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NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 January 2017

Thursday

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19 January 2017

"If martial law looms, I'll keep quiet about it"



Tycoons vow to spur dev't of Mindanao



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Will Trump go to war with Russia and China?

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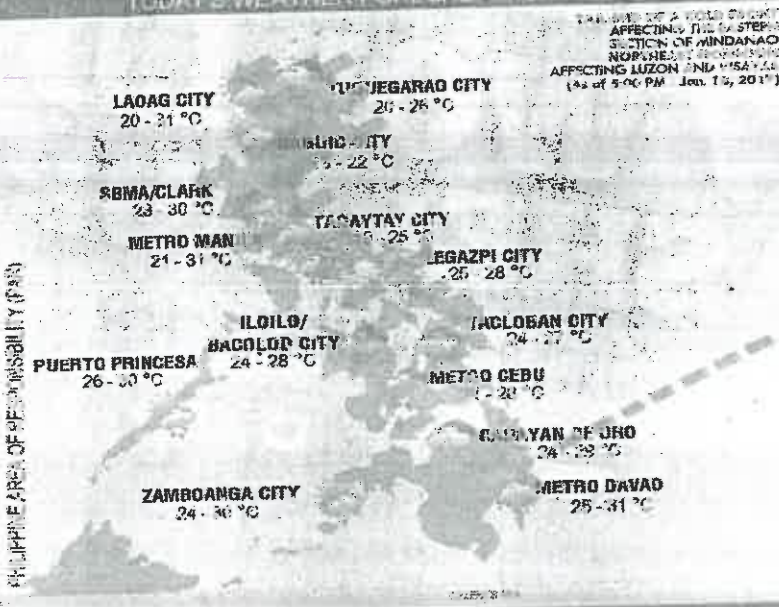


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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS - FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | JANUARY 19, 2017 | THURSDAY



LAOAG CITY 20 - 31 °C
TUGUEBARAO CITY 20 - 28 °C
BAGUIO CITY 13 - 22 °C
SBMA/CLARK 23 - 30 °C
METRO MANILA 21 - 31 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 30 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 30 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 19 - 25 °C
LEGAZPI CITY 25 - 28 °C
TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 27 °C
METRO CEBU 24 - 29 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO 24 - 29 °C
METRO DAVAO 25 - 31 °C

SUNRISE 6:26 AM
SUNSET 6:48 PM
MOONRISE 11:52 PM
MOONSET 11:18 AM
FULL MOON JUN 12 7:11 PM
LAST QUARTER MAY 20 8:58 AM
LOW TIDE 0:23 AM 0:01 PM
HIGH TIDE 1:21 AM 1:02 PM

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

	JAN 19	JAN 20	JAN 21	JAN 22
METRO MANILA	22 - 30 °C	22 - 30 °C	19 - 26 °C	19 - 24 °C
TUGUEBARAO	20 - 26 °C	21 - 26 °C	25 - 28 °C	25 - 27 °C
LAOAG	21 - 30 °C	20 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C	26 - 30 °C
BAGUIO	13 - 21 °C	12 - 20 °C	25 - 28 °C	24 - 27 °C
SBMA/CLARK	26 - 29 °C	27 - 29 °C	24 - 28 °C	25 - 27 °C
TAGAYTAY	19 - 25 °C	19 - 24 °C	25 - 27 °C	25 - 26 °C
LEGAZPI	25 - 28 °C	25 - 27 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 29 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 31 °C	26 - 30 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 31 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 28 °C	24 - 27 °C	24 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
METRO CEBU	24 - 28 °C	25 - 27 °C		
TACLOBAN	25 - 27 °C	25 - 26 °C		
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 31 °C	24 - 29 °C		
METRO DAVAO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 31 °C		
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C		

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Tycoons vow to spur dev't of Mindanao

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

They came in full force to meet with President Duterte, committing to pour resources into some of the nation's most impoverished regions and promote inclusive growth.

Sitting down to dinner with the President at Malacañang, the country's business heavyweights vowed to help the government promote peace, spur development and reduce poverty in Mindanao.

The meeting took place Tuesday at the President's Hall, with Ramon Ang of San Miguel Corp., Manuel V. Pangilinan of Metro Pacific and PLDT, Hans Sy of the SM Group, Tony Tan Caktiong of Jollibee and Ayala Corp.'s Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, among others, in attendance.

"Mainly, they were there to show their support, especially for improvement in areas of poverty and crisis and conflict," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a briefing yesterday.

He said the consensus after the meeting was for the business sector and the Duterte

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Tycoons From Page 1

administration to work more closely in boosting Mindanao development while efforts to forge lasting peace with rebel groups are underway.

"In fact they had taken the initiative regarding Sulu... I think Secretary Sonny was also talking to them about how the Landbank had extra funds, something like \$40 million for improvements in other areas of Mindanao," he said, referring to Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III.

"So, basically, they were being brought on board to help address the issue of how to create a more inclusive economy, especially addressing work and investments, investments in areas of conflict," Abella added.

Pangilinan told reporters yesterday his group has conveyed its interest to Duterte in investing more in hospitals, telecommunications and in a coconut oil mill facility in Mindanao.

"We offered and suggested areas where we could help. The business groups that were present, I would say, were in full force, in support of the government," he said, referring to the Tuesday dinner.

He added his group would also be interested in working with community development movement Gawad Kalinga for housing projects in Mindanao.

Following the dialogue with the President, he said the next step would be to concretize plans and discuss them with

relevant government agencies.

"It is good to have this dialogue with the President. In my recollection, this is the first time that a president has done this and sat down with business groups," Pangilinan said. "It's unprecedented. We have much to be thankful for."

Earlier, Pangilinan said his group is looking at submitting unsolicited proposals for projects in the infrastructure, power and agriculture sectors.

At present, MPIC is involved in infrastructure projects in the rail and tollways sectors under the public-private partnership program.

The MPIC is also engaged in other ventures like water, power, healthcare and logistics.

It was presidential adviser on entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion III who invited the business titans to Malacñang. Former president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo also helped arrange the dinner meeting.

Listening president

In the same meeting, President Duterte had shown his willingness to listen to the business community's call for the preservation of the current practice of contracting as long as workers' security of tenure is guaranteed and protected, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president George Barcelon said.

"On contractualization, Mr. Joey Concepcion explained

that endo (end of contract) is prohibited and the business community will police its own ranks. Joey pointed out that this is the best solution wherein the workers - even they are given jobs by the service providers, they are protected, they are regularized, they will enjoy all the benefits mandated by law, and in case they will temporarily be out of work, they would be able to get some financial assistance," Barcelon told **The STAR** yesterday.

"So this provides the security of tenure for the workers. I think he is okay with the proposal," Barcelon said.

The Department of Labor and Employment has yet to come out with a clear policy on the issue of labor contracting.

Duterte earlier promised to put an end to contractualization. Workers are calling for the complete abolition of contracting in the country.

The business community, however, said that while it is clearly against the illegal practice of contracting such as endo and "5-5-5," it wants to maintain the accepted and legal practice of the scheme.

"Under the law, the management has the right to hire contractual workers. Actually I mentioned it in our discussion that the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are not like the big companies that can project the number of people they will need," he said.

"The biggest employers in our country are the SMEs, so for them it is important to have that flexibility," Barcelon

pointed out

"We are hoping that this issue can clear the air so that those who want to invest here in our country will see that labor contracting is not an issue to deter them," he added.

"The common denominator is that the taipans and the business community want to help in job creation," Barcelona said, stressing the complete abolition of contracting would only limit job opportunities.

Abella said the business leaders were discussing a "win-win" position with Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III.

"Apparently, they are engaged in a conversation with Sec. Bello and they are working out a win-win situation. In the words of Sec. Dominguez, they are trying to work out a win-win situation. They are engaged in working out a situation which will be beneficial for both employees and employers," Abella pointed out.

He added the dinner meeting provided a conducive environment for the President and the business groups to share insights regarding development goals.

"It was over dinner, they had conversation. Apparently as FA (presidential adviser) Joey (Concepcion) was saying, their preconceptions about PRRD were settled because of the one-on-one conversation," he said, referring to Duterte by his presidential initials.

"Many of them have not met the President, they had this face-to-face, according

to PA Joey, a number of their uncertainties were settled," Abella disclosed.

Brewery investment

Meanwhile, SMC is investing \$300 million or roughly P14.9 billion for beer breweries in Cagayan de Oro and Laguna, its president Ramon Ang said.

He said the brewery in Cagayan de Oro would have a capacity of three million hectoliters. It would have an initial capacity of 1.5 million hectolitres.

"It's a \$300-million investment," Ang said, adding that the company would soon break ground for the brewery in Cagayan de Oro inside the Phividec Industrial Estate.

SMC would also expand its existing brewery and bottling plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna by two million hectolitres in capacity.

Ang said the company hopes to complete the expansion of its brewery business within the next two years.

Last week, SMC senior vice president, chief financial officer and treasurer Ferdinand Constantino said the conglomerate is pouring in P281 billion to finance the expansion of its various businesses in the next three years.

The allocation is part of a P543.3-billion capital expenditure program for various projects such as the expansion of its food business, a refinery upgrade for Petron, construction of power plants and toll roads.

Of the P543.3 billion, P262.1

billion had already been spent, according to SMC documents.

SMC expects revenue to grow by 1.5 times by 2020 as against 2015 figures on the back of the contribution of its new businesses. Constantino said.

He said revenues would grow because of the contribution of new businesses such as power and infrastructure.

New businesses are seen to retain their contributions to revenues at 66 percent, while their EBITDA contribution is expected to grow to 67 percent from 60 percent. EBITDA stands for earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization.

In 2015, SMC registered consolidated sales revenue of P674 billion while EBITDA hit P108.6 billion.

The beer business is SMC's first business. The company started as La Fabrica de Cerveza de San Miguel, which was Southeast Asia's first brewery, producing and bottling what would eventually become one of the best selling beers in the region and among the world's top beers.

San Miguel has since diversified into other beverages, food, packaging, fuel and oil and, in recent years, power and infrastructure.

It is one of the country's largest conglomerates, generating about 5.1 percent of the gross domestic product in 2015.

– With Richmond Mercurio, Iris Gonzales, Louella Desiderio

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1945 1988
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Duterte summons tycoons

Job generation, tax reforms, investments in areas of conflict, graft, federalism tackled

By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

President Duterte has encouraged the country's business tycoons to help promote inclusive growth

by generating jobs and supporting tax reforms, among others.

He tried to get the cooperation of the business sector during a meeting with more than a dozen tycoons in

Malacañang Tuesday night.

"Basically, they were being brought on board to help address the issue of how to create a more inclusive economy, especially addressing work and invest-

Duterte summons tycoons ◀1

"They opened discussion, touched on many topics – federalism, contractualization, graft, job creation, and tax reform," Abella said.

"The President reiterated that he was all for job creation to uplift the people's well-being," he added.

Among the tycoons present were Ayala Corp chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan, International Container Terminal Services, Inc chair Enrique Razon, and SM Prime executive committee chair Hans Sy.

Also present in the meeting were former President and now Pampanga Rep Gloria Arroyo, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez, and Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president George Barcelon.

Asked about the businessmen's sentiment on addressing contractual employment, Abella said they are engaged in discussions with Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III to reach a "win-win situation."

"In the words of Sec. Dominguez, they are trying to work out a win-win situation. In other words, they are engaged in working out a situation which will be beneficial for both employees and employers," Abella said.

The businessmen, meantime, were "extremely happy" after their "uncertainties" about the President were allayed during the meeting, according to Abella.

"As far as PA Joey was saying that their preconceptions regarding the President were settled because of their one-on-one face-to-face conversation," he said.

"Many of them had apparently never really met the President. But this is the first time they had – they had this face-to-face and the according to PA Joey a number of their uncertainties were settled," he added.

In the meeting, Concepcion gave an update on the "Negosyo Para sa Kapayapaan sa Sulu" project that aims to bring peace and development to Sulu. The project involves livelihood programs, mentorships, infrastructure and facilities with the help of business leaders.

"Mainly they were there to show their support, especially for improvement in areas of poverty and crisis and the conflicts. And, in fact, they had taken initiative regarding Sulu," Abella said.

He said Dominguez talked about the Land Bank of the Philippines' fund allocation of \$40 million for development initiatives in Mindanao during the meeting.

ments, investments in areas of conflict," Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a Palace press briefing.

Abella said the President's dinner meeting with the top businessmen was

initially set for an hour but lasted for three hours due to the vibrant discussions. The meeting was facilitated by Presidential Adviser on Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion. ▶6

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World War II bomb taken to Army camp

SURIGAO CITY –The 500-pound World War II bomb found inside the yard of a high school here was transferred on Tuesday to an Army camp in Barangay Bad-as, Placer town, Surigao del Norte.

The discovery of the bomb had forced worried residents in Bernadette Village and neighboring areas to leave their homes.

The vintage ordnance, which is 54 inches long and 28 inches in diameter, was found buried six meters deep in the compound of the Surigao del Norte National High School.

It was brought to the headquarters of the Army's 30th Infantry Battalion (30th IB) in Barangay Bad-as, Placer town of that same province Tuesday afternoon for proper disposal.

In an emergency meeting,

the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) decided to transfer the bomb and urged the police and military to move the bomb to a safer, non-populated area.

Surigao del Norte Governor Sol F. Matugas and Surigao City Mayor Ernesto T. Matugas agreed on the bomb's removal "for the safety of our residents."

Construction workers unearthed the bomb and transported it on a mini dump truck to the warehouse of the Orquina Construction Company at Bernadette Village in Barangay Luna.

The presence of the bomb in the village panicked the residents.

Police proceeded to the warehouse and secured the bomb. (Mike U. Crismundo)

<http://dwdd.com.ph/>

SOLDIERS WELFARE | AFPMBAI donates entertainment packages to soldiers

Lui Claudio



FORT BONIFACIO, Metro Manila – The Armed Forces of the Philippines Mutual Benefits Association Incorporated (AFPMBAI) turned over 11 sets of entertainment packages as donation to the Philippine Army in a simple ceremony held in the conference room of the Army headquarters last January 16.

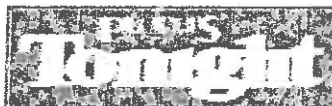
Each entertainment package includes a 32-inch LED TV, a karaoke with amplifier and 2-way bass reflex speaker.

The recipient Army units were the headquarters of the 7th Infantry Division, the 603rd Infantry Brigade, the 7th and 34th Infantry Battalions, the 4th Mechanized Infantry Battalion and the 1st Cavalry Squadron of the Mechanized Infantry Division, the 3rd and 10th Regional Community Defense Groups of the Army Reserve Command, the 15th Field Property and Accountability Office, and the Property Accountability Office and General Support.

AFP Brigadier General Librado B. Moog, head of the Executive Services Division, AFPMBAI, representing the donor institution, said they will continue to provide assistance to the soldiers as part of their commitment to improve the welfare of the AFP troops.



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PROMOTION – The commander of the Philippine Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Brig. Gen. Herminigildo Francisco C. Aquino (right), troops the line together with TRADOC Inspector General Col. Joselito Serrano, during an arrival ceremony last January 17, 2016, after his promotion to major general (2-star rank) by Pres. Rodrigo Duterte last month. Maj. Gen. Aquino is the 44th commander of TRADOC and was widely credited for the success of the ASEAN Army Rifles Meet (AARM) last month hosted by the Philippine Army held at Camp O'Donnel, Tarlac. Aquino is also the former assistant superintendent at the Philippine Military Academy.

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A vintage bomb found in the premises of the Surigao National High School on Monday is loaded on a truck in this photo provided by the police.

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General tapped to destroy ASG

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Armed Forces of the Philippines said that Major General Carlito Galvez Jr. was appointed as the new chief of the Western Mindanao Command as part of efforts to destroy the Abu Sayyaf Group and other lawless elements within six months.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office, said that reliefs and designations are part of the dynamics of the military institution and Tuesday's appointment of Galvez is its manifestation.

"The AFP Chief of Staff has ordered the total decimation of the bandit Abu Sayyaf Group and other terrorist groups within six months adhering to the guidance of the Commander-in-Chief and President Rodrigo Duterte," Arevalo said.

"To achieve this difficult task, necessary adjustments in tactics and strategy, and in the approaches to neutralize the ASG – including changes in the leadership and composition of the team that will execute his plans

– will have to be made. And this is part of the dynamism of the military profession," he added.

Galvez has command of the WesMinCom, replacing Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo de la Cruz, who had served the unit for a year and two months.

Dela Cruz, according to Arevalo, has been appointed as the new Inspector General of the AFP.

"Lt. Gen. De la Cruz was accorded by the AFP leadership an opportunity to assume a sensitive position at the when he subsequently takes over as The Inspector General AFP," Arevalo said.

"Lt. Gen. de la Cruz expressed his appreciation to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo G. Año, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, and the AFP leadership for the privilege to have served as commander of one of the AFP's 'critical units' and commanded to his successor Maj. Gen. Galvez the soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines who are 'the best in the AFP,' Arevalo said.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Deny Abu Sayyaf sanctuary, AFP asks Tawi-Tawi residents

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año yesterday appealed to residents of Tawi-Tawi to deny the Abu Sayyaf sanctuary and logistics amid the military's campaign to defeat the group in six months.

AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said Año issued the appeal when the latter and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana visited the island municipality of Sibutu in Tawi-Tawi.

Año and Lorenzana went to the town to visit soldiers and to enlist the support of local officials and residents in the government's campaign against terrorism, kidnapping, piracy, and even illegal drugs.

He said Año told the residents that the criminal group "can only thrive in places where they can find refuge or support,

hence the people of Sibutu can help a lot by denying the ASGs sanctuary and logistics."

Arevalo said Año also asked the residents to be partners of the military for the security and development of Tawi-Tawi where the Abu Sayyaf is known to have presence.

"The people should be actively involved in monitoring the arrival of strangers or the happening of criminal activities in the island. The residents should organize themselves to be active partners of government in providing security, livelihood, and development opportunities," he said.

Arevalo said Sibutu town Mayor Alshefa Pajiji lamented "the incidence of kidnappings around the island that adversely affects his municipality" and committed support for the military in ending the criminal activities of the Abu Sayyaf.

Military officials have said the Abu Sayyaf's kidnapping-for-ransom activities continue to thrive because of support from the civilian populace.

Incidents of kidnapping were perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf off Tawi-Tawi in the past several months. The kidnap victims were later brought to Sulu, one of the bailiwick provinces of the criminal group.

Año assumed the top AFP post last month. During a command conference on January 6, he set a new deadline of six months for the military to defeat the Abu Sayyaf, the Maute Group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

Accompanying Año and Lorenzana in the visit were Arevalo, Army chief Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda, Navy chief Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado, Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina.

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Call me if you need me, Rody tells troops

Just call me "Pareng Rody."

President Duterte has given his contact numbers to a group of soldiers and urged them to call him whenever they are in need.

The President pledged his full support for the soldiers as he tried to boost their morale following the death of an Army captain in a clash with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan.

"Next time magka-problema kayo, may babae ka na hindi ka talaga sinasagot, ilang taon na, ito tatawagan mo itong tatlo. Maski anong problema, kopyahin na lang ninyo," Duterte said in a dialogue with soldiers last Monday night.

"Sabihin mo lang na, 'Pwede bang kausapin si Pareng Rody? May problema kami dito.' Oo, Pareng Rody lang," he added.

The President attended the wake of Army Capt. Clinton Capio in

Taguig City last Monday night and later held an impromptu dialogue with the soldiers.

The young military officer was slain in a government clash with the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan last week. Capio was posthumously promoted to major by the President in appreciation of his service to the nation.

The President recognized the sacrifices made by the soldiers in protecting the country from security threats and assured that he will continue to support them. He said he wants the soldiers to live comfortably in appreciation of their hard work.

"You do not get really the publicity of your exploits, of your bravery, or of your sacrifice but what is certain is that, ang gobyerno has, is (here for you)," he said. "Relax lang and basta nandiyan ako."
(Genalyn D. Kabiling)

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Chinese official reaffirms Phi-China ties with Rody

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Chinese Foreign Vice Minister Liu Zhenmin's visit to President Duterte at Malacañang last Tuesday was merely to reaffirm bilateral commitments, presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said yesterday.

Abella said the note verbale issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs against the presence of China's weapons systems in the disputed South China Sea did not crop up during the visit of the top Chinese official.

"It's simply coincidental," Abella told reporters when asked if the President discussed the matter or if Liu defended Beijing's construction in the disputed waters, which has worried some Philippine officials.

Abella said Liu's visit was a continuing effort to boost confidence-building measures between Beijing and Manila - which Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed on during Duterte's China state visit last October.

"Let me just read to you the visit proceeds on the agreement made between the President and President Xi Jinping during the former's state visit to China on the 21st of October 2016, wherein both sides affirm the importance of existing Philippine-China bilateral dialogue mechanisms in enhancing, understanding, broadening cooperation and striving for a stronger relationship," Abella said.

"It was simply a resumption. It says the resumption of these bilateral dialogue mechanisms suspended during the previous administration is a significant development that allows for the building of confidence through regular dialogue along official lines," Abella stressed.

"In other words, this is the first meeting in three years. So it's part of a regular process," he added.

At the same time, the Palace echoed the statement of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana of concern on the presence of weapons systems in the Spratlys.

Quoting the statement of Lorenzana issued last Tuesday, Abella said "the actions

of China in militarizing those disputed features are troubling."

"Despite warming relations between our countries, we will be remiss in our duty to protect the national interest if we do not protest, question and seek clarification from China on the presence of weapons in the Spratlys, especially so that some of those reclaimed islands are within Philippine exclusive economic zones according to UNCLOS and affirmed by the PCA ruling on the 12th of July, 2016," he said, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Netherlands.

AFP: No more tension at West Philippine Sea

The Chinese Navy in the West Philippine Sea no longer harasses the Philippine Navy and even Filipino fishermen, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said yesterday.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the country's soldiers continue to watch over and "guard areas that are ours."

"Our watch is in accordance with our Constitution because we have a mandate to protect our sovereignty and territory. That stays and has not changed," Padilla said in a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday.

Padilla also revealed that tension in the disputed waters has eased in the past months, with Chinese authorities no longer harassing Filipinos.

"If you notice, encounters in the area are no longer that aggressive because we have had talks to lower the level of tension," he said.

Padilla said the Chinese Navy no longer blocks the re-supply operations to BRP Sierra Madre in Ayungion Shoal.

"Tension has somewhat eased there and no blocking has so far been done by the other side," he said in Filipino. He noted, though, the continuing Chinese presence in the area. - With Michael Punongbayan, Edith Regalado

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Postscript

By FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Do Duterte, AFP top brass still talk?

WE PRESUME that the Commander-in-Chief still talks with, or to, his generals running the armed forces, so we are somewhat puzzled hearing discordant notes when President Rodrigo Duterte and the military top brass sing the same songs separately in public.



- **The President threatens** to declare martial law to save “my country” from lawlessness, even if it would mean ignoring the constitutional process – but the armed forces says through its spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla there is no compelling reason for him to do that.

- **The President orders** his troops to bomb and wipe out Abu Sayyaf terrorists who are using kidnap victims as human shields – but Gen. Eduardo Año, AFP chief of staff, interposes that the military’s first objective is to rescue the hostages.

- **The President plays down** China’s militarizing several artificial islands it has illegally built in Philippine waters – while Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, a retired Army major general, says such activity is “very troubling” and neither peaceful nor friendly

When the President and the military get to talk, they might find it useful to bring in also Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay, who seems overwhelmed by the complexity of the geopolitical problems he has had to tackle while learning on the job.

It took Yasay several weeks to respond to China’s building islands in surrounding seas complete with military-grade airstrips and weapons of war – and only after public opinion questioned the Philippine government’s timidity in the face of a bullying neighbor

Duterte gives the impression that at this stage of his love affair with Beijing, which has promised him multimillion-dollar investments and easy loans, he is not yet prepared to displease China until it delivers – and not before ascertaining what the US has in mind.

• Duterte awaits word from Trump

COMPLICATING Duterte’s balancing act is the failure of his other suitor across the Pacific, incoming US President Donald Trump, to say clearly and quickly what Washington under a Republican administration has by way of a counter-offer.

The budding *ménage à trois* of sorts is caught in the painfully slow transition from the Democratic presidency of outgoing Barack Obama smarting from Duterte’s curses for raising human rights questions over his bloody anti-narcotics campaign.

Contrasting with President Duterte’s velvet-glove handling of China’s aggressive island-building is Defense Secretary Lorenzana’s strong statement.

“Notwithstanding the warming of relations between our countries, the Philippine government would be remiss in its duty to protect its national interest if it does not protest, question and seek clarification from China on the presence of weapons in the Spratlys.

“The actions of China in militarizing those disputed features are very troubling. They do not square with the Chinese government’s rhetoric that its purpose is peaceful and friendly.”

The value of Manila’s belatedly announced displeasure over China’s unfriendly activities in disputed areas is diminished by its long delay, the foreign office’s refusal to reveal its text and the date it was delivered.

On a matter as serious as a territorial grab and the militarization of a neighbor’s territorial seas, the Chinese ambassador should have been summoned promptly to the foreign office and there served the diplomatic protest with instructions to deliver it post-haste to his principal.

We understand that nothing approximating that formal process happened, presumably because the Duterte administration is not ready at this point to incur the ire of its potential benefactor.

• **Militarization of isles in photos**

BACK in December, the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies released photographs of heavy anti-aircraft guns and other weapons systems that China had installed on seven built-up islands in the Spratlys.

Without denying their existence, China said the pictures were of weapons it had deployed that had "nothing to do with militarization." It described them as normal defensive facilities, an allegation that the Philippine military disputed.

Such maritime features, also claimed by neighbors – including the Philippines – are encompassed by China's "nine-dash line" unilaterally drawn boundaries of its SCS area.

In July last year, the boundaries were declared as violating international law by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea signed by China, the Philippines and other UN members.

However, the favorable PCA ruling on the arbitration case filed and won by the previous Aquino administration was set aside by Duterte as he turned left to China under what he called an independent foreign policy.

• **Collateral damage vs safe rescue**

ON HIS differing approach to rescuing hostages, General Ano stressed that the military has procedures and techniques to ensure the safety of captives of armed groups.

He told the media: "We are trained for that. We will always make sure that we apply the right force and we apply the right approach to make sure hostages are safe. Our first objective is to rescue the hostages. In the military, we have what we call tactics and techniques and procedures."

Duterte said in an earlier speech in Davao City: "My order really to the Navy and the Coast Guard is whenever there is a kidnapping and they (kidnappers) are trying to escape, blast them off. They might say 'there are hostages.' Sorry, collateral damage.

"Now, if they are blasted every day, that would stop or at least place us into a parity. *Hindi ka lalamang sa kalokohan mo, talagang pasabugin kita. Kaya huwag kayong magpa-kidnap, sa totoo lang.*"

★
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Slim chance of deal in peace talks

COMMENTARY

BOBBY M. TUAZON

control, and he wants to end the war to boost business and investment. With an amorphous “socialist” mindset, he is unclear about how he will carry out socioeconomic reforms; if he has such a plan, it is buried under his war on drugs. He is the first president to sign an order for freedom of information covering the executive branch, and to order fast-tracked public transactions. But transparency is clouded by the police’s concealed role in drug-related extrajudicial killings and the lack of legislated FOI. And for all his cozying up to China and Russia, his “independent foreign policy” is shorn of any official act rescinding the Philippines’ defense alliance with America and banning foreign forces from the country.

The NDFP’s progressive social and economic reforms collide with the dominant neoliberalism of Mr. Duterte’s chief economists, who also thumbed down a 2-year land conversion moratorium and mining restrictions proposed by Cabinet progressives. They nix restrictions on foreign equity to allow full foreign ownership of land and other vital resources. Nothing is wrong, they say, in keeping the neoliberal policies of past regimes, such as public-private partnerships and contractualization which has aggravated joblessness and widened income disparity.

Such policies underscore irreconcilable differences between the two panels on the

socioeconomic agenda. The Rome encounter will be protracted, with extended talks later on political and constitutional reforms. A bilateral ceasefire is a high-stakes prospect given the uncertain release of political prisoners. NDFP leaders say talks can continue even with a ceasefire breakdown. This scenario will derail Mr. Duterte’s all-out war on extremists in Mindanao and lock the military to two warfronts—a setback to his peace strategy. The last thing he needs now is a war with the more resilient communists.

A failed armed solution to the ideology-driven Left rebellion has forced the government in the past 30 years to negotiate. But this track is driven mainly to silence the NPA’s guns, leaving needed reforms uncertain. Government negotiators rate the NPA’s strength on the areas it controls, glossing over the fact that in the nature of guerrilla war, it now operates in 120 guerrilla fronts. The Left’s aggregate strength includes the mass base that it musters nationwide, a key player in bringing down rogue regimes since the 80s.

In the current talks, Mr. Duterte has narrow options. One is to find a common ground with the NDFP by adopting thoroughgoing reforms that require a coalition where the Left and other progressive movements take part in governance and lawmaking. It’s a process that the government loathes. Attritive bargaining and indefinite war are what’s left.

Bobby M. Tuazon is director for policy studies of the think tank CenPEG.

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A POINT OF AWARENESS

By PRECIOSA S. SOLIVEN



A salute to the brave

(Part III of "A Pledge to Duty, Honor, Country and God")

My husband, **Philippine STAR** publisher and columnist Max Soliven, recalled General Rafael "Rocky" Iletto's death from heart failure in June 2003. "In war and peace, General Iletto's heart never failed him. It was Our Lord the Almighty God of Battles and Peace, who finally called him home to heaven for a warrior's rest. For Rocky Iletto was a paladin and a noble knight in the old-fashioned sense of the term. He stood up for principle to the very end. He had been the lone general who had rejected the Dictator Ferdinand E. Marcos "Letter of Instruction" of Sept. 21, 1972 – the martial law decree under which 400 of us, led by Senator Ninoy Aquino (who ended up my cellmate in Fort Bonifacio) were arrested between midnight and crack of dawn."

The Father of Scout Rangers

Dubbed the "Father of Scout Rangers" it had been the great Ramon Magsaysay who had told him to forge, into finest steel, a small elite force to be the cutting edge of the struggle to crush the Communist Huk rebellion, which had been more powerful and fanatically devoted to the "dialectic" than the present New People's Army (NPA).

The protégé of General Iletto, Colonel Dennis Eclarin, who fought with distinction as a Scout Ranger himself in Mindanao – including the epic series of engagements leading to the fall of Camp Abubakar in the bloody battle against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) recounted the tale of how he did it and the men who carried on that elite but not narrowly confined tradition today.

Dennis Eclarin's contribution not to the legend but to the reality of the heroism of General Iletto is the 572-page book "The Scout Rangers Combat Guide" far more exciting than the legend. When Iletto was dying in the Philippine Heart Center, he had summoned Eclarin to his sickbed. Beckoning him to come closer, he had whispered into his ear: "Dennis don't forget those words, Duty, Honor, Country. I live by them." In this book you can find the chronicles of Iletto and the leaders who succeeded him to live – and often die – by those three ideals.

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The history of Scout Rangers

The first chapter records the history of Scout Rangers:

1950 to 1957. The threat of the Huks gave rise to the Scout Rangers. It was in 1950 when the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) menace was spreading like brushfire. Large-scale operations proved futile against the highly mobile and very elusive rebels. Then came the idea of a compact, hard-hitting unit to match the nature of the rebels. Intrepid and highly skilled in guerilla warfare, the core of this unit would have the stamina to go deep into enemy territory. They would infiltrate stealthily and strike with deadly effectiveness. The unit name Scout Ranger was a combination of the names of two outstanding World War II units: the Alamo Scout, adept in intelligence-gathering missions behind enemy lines, and the US Army Rangers, known for ferocity in combat.

On Nov. 25, 1950, with General Orders No. 325 from Headquarters, Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Scout Ranger Training Center (SRTC) was activated and tasked with training volunteers from the Philippine Army Battalion Combat Teams (BCTs). The first batch of trainees was composed of 12 officers and 100 enlisted personnel, all volunteers selected from different combat battalions. Before the ten-week course was over, many were washed out with only nine officers and 61 enlisted personnel graduating.

Their rigid training paid off in surprising dividends that one of the metropolitan dailies' front page reported "The newly organized Scout Rangers of the Armed Force of the Philippines – a commando unit similar to Carlson Raiders of WWII fame – scored their first Huk casualties including three of the enemy killed and five wounded, in a rough-and-tumble clash in the mountains beyond Olongapo, Zambales."

The Scout Rangers were instrumental in the neutralization of the top ranking Huk leader Capadocia in Panay, the ambush of Domingo Balgos in Bicol and the capture of the rebel bandit Kamlon, in Jolo. During this time, success seemed to follow each Scout Ranger move, so that the unit was soon dubbed as the "Darling of the Armed Forces of the Philippines." Having sealed the fate of the Hukbalahap movement by 1957, the combat oriented First Scout Ranger Regiment found itself without a mission and was deactivated with its members sent to the different units of the Philippine Army.

1971 to 1989. The local Communist

movement, spearheaded by the New People's Army, led to the resurrection of the 1st Scout Ranger Regiment in 1971.

With bases in Northeastern Luzon, Samar and Mindanao, the Red guerillas practiced a brand of jungle warfare, which only the well-trained and elite Scout Rangers could match. Hence, on Dec. 8, 1971, the Scout Ranger Training Unit (SRTU) was reactivated.

One of the first accomplishments during this period was the successful raid against the attempted smuggling of a huge NPA arms shipment through M/V *Karagatan*.

On July 16, 1978, the SRTU was organized into the Scout Ranger Group (SRG), which became organic to the newly formed Army Special Warfare Brigades (SWABde). The SRG's five companies participated in pacification campaigns all over the country, most notably in Cotabato, Lanao, Davao and Leyte.

The need to recognize the Army's elite units in the mid-eighties saw the deactivation of the SWABde and the reactivation of the First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSRR) in March 1983. During that time, the NPA's strength has ballooned into its largest ever. The Communist underground structure had complete or partial control of almost all of the nation's barangays. But the Scout rangers rose to challenge, unshackling the poor coerced populace from the tentacles of the insurgency. The Rangers silenced the enemy more than any other groups did. Because of its unsullied reputation as an excellent combat force, the FSRR was designated as the "National Maneuver Force" of the AFP on Dec. 1, 1986, and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in December of 1988.

1991 and Beyond. The AFP leadership again saw the need for the FSRR in 1991. The Communist guerillas' strength has become bolder. The members of Scout Ranger class 103, undergoing their test mission in Kalinga, delivered the first result. They conquered the Mabiga-Poguin Complex in Kalinga – an enemy fortress declared impregnable by infantry units in the area. It took the class one whole week to inch their way into the stronghold which was complete with anti-air raid tunnels, peppered with booby traps and manned by the fierce guerilla fighters.

Humbling defeats of Abu Sayyaf in Basilan, capturing Camp Abubakar

The Scout Ranger units posted in Mindanao responded to the renewed flare up of hostilities with the Southern Philippines armed groups.

The Abu Sayyaf, suffered a string of humbling defeats at the hands of the 1st Scout Ranger Battalion in Basilan.

The Second Scout Ranger Battalion, on the other hand, struck fear into the hearts of Moro rebels in Maguindanao. The Rema Regente operations recovered a piece of land touted by the rebels as their sanctuary.

In the all-out war against the MILF in 2000, the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion battled it out to win Camp Abubakar and other MILF strongholds in Cotabato and Maguindanao.

The 4th Scout Ranger Battalion, where Dennis Eclarin was a company commander, was instrumental in conquering enemy camps in Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte and in clearing the impenetrable Narciso Ramos Highway.

The famed First Scout Ranger Regiment under Col. Gabriel Ledesma, received the Presidential Steamer Award in 2000.

The true heroes of the Republic

To date, the First Scout Ranger Regiment remains as the top contributor to the AFP's combat scoreboard – year in and year out. The battle-wise individuals, who compose the legendary unit, remain strong in their commitment to fight for their Motherland. Offering everything and sometimes getting nothing in return, they are the true heroes of the republic.

(Part III – "Raising a Modern Day Knight")

(For feedback email to precious.solliven@yahoo.com)

ONLINE NEWS 19 JANUARY 2017

<http://dwdd.com.ph/>

AFP don't recommend martial law

Lui Claudio



Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said that there is no need for President Rodrigo Duterte to impose martial law.

AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said at a press briefing that the AFP are able to operate and catch all the people who have been committing violence.

"Currently, we are able to accomplish our mission without the complexity of needing to have any kind of special rule applied," Padilla said.

Last Sunday, Duterte stated that no one could stop him from declaring martial law if the drug threat has turned "something really very virulent."

Duterte emphasized that he will declare it not because of invasion or insurrection but to preserve the nation.

On the other hand, Padilla said that if the president declares martial law, the AFP will support it. (LMC/MF)

<http://www.inquirer.net/>

DND chief, AFP officials seek people's backing vs kidnapping

By: Frances Mangosing - Reporter / @FMangosingINQ

INQUIRER.net / 07:10 PM January 18, 2017

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and top military officials on Wednesday visited the country's most southwestern island, the municipality of Sibutu in Tawi-Tawi, as part of their camp tour.

Aside from the meeting the soldiers, the officials also wanted to get the support of the community in the government's campaign against terrorism, kidnapping, piracy, and illegal drugs, Armed Forces of the Philippines public affairs chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said.

Lorenzana also spoke to local officials and military commanders in Tawi-Tawi.

"He emphasized that it is not enough that the military provides the security. Good governance and the cooperation of the people are essential ingredients for progress to set in," Arevalo said.

He said that the kidnappings around the island remain a great concern to local officials.

"Sibutu Mayor Alshefa Pajiji [gave] his support and that of his constituents to help in the campaign to end the criminal activities of the ASG among other concerns," Arevalo said.

Mr. Calbi Nami, the President of the Association of Barangay Captains, for his part, sought the assistance of government for solar lights to illuminate their streets and communities to uplift the lives of some 30,000 people of the municipality.

Lorenza was joined by AFP chief Eduardo Año, Army commanding general Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda; Navy Flag Officer in Command Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado; Air Force commanding general Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina; and 11 other generals and flag officers from the Department of National Defense, the General Headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, and Western Mindanao Command, and Director National Intelligence Coordinating Agency Alex Monteagudo.

<http://www.philstar.com/>

Hataman: ARMM needs good cops, not 'ninjas'

By Roel Pareño



Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao at the Mindanao Week of Peace. ARMM Bureau of Public Information

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Philippines -- Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Regional Gov. Mujiv Hataman has appealed to the leadership of the Philippine National Police to send courageous, honest and determined cops to the Muslim region.

This, as Hataman resented anew pronouncements that so-called 'ninja' cops would be sent to the ARMM as a form of punishment by the PNP national command.

"Hindi corrupt at hindi sindikato na pulis ang kailangan namin," Hataman said while in Zamboanga City.

Hataman said the autonomous region already has to deal with syndicates and criminal elements. He added the region also has to contend with kidnappings and terror groups like the Abu Sayyaf and Maute.

"So, what we need here are courageous cops that are determined and not those corrupt ones. I mean, even if it's a policy, but it's not really a good idea," according to Hataman.

He said they are trying to build up the image of the Muslim region and dumping dishonest police personnel in the ARMM will not help.

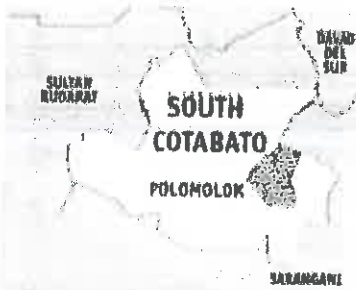
"If they really want to help, they should deploy those courageous ones who are willing to run after the criminals, lawless elements and terrorists," Hataman added.

Hataman said he has not brought the issue up with PNP Director General Ronald dela Rosa yet but that they are arranging a meeting to discuss it.

<http://dwdd.com.ph/>

ANTI-TERRORISM UPDATE | 3 members of AKP arrested

Lui Claudio



Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City — Prior to President Rodrigo Duterte's scheduled visit in Maasim, Sarangani, the Philippine National Police (PNP) intensified its efforts to weaken the force of 3 members of Ansar al-Khilafah Philippines (AKP) arrested.

Three members of AKP were arrested named Zaidon Nilong, Danny Yang, and Mario Suib Linggay.

Police recovered a grenade from Nilong, sachets of suspected shabu from Yang, and a .45 Caliber Pistol from Linggay.

Polomolok Municipal Police Station took the custody of the three and scheduled to file charges in court today.

Linggay claimed to be an internal asset of 6th Infantry Division while Nilong is said to be a 2nd-degree cousin of Abdul Basit Usman who is the founder of AKP Southern Mindanao.

Nilong reportedly allowed the AKP to use their old MNLF camp in Barangay Aflek, T'boli where some members of AKP from Maguindanao are hiding.

On the other hand, Regional Anti-Illegal Drug Special Operation Task Force (RAIDSOTF) searched the house of Nilong's brother, Lapu Brgy. Capt. Abdullah Nilong, and Redzkie Dumato but nothing illegal was found. **MCAG/LMC/MF**

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