that always barks but seldom bites."

Drilon said such pronouncements only strengthen the people's perception that "the rule of law plays second fiddle to the administration's campaign against drugs."

He also said "the news re-

ports were devoid of any interpretation by the media.”

“The reports were based on the President’s speech and the statements were quoted verbatim. We should not blame the press for reporting what the President said,” he said.

For Sen. Paolo Benigno Aquino IV, Duterte should seriously take notice of the recent Pulse Asia survey where 74 percent of Filipinos opposed the imposition of martial law.

“Why does the President seem so obsessed with dictatorial rule when the majority of the people want democratic governance?” Sen. Risa Hontiveros added.

Trillanes said “all freedom-loving Filipinos should start preparing to fight another dictator. Soldiers should also start reviewing their constitutional mandate.”

The fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) also slammed Duterte’s threat to declare martial law.

“The hands of the armed forces are already tainted with blood, their institution is already embedded with human rights violations and impunity. We fear that bringing back the military rule would heighten the dictatorial character of the already fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines,” Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

“Duterte should keep true to his earlier pronouncement that he would not declare martial law because nothing happened during those dark days. Martial law will never be the solution to resolve the ills of society like proliferation of illegal drugs and crimes. President

Duterte should instead address why these anti-social activities prevail in the present societal system.

“The Filipino people have surpassed martial law and toppled a dictator before. We will again do so if this purported plot for martial law would become imminent and in the name of preserving the basic rights of the Filipino people,” he added.

Koko: Duterte just discussing his power

Senate President Aquilino “Koko” Pimentel III, an ally of Duterte, downplayed his threat to declare martial law.

He said everything in Duterte’s statement, even if hypothetical, was in conformity with the Constitution.

“Don’t be too alarmed about

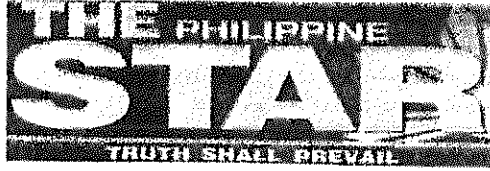
a lawyer president discussing his power, which is clear also under the Constitution. What is so alarming about that?” Pimentel told reporters.

“The statement that the President has the power on his own to declare martial law is found in the Constitution and all other safeguards are also found in the Constitution. Don’t worry too much about that legally correct statement of the President,” he added.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson also downplayed Duterte’s threats to declare martial law.

“It’s one of those rhetorics that we should get ourselves used to by now. Instead of commenting, it’s prudent to just wait for his spokespersons to interpret or clarify first,” Lacson said. – **With Delon Porcalla, Rhodina Villanueva, Ding Cervantes**

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Sayyaf hunter is new Westmincom chief

ZAMBOANGA CITY – An Army Scout Ranger officer, a veteran in operations against Abu Sayyaf bandits, will take over as Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief.

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez, commander of the 6th Army Division, will assume the post from Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz at ceremonies to be held at Camp Don Basilio Navarro today.

De la Cruz will take over as inspector general of the Armed

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AFP: Abus behind Basilan roadside blast

The military has blamed the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) as the ones behind the roadside bomb explosion that killed one person and injured another in Basilan province on Sunday. Col. Thomas Donato, Army's 104th Infantry Brigade commander, said the incident occurred around 4 p.m. Sunday in Barangay Sabong, Lamitan City, Basilan. Donato said the improvised bomb fashioned out as a landmine was placed along the side of the Basilan circumferential road. Killed was Saibi Haddalun and wounded was Haddalun's mother, Neneng, according to the Lamitan City police. Donato said the bombing was the handiwork of ASG brigands targeting soldiers passing along the circumferential road but unfortunately civilians were victimized. He ordered to strengthen the conduct of security patrols to ensure the protection of the residents.

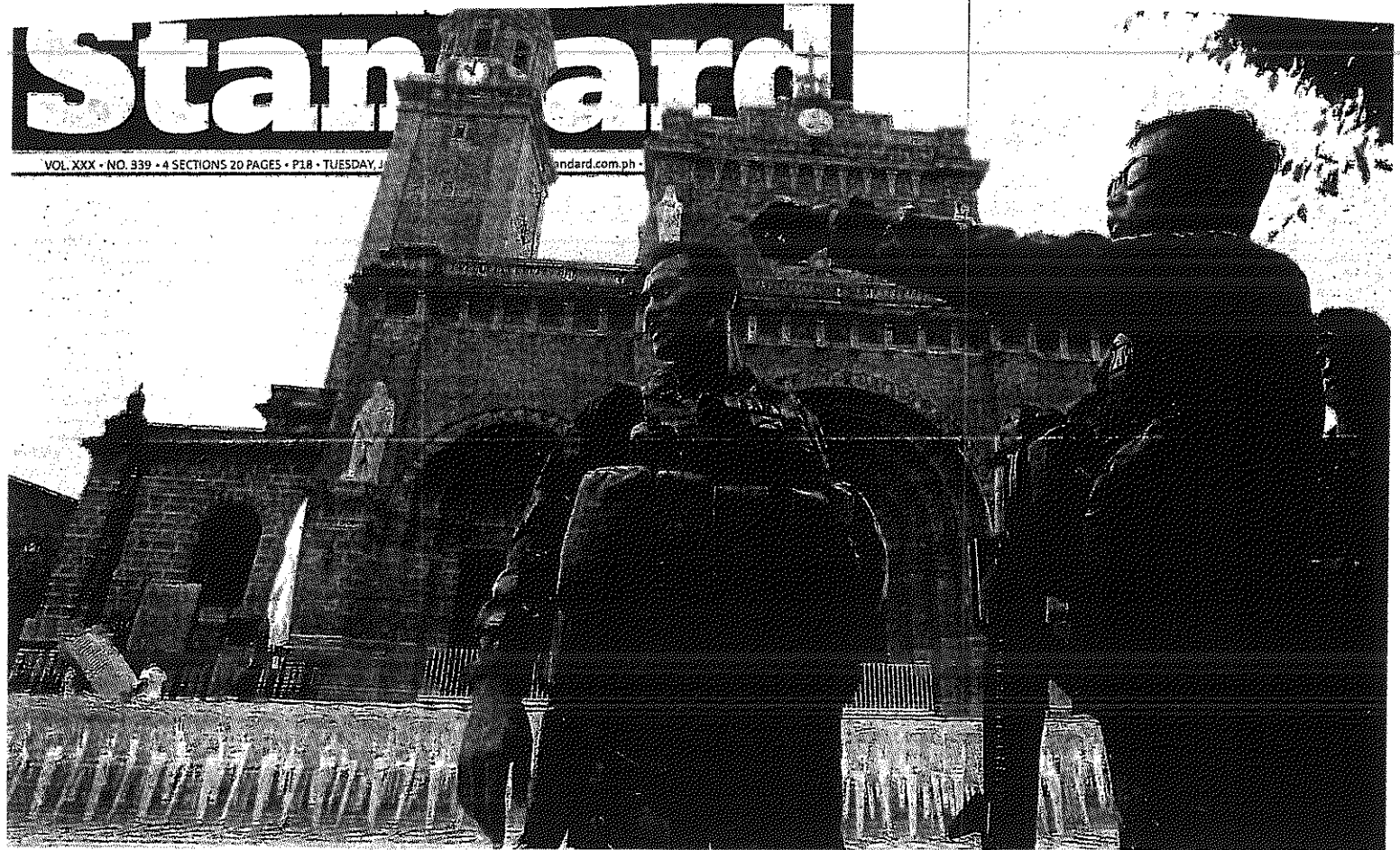
PNA

17 January 2017

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

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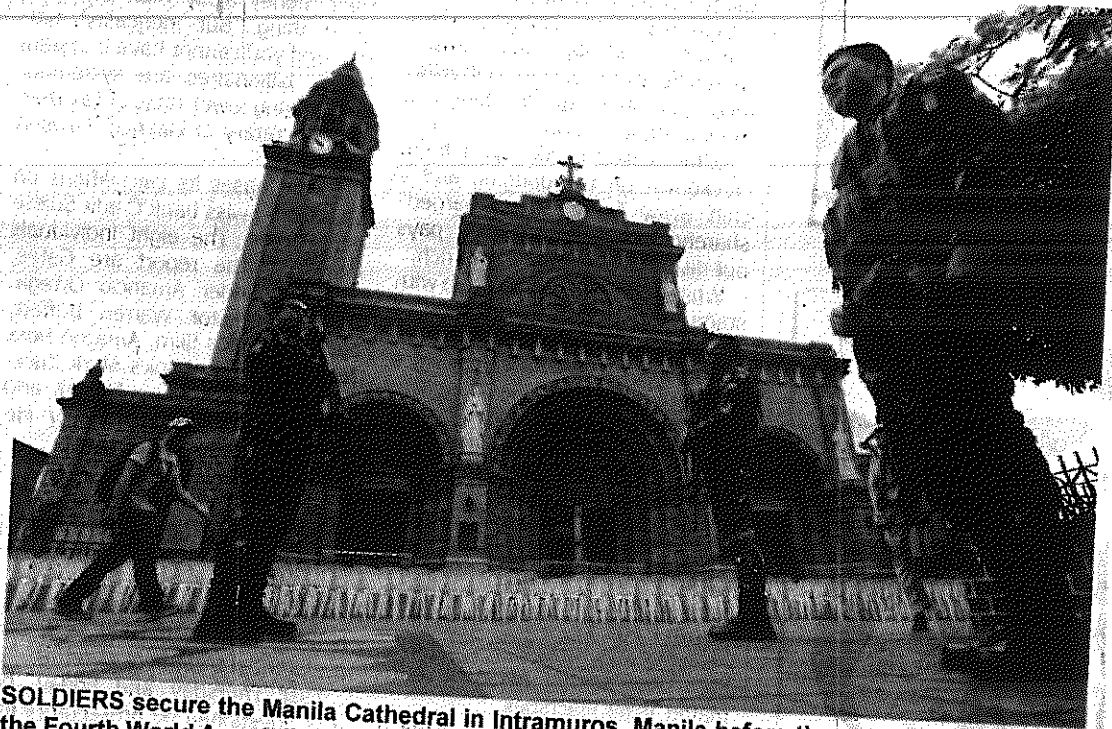


SAFE AND SECURE. Army troops guard the 16th century Manila Cathedral as hundreds of foreign and Filipino delegates attend the opening Monday of the 4th World Apostolic Congress on Mercy in a well-attended Mass presided there by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Guiseppe Pinto, with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle as homilist. Norman Cruz

17 January 2017



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SOLDIERS secure the Manila Cathedral in Intramuros, Manila before the opening ceremony of the Fourth World Apostolic Congress. (Ali Vicoy)

17 January 2017



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PH, US militaries train on joint emergency response

By FRANCIS J. WAKEFIELD

The Philippines and the United States (US) militaries began yesterday the conduct of Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEEs) at Clark Air Base in Angeles City, Pampanga that will last until January 25.

In a statement provided by the United States Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs which can be viewed via <http://www.pacaf.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/377/Article/1047831/servicemembers-to-conduct-hadr-exchange-with-philippine-allies.aspx>, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army and

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) service members will conduct bilateral Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief related SMEEs.

The US PAFPA said the exchanges will center on the capability produced by the U.S. Air Force's deployable ground-based satellite imagery system known as Eagle Vision.

"The system provides real-time mission critical imagery acquired from commercially available satellites and is a key enabler to U.S. Pacific Command's Foreign Humanitarian Assistance response," the US PAFPA said.

17 January 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Safety of hostages still priority, says AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday said it would continue to give primacy to the safety of kidnap victims in the fight against the Abu Sayyaf despite President Duterte's order for security forces to bomb the kidnap-for-ransom group even if the kidnap victims become "collateral damage."

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding 25 hostages, mostly foreigners. Duterte, speaking before businessmen in Davao City Saturday, said he wants the Abu Sayyaf kidnappings stopped and if the bandits are trying to escape, "bomb them all."

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the President might have made the "bold pronouncement" because of his eagerness to end the Abu Sayyaf kidnappings and to re-

See SAFETY > Page B6

SAFETY

store peace in the areas where the group operates.

Even then, he said, the military will "still give consideration to the safety of the hostages they are holding."

Padilla said soldiers will be "swift and aggressive" in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, and it is up to the military commanders to execute the campaign "in the best way possible, at the least cost of life,

and at the least application of violence" which he said part of the "operational art."

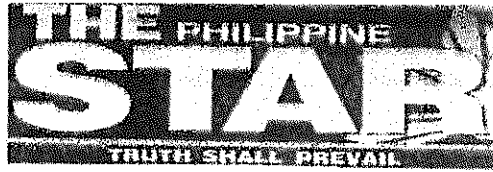
"As much as possible, we want to avoid what we call collateral damage. That is why our soldiers and policemen undergo training so they can accomplish their mission properly, at the least cost of life, at the least application of violence," he said.

Padilla also said the military will have to make "sacrifices" if these will benefit the more people. "The order is clear for

us to pursue (the Abu Sayyaf) even in the high seas and apply whatever force is necessary, that is clear. And second, the timetable, the plan, he (Duterte) wants this (problem solved) done as soon as possible," he said.

AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Ano early this month set a six-month timetable within which to end the Abu Sayyaf problem, together with the Maute group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

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Bato explains Rody kill order vs Abus

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa defended President Duterte's directive to shoot and kill Abu Sayyaf bandits even if it could also harm their hostages, saying it was not the President's intention.

Dela Rosa said the President is determined to end the problem of the Abu Sayyaf, which is involved in kidnap-for-ransom incidents mostly victimizing foreigners in Mindanao.

"Those statements of the President are just to emphasize that he wants to end this problem. He wants to bomb these terrorists, so if there are collateral damage, sorry," Dela Rosa said in Filipino and

English.

He said that armed clashes sometimes have collateral damage that are not intentional.

Dela Rosa said the number of kidnapping victims of the Abu Sayyaf continues to increase since some people insist on going to rebel-infested areas.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), however, clarified that the military would pursue the Abu Sayyaf but would keep in mind that it should still minimize the loss of lives.

Reacting to President Duterte's order for soldiers to bomb the enemy even if hostages might become collateral

damage, AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said it is still up to the military how to carry out its operations.

"You know in the application of force, in order to accomplish the mission, sometimes it cannot be avoided that there will be a certain level of damage," he said.

"For example, if you are ordered to attack and seize a facility, it is up to us to apply what we learned as men in the service in seizing that objective and applying whatever force is necessary to seize that objective," he explained.

Padilla said this is the reason why soldiers and the police go through a hard process

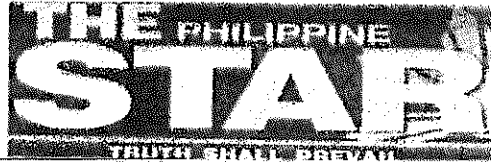
of training and readiness so that they can discharge their functions properly "at the least cost of life."

He said President Duterte's pronouncements are strong and aggressive because such are his traits as a former mayor of Davao City and a pure Bisaya.

Padilla said President Duterte's pronouncements are operational orders that he has given to the AFP, which the military treats as guidance and takes seriously.

"But in the implementation of those guidance, we apply our skills and our operational art, it's an operational art," he said. – With Michael Punongbayan

17 January 2017



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Gov't panel leaves for Rome

for peace talks

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Armed with proposals tackling socioeconomic and political reforms and ways of ending Asia's oldest rebellion, the government panel leaves for Rome today, ready for the third round of peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front (NDF).

Silvestre Bello III, government peace panel chairman, submitted the draft comprehensive agreements on socioeconomic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and on end of hostilities and disposition of forces to President Duterte during a courtesy visit in Malacañang yesterday.

The talks with the communist party will be held on Jan. 19 to 25.

"We are all set and ready to engage the NDF in the discussion of all substantive agenda including supplemental agreements needed to proceed and arrive at a peaceful negotiated political settlement to end the armed conflict in the country," Bello said.

But Anakpawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao yesterday said that if the government is really intent on providing reforms, then Congress should pass House Bill 555 or the Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARF) that pushes for free distribution of land and replaces Republic Act 6657 or the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), which expired in June 2014.

"Filipino farmers have been fighting for land reform since the Spanish colonialism until martial law and up to present. It is a legitimate and moral aspiration that should be realized in the country. Here in Congress, we urge House members to heed this call as a parallel effort to the ongoing peace talks with the NDFP," Casilao said in a statement.

He also warned against reviving the CARL through bills that will push the extension of land acquisitions and distributions, claiming this would only require "farmers

to pay for amortization until he is not able to and be driven away from the lands."

"Rural development is impossible without genuine land reform, as the rights of farmers are not secured and the lands are not protected from use con-

version," Casilao said, referring to Duterte's pre-election promises on developing the countryside.

Bello said the government is approaching the talks "in the spirit of true reconciliation and genuine quest for just and last-

ing peace," remaining confident that major breakthroughs would be achieved this time.

The government panel, he added, is ready to sign the supplemental comprehensive

agreement on respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, which will include an expanded role of the Joint Monitoring Committee.

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Gov't From Page 3

"And we are challenging the NDF to formalize the unilateral ceasefire with a bilateral ceasefire agreement to give our communities and combatants a more secure environment for the peace process," Bello said.

Duterte ordered the resumption of peace

talks with the NDF last year after more than five years of impasse.

During the first round in August, both panels agreed to reaffirm all previous signed agreements and reconstitution of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and on the release of NDF leaders and members. - With Ding Cervantes, Elizabeth Marcelo

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PNP: Sema son tagged in Davao blast not arrested

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa clarified yesterday that a lawmaker's son who reportedly facilitated some kidnap-for-ransom incidents in the country has not yet been arrested.

Dela Rosa said the PNP is coordinating with its counterparts in Malaysia and Thailand on the alleged arrest of Mohammad Abduljabbar Sema but could not get confirmation.

"The latest report that I got from our police attaché in Ma-

laysia says he has not been arrested yet. There was an attempt from Sema to cross the border of Malaysia and Thailand. However, he was barred from entering Thailand. Maybe this is why the report said he was arrested. But he was not arrested. He was merely held and sent back to Malaysian territory," the police chief explained.

Earlier, President Duterte tagged the 26-year-old Sema as being involved in the Davao City bombing last September that left 15 people dead and

dozens injured.

He also said that Sema, whom he described as a son of a Cotabato mayor, was arrested in Malaysia.

But Dela Rosa clarified that this has not been confirmed yet.

Sema is the son of Muslimin Sema, chairman of the main faction in the Moro National Liberation Front and

Rep. Bai Sandra Sema, congresswoman of the first district of Maguindanao.

As for the kidnapping incidents, Dela Rosa said the

younger Sema provided the vehicle for the group to operate.

"The staging point of the operations came from him and he was one of

the brains behind (some incidents)," he added.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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PH protests China weapons on man-made isles

The Philippines has filed a low-key diplomatic protest with China after a US think tank reported that Beijing appears to have installed antiaircraft and antimissile weapons on its man-made islands in the strategically vital South China Sea.

In an interview with CNN Philippines on Monday, Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said a diplomatic communication was issued after the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) released the report last month.

The report said antiaircraft guns and close-in weapons systems designed to guard against missile attacks have been placed on all seven of China's newly built islands in the Spratly archipelago.

Yasay said Manila had responded, but did so quietly as taking more aggressive moves would not help resolve the problem.

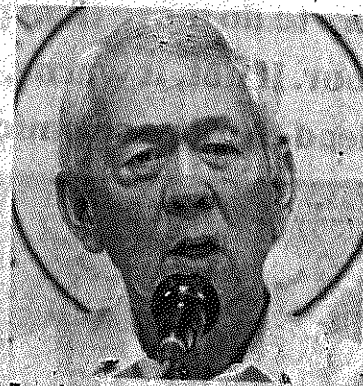
"We have taken action on that, we have issued a note verbale," he said, referring to a diplomatic communication that is issued in the third person and is not signed. It is considered less formal than a letter of protest.

Yasay did not say when the note verbale was issued, adding it was a matter that he did not want to discuss.

"I just want to assure the Filipino people that when we take action at engaging China in this dispute, we do not want to take such aggressive, provocative action that will not solve the problem," he said. "We cannot engage China in a war."

Nevertheless, "when there are reports about the buildup of weapon systems in the area [on] our watch we made sure that the interests and rights of the Philippines are properly protected," Yasay said.

China claims almost all of the



Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay

South China Sea, dotted with islets and reefs believed to be sitting atop vast energy reserves and through which \$5 trillion in global trade passes every year.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan also have claims in the resource-rich sea.

On July 12 last year, the UN-backed Permanent Court of Ar-

bitration in The Hague ruled that China's claims had no basis in international law and that it had violated the Philippines' sovereignty by preventing it from fishing and exploring resources in the West Philippine Sea, South China Sea waters within Manila's 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone.

The Philippines brought the case in 2013 after China seized Panatag Shoal, a traditional fishing ground for Filipinos off the coast of Zambales province, in 2012.

Beijing rejected the ruling, insisting on bilateral negotiations to settle the dispute.

Mending ties with China

Instead of pressing acceptance of the ruling, President Duterte, a self-styled socialist, has been trying to mend ties with China that have been frayed by the arbitration case

brought by his predecessor, Benigno Aquino III.

So far, China has responded enthusiastically, with promises of increased trade and billions of dollars in pledges for infrastructure projects in the Philippines. It has also offered to sell weapons to the Philippines, according to Mr. Duterte.

But Mr. Duterte's reworking the Philippines' ties with China has been accompanied by attacks on traditional ally the United States, which has criticized his bloody war on illegal drugs.

He has called US President Barack Obama a "son of a bitch" and scaled back security cooperation with the US military.

With the election of populist Donald Trump to the US presidency in November, however, Mr. Duterte has said he will stop quarreling with the United States and will keep Manila's treaties with Washington.

The United States has sent a new ambassador to Manila, Korean-born Sung Kim, replacing Philip Goldberg, whom Mr. Duterte has called a "gay son of a bitch" for criticizing his off-color joke during the campaign about the rape and killing of an Australian missionary in a Davao City prison in 1989.

Sung met with Mr. Duterte in Davao City on Sunday after the formal assumption of the Philippines as chair and host of this year's Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit.

Kim congratulated the Philippines and assured Mr. Duterte of US support, according to presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella.

"He reiterated the commitment of the US to the bilateral relationship with the [Philippines], which he described as 'solid,'" Abella said. —REPORTS FROM AP AND LEILA B. SALAVERRIA INQ.

17 January 2017



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Tawi-Tawi solon allowed to join Rome peace talks

The Sandiganbayan has allowed Tawi-Tawi Rep. Ruby Sahali-Tan to join the third round of peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Rome this week. In a two-page resolution, the court permitted the lawmaker to leave the country from Jan. 17 to 30 to join members of the House Committee on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity, which she chairs. Prior to her travel, Tan went through conditional arraignment and pleaded not guilty to six counts of violating Section 8 of the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees for failing to abide by asset disclosure rules. She also posted a travel bond of P60,000. Tan will be in Rome from Jan. 18 to 25 to attend the peace negotiations with the NDFP. From Jan. 26 to Jan. 29, she will join her fellow lawmakers in France to meet officials of the Philippine Embassy, as well as the Filipino communities there. —VINCE F. NONATO

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BusinessMirror

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Govt to sign supplemental pact with NDF

BY SAMMY F. MARTIN | *Philippines News Agency*

THE government is ready to sign other agreements with the National Democratic Front (NDF), while discussion on contents and provisions of major substantive agenda is ongoing, when peace talks resume in Rome this week.

Government chief peace negotiator with the NDF Silvestre H. Bello III said the government is all set to sign a supplemental agreement on the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect of Human Rights and Inter-

national Humanitarian Law, which will include an expanded role of the Joint Monitoring Committee.

“We are prepared to sign other agreements while we are discussing contents and provisions of the

major substantive agenda,” Bello said in a statement.

“And we are challenging the NDF to formalize the unilateral cease-fire with a bilateral cease-fire agreement to give our communities and combatants a more secure environment for the peace process,” Bello added.

The third round of talks will start on January 19 and ends on January 25.

Bello is confident that the Rome talks will result in major breakthroughs.

Bello also said the panel will submit on Monday to President Duterte the draft documents that will be tabled for discussion in Rome.

“We are all set and ready to engage the NDF in the discussion of

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all substantive agenda, including supplemental agreements needed to proceed and arrive at a peaceful negotiated political settlement, to end the armed conflict in the country,” Bello added.

The government panel will pay a courtesy call on the President in Malacañang tonight.

Among the documents to be submitted to the President are draft agreements and principles for the Comprehensive Agreement on Socioeconomic Reforms (Caser), Comprehensive Agreement on Political and Constitutional Reforms, and Comprehensive Agreement on End of Hostilities and Disposition of Forces.

“We are doing this in the spirit of true reconciliation and genuine quest for just and lasting peace,”

he explained.

The main group of government delegation leaves for Rome on Tuesday.

Peace negotiations with the NDF were resumed in August 2016, after more than five years of impasse following the election of Duterte.

In the August round when the negotiations were reopened, both panels agreed to reaffirm all previous signed agreements and reconstitution of the Joint Agreement

on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and release of NDF leaders and members.

In the second round also in Oslo, Norway, negotiators exchanged outlines and agreed to accelerate the negotiations.

The government is confident it can strike a peace deal with the communist-led NDF, which counts among its member organization the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People’s Army.

“We are prepared to sign other agreements while we are discussing contents and provisions of the major substantive agenda.”—BELLO

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ONLINE NEWS
17 JANUARY 2017

Military considers safety of hostages in operation vs ASGs

January 16, 2017-www.update.ph

While the military has expressed willingness to go after the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists with all their available combat power, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said they will do so with the least cost of violence and life.

He made this statement when asked to comment on President Rodrigo Duterte's order to bomb or blast fleeing ASG despite the brigands still having several hostages.

"We get all these guidance and look at it seriously but in the implementation of those guidance, we apply our skills and our operational art," Padilla said in Filipino.

And by operational art, the AFP spokesperson is referring to military skill sets that will allow them, if possible, to rescue the hostages without endangering them and ensuring their security.

As of this posting, ASG terrorists are believed to have in their custody between 27 to 28 kidnap victims.

And while prepared to carry out the Chief Executive's instructions to eliminate and prevent the ASG from conducting kidnapping raids, Padilla said it is the military commanders purview on how to accomplish the mission.

"(The AFP) is prepared to carry out the President's directive, but we will also take consideration of the hostages' lives while applying the full force of military resources and power in order to implement that. But as I was saying, it is now left to the commanders to be able to implement that in the best way possible, at the least cost of life and at the least application of violence," he added.

Padilla also said the President's order speaks of the latter's commitment to remove the ASG threat once and for all.

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

WITHIN 6 MONTHS || AFP PLANS TO OBLITERATE ASG

Posted by **Lui Claudio** on January 16, 2017 at 1:53 PM-www.dwdd.com



Camp Aguinaldo — Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Eduardo Año is determined to annihilate the reign of the Abu Sayyaf Group in Mindanao within his first six months of service as the AFP chief.

AFP Public Affairs Office Chief Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo said that there will be adjustments on operational commitments of the AFP particularly on operational procedures on leadership and also on the composition of fighting teams.

This is to ensure that the AFP will be able to defeat the ASG within six months.

Arevalo clarified that the said six-month target is just a time-frame to the soldiers deployed in the field for the plan to spread out.

Though Arevalo did not mention this directly, but he is expecting for an additional force of military that will be deployed in Sulu, Basilan, and Tawi-tawi where ASG presence is most prominent. — EPJA

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FREED HOSTAGES || AFP STRICTLY FOLLOWED NO RANSOM POLICY

Posted by **Lui Claudio** on January 16, 2017 at 10:17 AM- www.update.ph

Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City — The Armed Forces of the Philippines strongly affirmed that no ransom was paid in exchange for the release of a Korean national, Park Chulhong and a Filipino, Glenn Alindajao that were held hostages by the Abu Sayyaf Group on January 14, 2017.

AFP Public Information Officer Marine Colonel Edgard Arevalo, they strictly followed their no ransom payment policy and the only reason why the hostages were freed because of the non-stop military operations.

Arevalo also mentioned that the rebels also had starved and had a hard time avoiding the military operations which left them without any other choice but to surrender their victims.

On the other hand, Arevalo pointed out that they have no verified information if the families of the victims have paid any ransom money. – EPJA

Military crushing Abu Sayyaf in 6 months not ambitious – AFP

January 16, 2017- www.update.ph

The Armed Forces of the Philippines chief's commitment to crush Abu Sayyaf terrorist group in six months is not ambitious as changes are now ongoing on operational commitments, procedures, leadership and compositions of the fighting teams. This was disclosed by AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo in an interview late Sunday. He added that adjustment in tactics will be done after six months which is in line with the self-imposed time frame set by AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Año on eliminating the ASG threat.

"And if within six months, the ASG threat is still present or existing, after six months, then, we will have an assessment of the experiences, lessons made in fighting the ASGs and, we will come out with an adjustment (in tactics) that will be based on the previous semester," Arevalo said in Filipino.

Arevalo declined to comment on whether new forces will be deployed in the ongoing anti-ASG operations due to security reasons.

"I just cannot tell you about that yet, as of yet, but you can expect that," he added.

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Año earlier said that while Development Support Security Plan “Kapayapaan” is focused on the primacy of the peace process, terror groups like the ASG, Maute Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, Ansar Al-Khilafah Philippines and other lawless groups will feel the full brunt of the military’s combat power. with PNA

Philippines issued note verbale against China’s weapons in West Philippine Sea

January 16, 2017 -www.update.ph

The Philippines has issued a note verbale after Center for Strategic and International Studies/Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (CSIS/AMTI) reported last December 2016 that it appears China has installed anti-aircraft guns and possibly close-in weapons systems (CIWS).

“We have taken action on that, we have issued a note verbale,” Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay told CNN Philippines as quoted by Associated Press.

Note verbale is a diplomatic communication prepared in the third person and unsigned. It is seen as less formal than a diplomatic note or letter of protest.

“I just want to assure the Filipino people that when we take action at engaging China in this dispute, we do not want to take such aggressive, provocative action that will not solve the problem,” Secretary Yasay said. “We cannot engage China in a war.”

“When there are reports about the build-up of weapon systems in the area, during our watch we made sure that the interests and rights of the Philippines are properly protected,” Yasay noted.

“China appears to have built significant point-defense capabilities, in the form of large anti-aircraft guns and probable close-in weapons systems (CIWS), at each of its outposts in the Spratly Islands,” CSIS/AMTI said in December 2016.

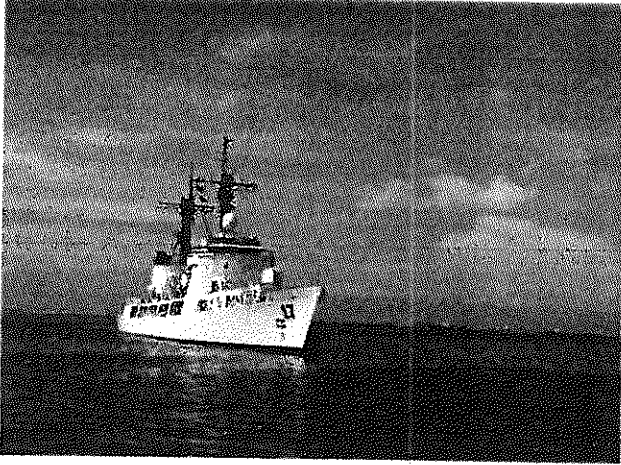
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Sinulog: PH Navy opens warship Andres Bonifacio to public

From Rappler (Jan 16):

The Cebuano chief of the Philippine Navy, Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado, is a devotee of Santo Niño



NEWEST WARSHIP. The Philippine Navy acquired BRP Andres Bonifacio from the US Coast Guard. Photo by Rappler

The Philippine Navy's newly acquired warship, BRP Andres Bonifacio, was opened to the public on Monday, January 16, for a 2-day open house in Cebu, coinciding with the celebration of the Sinulog Festival.

BRP Andres Bonifacio is docked at the Cebu International Port and will be open from 9 am to 4 pm until Tuesday, January 17, according to an advisory from the Philippine Navy.

The warship, acquired from the US Coast Guard, arrived in Cebu on January 13 as part of the Philippine Navy's nationwide tour to recruit potential navy officers.

Led by its commanding officer Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado, a Cebuano and devotee of Santo Niño, the navy participated in a string of activities in the festival and is involved monitoring the security of the event, an annual crowd-drawer.

On January 15, the Philippine Marine Drum and Bugle Team (MDBT) performed at Cebu City Sports Complex after the Holy Mass as a tribute to Santo Niño.

The MDBT will also perform at the Terraces of Ayala Center Cebu on Monday and at the Activity Center of SM City Cebu on Tuesday.

Graduating cadets of Philippine Military Academy "Salaknib" Class of 2017 are also onboard the warship to prepare them for their integration in the Philippine Navy Officers Corps.

<http://www.rappler.com>

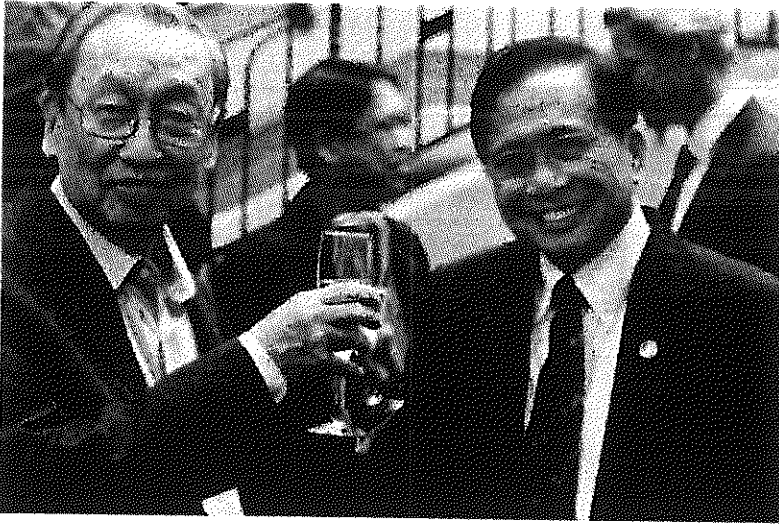
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Duterte awaits meeting with Joma Sison

From Rappler (Jan 16):

The meeting between President Rodrigo Duterte and CPP founder Jose Maria Sison will largely hinge on the success of the 3rd round of talks that begin this week



NDF TALKS. CPP founder Jose Maria Sison and chief presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza during the first round of talks in August in Norway. File photo

President Rodrigo Duterte is awaiting significant progress in the talks between government negotiators and the communist National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) so he could finally meet in person exiled Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Maria "Joma" Sison, he said in a speech over the weekend.

"Dureza and Bebot Bello are there, *nasa* (in) Rome *silang ngayon* (right now).... I said, "*Sige* (okay), I will just wait for awhile. When you're ready, it's either I will go to somewhere in a third country where I can talk to Sison," Duterte said in Davao City Saturday night, January 14, referring to chief presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza and government chief negotiator Silvestre Bello III.

"After that, if there's something that is really official and substantial, then we can announce to the world that we have this agreement," Duterte added.

The meeting between Duterte and Sison will thus hinge largely on the success of the 3rd round of talks that will begin later this week, January 19-25, in Rome.

In the previous Aquino administration, there was also an attempt to consider a meeting between then president Benigno Aquino III and Sison, possibly in Vietnam, to fast-track negotiations, according to a Rappler source privy to the talks then. The talks collapsed under the Aquino administration over disagreements on how to break their deadlock.

During the 3rd round of talks in Rome this week, Bello is aiming to sign the already delayed bilateral ceasefire agreement and complete the draft on the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms or CASER. (READ: Gov't panel to meet Duterte before critical 3rd round of talks)

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

Communication lines between Duterte and his former professor Sison have been open since the campaign period, with the 2 occasionally having televised Skype calls or private mobile phones conversations. The NDF panel was also invited to a dinner in Malacañang.

The two camps are currently deadlocked on the joint ceasefire deal, an agreement that the government is hoping to sign to guarantee a prolonged ceasefire between the military and the New People's Army (NPA). The NDF is stalling as it protests the delayed release of political prisoners. (READ: Gov't in backchannel talks to protect ceasefire with Reds)

After releasing 22 high-profile NDF consultants and granting pardon to 4 convicted NDF members, Duterte said he will not allow further releases until the NDF signs the bilateral ceasefire deal that will put in place common rules for the military and the NPA.

The NDF said it is willing to sign an agreement but it will only be effective when the President fulfills his promise to release the remaining political prisoners.

The releases and the joint ceasefire deal were the 2 agreements during the 1st round of talks in August 2017 that were meant to put in place a conducive environment for the panels to discuss reforms, particularly on the country's socio-economic policies, political systems, and the Constitution.

<http://www.rappler.com>

Military: Abu Syyaf behind Basilan roadside bomb explosion

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 16):

The military has blamed the Abu Syyaf Group (ASG) as the ones behind the roadside bomb explosion that killed one person and injured another in Basilan province on Sunday.

Col. Thomas Donato, Army's 104th Infantry Brigade commander, said the incident occurred around 4 p.m. Sunday in Barangay Sabong, Lamitan City, Basilan.

Donato said the improvised bomb fashioned out as a landmine was placed along the side of the Basilan circumferential road.

Killed was Saibi Haddalun and wounded was Haddalun's mother, Neneng, according to the Lamitan City police.

Donato said the bombing was the handiwork of ASG brigands targeting soldiers passing along the circumferential road but unfortunately civilians were victimized.

He ordered to strengthen the conduct of security patrols to ensure the protection of the residents.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

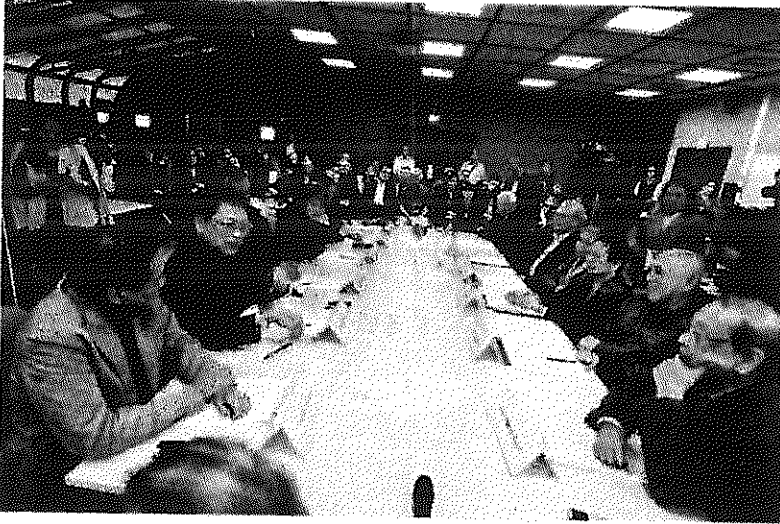
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Chilling reason why PH, NDF talks moved from Oslo to Rome

From Rappler (Jan 16):

It's the first time that the formal peace negotiations will be held outside Norway



COLD OSLO. Negotiators of the Philippine government and National Democratic Front of the Philippines find Oslo too cold for the 3rd round of talks. Photo courtesy of OPAPP

The 3rd round of formal talks between the Philippine government and the communist National Democratic Front (NDF), to be held from January 19 to 25, moved venues from Norway, the 3rd country facilitating the talks, to Rome in Italy.

"I don't know why they transferred venue. *Siguro mapalapit doon sa* (They might want to go near the) Pope *para magrasyahan ang* (to get graces for the) [talks]...", President Rodrigo Duterte said in jest over the weekend. (READ: [Gov't in backchannel talks to protect ceasefire with Reds](#))

Duterte expressed hopes that the 3rd round will move the talks forward "substantially" so he could plan a possible meeting with exiled Communist Party of the Philippines Jose Maria Sison. (READ: [Duterte awaits meeting with Joma Sison](#))

But really, why hold talks in Rome and not in the country that is arranging and paying for the talks?

The reason is chilling. It's too cold in Oslo this time of the year and the negotiators have not forgotten the last time they froze in the deep winter of the Scandinavian country. It dipped to as low as negative 23 degrees when they were there in February 2011 for formal talks under the previous Aquino administration.

"*Talaga namang ang lamig lamig sa* (It's really cold in) Oslo this time around. It's the only reason. We both agreed in October [to hold the 3rd round of talks in Rome]," said Fidel Agcaoili, chief negotiator of the communist National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

"We need to meet January or February *kasi* (because) [the last round was in] October. *Mawawala ang* (We will lose the) momentum e. *Pero huwag naman sa* (But please not in) Oslo," Agcaoili added.

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It will drop to as low as negative 8 degrees Celcius on January 19 when the talks will start, a big change from Manila's 30-degree-Celcius weather. Rome will be considerably warmer than Oslo at 1 degree Celsius at worst.

The negotiators have discussed moving the venue as early as the 1st round of talks in August 2016 when a number of the newly released NDF consultants fell sick while the negotiations were ongoing in Oslo. At least one NDF consultant was brought to the hospital.

They apparently tried to pitch holding the talks in Greece or Spain, but the Norwegian facilitators of the talks opted for Rome supposedly because of better relations with the country.

The negotiators are expected to return to Oslo for the next round of talks.

<http://www.rappler.com>

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