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NEWS CLIPPINGS

10 March 2017

Friday

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

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BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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BusinessMirror

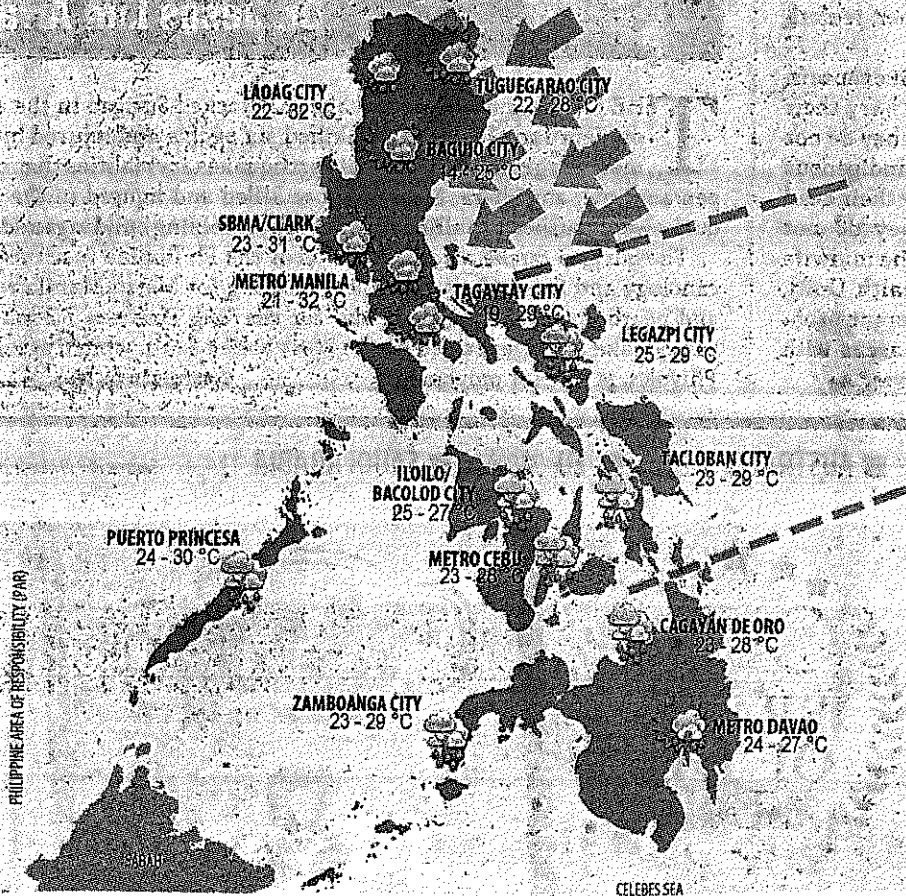
A broader look at today's business



TODAY'S WEATHER

MARCH 10, 2017 | FRIDAY

TAIL-END OF A COLD FRONT
AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF
VISAYAS AND MINDANANO
NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING LUZON
(As of 5:00 PM - Mar. 9, 2017)



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3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	MAR 11	MAR 12	MAR 13	3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	MAR 11	MAR 12	MAR 13
	Saturday	Sunday	Monday		Saturday	Sunday	Monday
METRO MANILA	22-32°C	23-32°C	23-32°C	METRO CEBU	24-30°C	25-30°C	25-30°C
TUGUEGARAO	22-28°C	22-28°C	23-29°C	TACLOBAN	24-30°C	25-31°C	25-30°C
LAOAG	23-31°C	23-32°C	23-33°C	CAGAYAN DEORO	24-29°C	24-29°C	24-29°C
BAGUIO	15-26°C	15-25°C	16-26°C	METRO DAVAO	25-29°C	26-30°C	26-31°C
SBMA/ CLARK	23-31°C	23-32°C	24-32°C	ZAMBOANGA	24-31°C	24-32°C	25-32°C
TAGAYTAY	19-29°C	18-28°C	19-29°C	SUNRISE	6:07 AM	SUNSET	6:06 PM
LEGAZPI	24-28°C	25-28°C	25-31°C	MOONRISE	4:07 PM	MOONSET	4:10 AM
PUERTO PRINCESA	24-31°C	26-32°C	26-32°C	FIRST-QUARTER	MAR 15 7:32 PM	FULL MOON	MAR 12 10:54 PM
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25-28°C	25-29°C	26-30°C	LOW-TIDE	3:55 AM -0.17 Meter	HIGH-TIDE	8:27 PM 0.98 Meter

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10 March 2017



Page: 1

Duterte warns of martial law

'Unleash weapons of war vs NPA'

By ALEXIS ROMERO and EDITH REGALADO

Help him solve security problems or he'll declare martial law in Mindanao.

These were the choices President Duterte gave local executives in Mindanao yesterday as he urged them to use their police forces to prevent terrorism from spinning out of control.

"I am asking you... because then as President, I will be forced, I will be compelled to exercise extraordinary powers," Duterte said during a meeting of local officials in Davao City. "Either you help me or I will declare martial law tomorrow (in) Mindanao."

Also yesterday, Duterte ordered the military to "unleash the weapons of war" including "jets and rockets" against the New People's Army (NPA).

Duterte accused the communist rebels of "ideological cannibalism" after they killed four policemen in an ambush Wednesday in Davao and executed four civilians last Tuesday in Pagadian City.

The President said martial law is not a good idea because it could traumatize Filipinos.

"There is no need for martial law or suspension (of the

writ of habeas corpus). I can do it by just declaring martial law but (that) would open the doors of every house there, the arrest of every person, the detention of every person, everyone, anyone. The military and the police would be allowed to just pick you up on the street," he said.

"That is my problem now. Help me. If not... then I have to authorize the military just to arrest you, detain you and if will not be good for our people and they would go into a trauma."

Duterte said martial law "could be a brutal war, just like any other ideological war."

"The problem with martial law is the military and police would be higher than you already in terms of authority and I don't want to do that, so help me. Use the police," he said.

The President then cited violent activities in Mindanao, including the bombing of a school in Zamboanga, that involve "devouring even our children."

"I would rather sink, rise and fall on the issue of law and order. *Kung 'di ko talaga kaya, ibigay ko na lang sa babae at sabihin ko, baka kaya mo, hindi ko kaya* (If I really cannot do it, I will just give it to the woman and tell her maybe you can do it, I can't do it)," Duterte said, referring to Vice President Leni Robredo.

"Or I will be compelled now to exercise extraordinary powers not to perpetuate myself.

Believe me, I am not happy continuing with this job but since I'm here, it's not a question of emotions, it's a question of duty," he added.

As president, Duterte said he now faces "the enormity of the problem of dealing with this violence that is almost unstoppable."

He also asked policemen not to fear criminal charges if they are performing their duty.

He vowed to support local executives and policemen who would face complaints before the ombudsman.

"I will include in my affidavit, I specifically ordered mayors and governors to use necessary force and to kill if demanded under the circumstances," Duterte said.

He would rather die than sit and preside over affairs of the nation as an inutile president.

"Just shoot me while I'm on my way out here. That would be more honorable for me to die than to sit and preside over a deteriorating country," he said.

Jets, rockets vs NPAs

Before threatening to declare martial law to maintain peace and order in Mindanao, Duterte earlier powered up the government's war with the insurgents, collateral damage notwithstanding.

"I will allow the police and the military this time to use all available assets... airplanes, jets, use them... rockets. Col-

lateral damage, *pasensya* (sorry)," Duterte said yesterday, as he condemned Wednesday morning's deadly ambush in Davao del Sur and ordered the military and the police to continue waging war against the communist rebels.

And with the peace talks "totally absent for now," the President commanded the armed forces and the police to "just go ahead" with the stepped-up battle in the meantime and unleash the weapons of war.

"Wage a war against them, anything goes for now," Duterte said.

Four policemen - Police Officers 1 Rolly Benelayo, Joe Narvaza and Saro Mangutara and PO3 Jayden May Rabor - were killed and another was wounded in that ambush perpetrated by suspected NPA members in the province's Barangay Sibayan, Bansalan town.

A team of investigators from the Bansalan Municipal Police Station and the local Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) were on their way to probe a murder incident when they were attacked by suspected rebels.

"I'm sorry this gory incident had to happen. But I can assure everybody that the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police (PNP) will respond. This time, I'm using everything. I have encouraged the police to call in the air assets and the new jets, make use of the rockets, bombs."

Duterte, who arrived at the Bansalan Municipal Hall

around 3:40 p.m. yesterday, handed posthumously Medalya ng Kagalingan awards to the relatives of the Benelayo, Narvaza and Mangutara, who all belonged to the Bansalan Municipal Police Station, and Rabor, a member of SOCO Digos City.

The slain policemen were cited for their bravery and service to the country.

Mangutara's remains were immediately retrieved by his relatives after the incident so he could be buried in accordance with Muslim burial customs.

The President also awarded a Medalya ng Kadakilaan to PO3 Allen Arnado, who was wounded in the same incident and was also present at the wake when the President visited.

The families of the slain policemen and Arnado received financial, medical and educational assistance from Duterte.

'Ideological cannibalism'

The communists, according to Duterte, are engaging in "ideological cannibalism" because they are killing fellow Filipinos.

"It's not an overkill actually. It's a question of honor... We fight war and as revolutionary ideology would put it, it's a kind of ideological cannibalism because you devour your own kind, you kill your own brothers and sisters in thy name, on the altar of revolution," he said.

Malacañang, however, believes the ambush would influ-

ence the prospects of the peace negotiations, which were terminated by the President last January.

"It will influence the talks... You know, I suppose the conversation would be that there should be firmer action coming from the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front side on the people on the ground," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a press briefing.

The ambush in Davao del Norte involved a "well-laid trap" that led to the deaths of members of a SOCO team, according to Duterte.

"SOCO fundamentally is police organization or agency under the police organization but they are not combatants. They don't bother to bring firearms," the President said.

Duterte lamented that attacks against government forces continued even during the implementation of a ceasefire.

"They better choose. I'm ready for all-out war, another 50 years... fine... So, what you receive, you give also," he said.

3 civilians slain

Less than 24 hours before the Davao ambush, communist insurgents gunned down three civilians, whom they charged in a kangaroo court, in a remote village in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur, the police reported yesterday.

Police Regional Office 9 (PRO-9) spokesman Supt. Rogelio Alabata identified the fatalities as Alipio Banogon Andus, 39; Ariston Obaran

Paroc, 46; and Julieta Bolo Candao, 28, all married and residents of Barangay Dampalan.

The victims were shot by 15 fully armed NPA members Tuesday afternoon, Alabata said, based on the account of Marlin Paroc, the wife of Ariston.

Marlin told police that they were walking home from their farmland when they noticed the rebels sitting along the roadside at Purok 4 about 5 p.m.

The rebels allowed her to run away while her husband and their two companions were held and shot with automatic weapons, according to Marlin.

Back-channel talks

Last Tuesday, Duterte revealed that the government and the communists are holding back-channel talks in an effort to revive the negotiations.

In fact, the government allowed Wednesday night three top party leaders to leave for Europe to meet with Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process (OPAPP) Secretary Jesus Dureza for the much-needed back-channeling that would pave the way for the resumption of the stalled peace negotiations.

In a defense forum held at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that key NPA leaders - the Tiamzon couple Benito and Wilma, along with Vicente Ladlad - were allowed to leave the country, hours after Dureza also flew to Europe.

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“Yesterday (Wednesday) Sec. Dureza left for Europe and last night we allowed the departure of Benito and Wilma and Mr. Laddad to also do back-channelling,” Lorenzana said.

The Tiamzons, being the overall NPA leaders operating across the country, are also known as hardliners among the

CPP-NPA-NDF consultants in the stalled peace talks. Lorenzana said the NPAs are to blame for Duterte’s ordering the termination of peace talks, leading to the resumption of hostilities.

“Because of some (NPA) atrocities in Mindanao, the President stopped the peace talks and also terminated (the military’s unilateral ceasefire), and so we are back to fighting,” Lorenzana said.

To compensate for their losses at the

hands of the military, the rebels turned to attacking innocent civilians and started burning equipment and harassing civilian security agencies, the latest of which was in Nasugbu, Batangas, according to the defense chief.

‘Prioritize probe’

Interior and Local Government Secretary Ismael Sueno has directed the PNP to prioritize the investigation on the Davao ambush-slay.

The investigation to be conducted under the supervision of PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa, according to Sueno, would ensure that the killers of policemen will face the consequences of their actions.

“I have clear instructions to our PNP chief to respond accordingly and deliver swift action against the suspects who are allegedly members of a lawless armed group,” Sueno said, adding that he is deeply saddened by the incident.

For Dela Rosa, once the municipal police chief of Bansalan, the manner by which the four policemen were killed was a clear signature of the NPA in carrying out an ambush on government troops.

– With Jaime Laude, Cecille Suerte
Felipe, Roel Pareño

March 2017

THE DAILY
tribune

Page: 1

DUTERTE CITES RISING MINDANAO PROBLEMS

Rody to mayors: Help me or I'll declare ML

**By Ted Tuvera
and Mario J. Mallari**

President Duterte tasked local government officials in Mindanao yesterday to restore law and order and stop terrorism or else, "he will declare martial law in the region."

In an address before Mindanao mayors in his hometown Davao City last night Duterte said he felt compelled to maintain public order in the region through "extraordinary powers" in the face of a wave of threats from various enemies, including terrorists and illegal drug traffickers.

"Either help me or I will declare martial law tomorrow for Mindanao, I may understand battles

(being waged in) all the camps but I cannot, for the life of me, understand why we have to kill our children too," Mr. Duterte said in his address.

He also cited the communist movement's operations after the breakdown in the peace negotiations more than a month ago.

To solve the deteriorating law and order situation, Mr. Duterte said declaring martial law is needed for him to quell threats from several armed groups.

"I'm called upon to protect everybody. I can even do it with just declaring Martial law," the President said, adding that for the enemies of the state to avoid an all-out military crackdown,

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it's better to talk or cooperate with the government.

"Or else it will be bloody," Mr. Duterte warned.

"It would be bloody and it will not be good for the country... If we allow violence, I really do not know. The people, maybe would demand for my resignation. To avoid that, I will do something and it will be drastic and painful for everybody," he stressed.

Mr. Duterte pointed out that the latest ambush incident allegedly carried out by the communist New People's Army (NPA) could be a deciding factor on whether or not the peace process will continue. He said he is issuing an ultimatum against the communist movement if they still want the peace negotiations to continue.

Mr. Duterte also threatened the rebels that he will likely carry out a campaign similar to that of the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos who implemented a war against the Maoist insurgents when he declared martial law in 1972.

"Martial law would open the doors of every house there, the arrest of every person, the detention of every person, every one, anyone," he said.

"The military and the police would be allowed to just pick you up from the street and detain you. And then you can go to court for the suspension of writ of habeas corpus," the President added.

In an earlier media interview luring his visit to the wake of fallen oncombatant elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Ansanlan, Davao del Sur, the

President ordered state security forces to intensify its attacks against the NPA.

Abduction, piracy spread

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier said he is literally losing sleep over the continued unabated kidnapping and piracy in Mindanao.

Lorenzana noted that since Mr. Duterte assumed office last June 30, the number of hostages being held by the terrorist Abu Sayyaf group went up by more than a dozen.

"It's giving me headache. Sometimes I could not sleep at night thinking about how to solve the problem there (southern Philippines)," admitted Lorenzana.

"When the President was inaugurated, there were only 18 hostages being held by the Abu Sayyaf, now there are 31... it's very embarrassing... but we are doing a lot of things within our power," he added.

In fact, German hostage Juergen Gustav Kantner was beheaded last February 26 after the deadline for the payment of P30 million ransom expired. The victim was snatched last November off Sabah while aboard a yacht. His female companion was found dead on the sea craft.

Despite this, Lorenzana expressed optimism that the Duterte administration can finish the Abu Sayyaf problem.

"I believe we can solve this problem maybe by end of June, if not we'll give them another couple of months," he said.

The defense chief said that the military is planning to station a permanent division-sized command

in Jolo.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año has set a six-month deadline to significantly defeat the Abu Sayyaf and other terrorist groups in southern Philippines.

More than 20,000 troops are currently operating against the ASG - particularly in the provinces of Basilan and Tawi Tawi.

Lorenzana said they have met with local government officials in Jolo to seek their cooperation in addressing the Abu Sayyaf menace in the area.

"I think they are just being held hostage by a group of 400 armed men who kidnap with impunity, beat people with impunity as well. So we will pursue this, the President is really interested in ending the problem in Jolo," said Lorenzana.

Piracy-prone waters watched

The Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia will launch joint patrols in piracy-plagued waters, Lorenzana said after a wave of attacks that saw Islamic militants kidnapping and murdering foreigners.

The Abu Sayyaf, a kidnap-for-ransom network that has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, has been kidnapping sailors on fishing vessels and cargo barges including an elderly German whom it beheaded last month after ransom demands were not met. Lorenzana said he and his counterparts from Malaysia and Indonesia had agreed to patrol a sea lane where commercial vessels could pass with protection from the three nations' navies.

"We are inaugurating some time

in April or May a joint patrol of the three nations in that area," Lorenzana said in a news conference.

"(Vessels) cannot stray beyond that lane so that we can help protect them."

The waters between the three nations have become increasingly dangerous in recent years, with maritime officials warning of a "Somalia-type" situation if the attacks are not addressed.

Lorenzana said he told the Vietnamese envoy to Manila last week to arm his nation's crewmen passing through the waters or coordinate with Philippine authorities to avoid being kidnapped.

He added Mr. Duterte was "very interested" in ending the kidnapping problem.

Duterte had asked China to help patrol the waters, citing Beijing's dispatch of a naval convoy to the Gulf of Aden in 2009 to protect Chinese ships from Somali pirates.

Lorenzana said equipment to help fight the Abu Sayyaf like fast boats, drones and radars would be acquired as part of a military modernization program.

The Abu Sayyaf, established with seed money from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network, has been kidnapping foreigners and locals for decades and holding them for ransom on its remote island strongholds in the southern Philippines.

Lorenzana, who identified the Abu Sayyaf and other extremist groups as the Philippines' top security threat, said the kidnappings were "embarrassing to the whole world."

10 March 2017

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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After cops' ambush, Duterte orders war on Reds

**By Eldie Aguirre
and Allan Nawal**
@Team_Inquirer

BANSALAN, DAVAO DEL SUR—President Duterte on Thursday ordered security forces to “wage war” against communist New People’s Army (NPA) rebels who recently killed four police officers in an ambush in Davao del Sur province.

His order came as negotiators from both sides were in Europe for back channel talks to revive peace negotiations, which President Duterte angrily ended last month after the NPA lifted its unilateral truce.

“There are no peace talks yet. It’s totally absent. So in the meantime, I would just also ask the armed forces and the police to just go ahead and wage a war

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said communist negotiators led by the husband and wife team of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon and Vicente Ladlad left for Europe on Wednesday night for the back channel talks. Government chief peace adviser Jesus Dureza left a day earlier.

“We in the military and the defense welcome this development because we also want to stop the fighting in the hinterlands in the rural areas so that we can bring development,” he said.

Lorenzana noted that more than 100 congressmen have signed a petition urging a resumption of peace talks, even as President Duterte had earlier laid down some conditions.

But Interior Secretary Ismael Sueno on Thursday ordered the Philippine National

against them. Anything goes,” President Duterte said shortly after visiting the wake of the slain policemen.

“I will allow the police and the military this time to use all available assets,” he said, adding that he was sorry that the “gory incident” had to take place.

He said the military and police could use airplanes, jets, and rockets against the NPA, and said he was sorry for civilians caught in the violence as “collateral damage.”

Mr. Duterte said he was ready for another 50 years of war.

“What you receive, you give also,” he warned, stressing the slain policemen were only doing their job and responding to a distress call when attacked.

“Go ahead, flatten the hills,” he ordered the government

Police to act “swiftly” against the NPA, and vowed to help the families of the slain officers.

The policemen were headed to an upland village when they were ambushed. The victims, aboard two vehicles, were just 100 meters from their destination when they were attacked.

Gruesome attack

PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa described the attack as gruesome and said the slain police officers were “shot many times in the head.”

“We have long been talking peace with them but nothing happened. Nothing is happening. I would be retiring soon but the talks had not achieved anything,” he said, but added that he hoped that the rebels would be sincere this time.

security forces.

In Manila, presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said the latest attack could affect the possible resumption of peace talks, with the government expected to demand a stop to rebel attacks.

“It will provide some sort of influence, but there’s a bigger thing which is the pursuit of peace,” Abella told reporters in Malacañang.

He said the government panel would likely demand a “firmer action” from the Communist Party of the Philippines and its political arm, the National Democratic Front.

The President, he stressed, had earlier said he wanted the rebels to end its extortion activities and to agree to a bilateral ceasefire.

“I’m open to talk to the rebels, just not the killers. I’m ready to talk and I’m ready to stop this war. I would prefer for us to not have war, but we need to talk from the heart,” he said.

Dela Rosa, who is expected to retire next year, said he believed the NPA was behind the attack because no other rebel group operated in Bansalan. In 2009, he said a local police chief and three of his men were killed in an attack also blamed on the rebels.

Dela Rosa, who was the police chief in Bansalan in 1991, said the NPA’s Front Committee 51 was known to operate in the area. The gunmen, he said, were known to place grenades under the body of slain enemies.

—WITH REPORTS FROM LEILA B. SALAVERRIA, PHILIP C. TUBEZA AND CYNTHIA D. BALANA. INQ

10 March 2017



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4 Abus slain in Basilan clash

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Four suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed in an encounter with government forces in Basilan on Wednesday.

Senior Superintendent Nixon Muksan, Basilan police director, identified two of the fatalities as Mobin Kulin, alias Mulawin, and Hadji Villamin Hassan.

Police and military operatives were serving a warrant to arrest Hassan when they chanced on Kulin and two other suspects in Barangay Bong-Umus on the island of Tapanan.

Muksan said the suspects

drew their guns, triggering a firefight.

He said Kulin, who has a P600,000 bounty on his head, was charged in connection with the Sipadan kidnapping in 2000.

Kulin was also tagged in the siege at the Dr. Torres Hospital and St. Peter Church in Lamitan City in 2001.

Authorities said Kulin was also behind the kidnapping of plantation workers in Baran-

gay Tairan in Basilan in 2001.

Sleepless over kidnaps

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana admitted that kidnappings and piracy by Abu Sayyaf bandits are giving him sleepless nights.

"They are actually giving me... a headache," Lorenzana told a forum at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday. "Sometimes I couldn't sleep at night thinking about how to solve them."

He said the number of kidnap victims increased from only 18 when President Duterte took office in 2016, excluding 70-year-old German

Jurgen Kantner, who was beheaded last month.

"It's very embarrassing to the whole world that the bandits are doing this. But we are doing a lot of things that are within our power," Lorenzana said.

He said joint patrols with Malaysia and Indonesia would be conducted to prevent cross-border kidnappings.

Lorenzana said the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) would also put up a task force based in Bongao town and possibly a permanent division in Jolo.

During his visit to Sulu on Tuesday, the defense chief said

the AFP would dispatch additional military equipment and assets. He said more Marine troops would also be deployed if necessary.

Lorenzana said Navy boats had been deployed to the area, even as he admitted that they have no fast seacraft that could run after pirates and bandits.

He said the government is also considering the holding of next year's Balikatan exercises in Mindanao.

"Maybe we can swing these exercises toward the south to coincide with our fight against piracy and kidnapping," Lorenzana said.

National Security Adviser

Hermogenes Esperon said the military is applying its full force against the bandits to meet its self-imposed deadline to crush the group in six months.

Meanwhile, in Basilan, a bomb exploded in front of the Jose Elementary School in Barangay Matatag in Lamitan City yesterday. Another bomb was recovered in front of a church in Barangay Malinis shortly after the blast.

The military said the incidents could be a diversionary tactic amid relentless military operations against Abu Sayyaf bandits.

—With Michael Punongbayan

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Chinese ships entering PH waters—Lorenzana

Chinese survey ships have been entering waters recognized by the United Nations as Philippine territory, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Thursday, in a move he described as "very concerning."

Lorenzana said the ships were seen last year near Benham Rise, a Philippine territory 250 kilometers off the east coast of Luzon, as well as Reed Bank in the South China Sea, which is claimed by both Manila and Beijing.

"I have ordered the navy that if they see this service ship this year to start to accost them

and drive them away" from Benham Rise, Lorenzana said.

"The very concerning thing is they have several service ships plying this area, staying in one area sometimes for a month as if doing nothing. But we believe they are actually surveying the seabed," he told journalists.

Lorenzana's statement comes as President Duterte seeks warmer relations with Beijing, after ties soured under the previous administration because of conflicting claims in the South China Sea.

Asked why the ships might be

surveying in Benham Rise, Lorenzana said he received information the vessels were "looking for a place to put submarines."

Benham Rise is an underwater landmass believed to be potentially rich in mineral and natural gas deposits.

In 2012, the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approved the Philippines' undisputed territorial claim to Benham Rise.

The Philippines and China, along with Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam, have conflicting claims to the South Chi-

na Sea, but the Philippines' ownership of Benham Rise is indisputable.

China claims almost all of the vital sea lane, including the Reed Bank, which is about 148 km off the island of Palawan and which Manila considers as its territory.

Mr. Duterte's predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, had pressed the Philippines' claims leading to tensions with China.

But Mr. Duterte, who took office last year, has focused on boosting relations with Beijing.

—AFP

10 March 2017



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JOINT PATROLS

**PH, MALAYSIA,
INDONESIA
TO GUARD SEAS
VS PIRATES**

The Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia will launch joint patrols in piracy-plagued waters, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Thursday, after a wave of attacks that saw Islamic militants kidnapping and murdering foreigners.

The Abu Sayyaf, a kidnapping-for-ransom network that has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, has been kidnapping sailors on fishing vessels and cargo barges including an elderly German whom it beheaded last month after ransom demands were not met.

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Somalia-type situation

The waters between the three nations have become increasingly dangerous in recent years, with maritime officials warning of a "Somalia-type" situation if the attacks are not addressed.

In February, the Abu Sayyaf murdered Jurgen Kantner, 70, five months after his yacht was found drifting off southern Philippines with the body of his female companion, Sabine Merz, who had been shot.

The Abu Sayyaf are holding 31 foreign and local hostages including six Vietnamese seamen attacked on their cargo ship off the southern Philippines last month, according to Lorenzana.

Lorenzana said he told the Vietnamese envoy to Manila last week to arm his nation's crewmen passing through the waters or coordinate with Philippine authorities to avoid being kidnapped.

He added President Duterte was "very interested" in ending the kidnapping problem.

Mr. Duterte had asked China to help patrol the waters, citing Beijing's dispatch of a naval convoy to the Gulf of Aden in 2009 to protect Chinese ships from Somali pirates.

Lorenzana said equipment to help fight the Abu Sayyaf like fast boats, drones and radars would be acquired as part of a military modernization program.

The Abu Sayyaf, established with seed money from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network, have been kidnapping foreigners and locals for decades and holding them for ransom on its remote island strongholds in the southern Philippines. —AFP

March 2017



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China survey ships spotted at Benham Rise

By JAIME LAUDE

Chinese survey ships have not only conducted oceanographic research at Recto or Reed Bank in the West Philippine Sea

but also at Benham Rise in the Pacific, which has been recognized by the United Nations as part of the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, Defense Secretary Delfin Loren-

zana bared yesterday. Lorenzana described China's latest move as "very concerning" and said he had ordered the Navy to accost and drive

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away the service ship from Benham Rise if it is seen again. He also said the Philippines

lodged a diplomatic protest to assert its ownership of Benham Rise.

"Last year, they were monitored there for about three months," Lorenzana said, referring to the Chinese.

"The very concerning thing is they have several service

ships plying this area, staying in one area sometimes for a month as if doing nothing. But we believe they are actually surveying the seabed," he told reporters in a defense

forum that tackled the overall security outlook of the country for 2017, which was hosted by the National Defense College at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Lorenzana's statement comes as President Duterte seeks warmer relations with Beijing, after ties soured under the previous administration because of conflicting claims in the West Philippine Sea.

The Philippines won an arbitration case that challenged China's claim over the whole of the South China Sea, but Duterte said he would only invoke the ruling at the proper time.

Asked why the ships might be surveying in Benham Rise, Lorenzana said he received information the vessels were "looking for a place to put submarines."

Lorenzana said based on obtained satellite monitoring, the Chinese service ship had to sail from Benham Rise to Surigao City and dock to have one of their sailors undergo hospital treatment after an accident.

"When he (Chinese sailor) got well, he left for China," Lorenzana said.

Benham Rise is an underwater landmass believed to be potentially rich in mineral and natural gas deposits.

In 2012, the United Nations

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf approved the Philippines' undisputed territorial claim to Benham Rise.

Protests

Aside from Benham Rise, Chinese survey ships were monitored dozen of times conducting oceanographic research at Recto Bank, a maritime feature in the West Philippine Sea also believed to contain huge mineral and oil deposits.

The series of Chinese incursions in Benham Rise in the Pacific and Recto Bank in West Philippine Sea started sometime in July and continued up to December as per the defense department's sustained maritime monitoring over these areas.

Lorenzana said his department promptly reported these incidents to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) for the filing of diplomatic protests.

The Chinese ambassador, however, only issued outright denials.

"You know we have to protest because we have to show to these people that we consider those areas as ours," Lorenzana said.

land.

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The defense chief said the Philippines must continue lodging diplomatic actions to question Beijing's activities in the South China Sea and in Benham Rise or it would lose its maritime domain by default to Beijing.

"They are trying wear us down ... so that later or maybe in a couple of years, the new Filipino generation will accept

that these areas (West Philippine Sea and Benham Rise) belong to them (China)," Lorenzana said.

He said the Philippines would stick to diplomatic means to fight for its territory.

Lorenzana also bared that China was all set to reclaim Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal but was reportedly told by the Americans not to do so and for some reason, the Chinese aborted their planned reclamation of the rich Filipino fishing ground.

– With AFP

10 March 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

President Duterte ready for all-out war with NPA

President Duterte yesterday said he is ready to wage an all-out war with the New People's Army (NPA) even if it takes another 50 years.

He stressed this after the ambush of four policemen from Bansalan, Davao del Sur, allegedly by members of the NPA on Wednesday.

"Let them choose. Ako (Me), I'm ready for an all-out war. Another 50 years if need be. What you give, you receive also," Duterte said ▶9

in an ambush interview after his visit to the wake of the four slain policemen when asked if he would prefer peace talks or war.

"Fifty years na tayong nag-aaway (We're fighting for 50 years already). So let's extend it for another 50 years. But they'll never have the chance to gain power," he added.

Duterte said since he cancelled the peace talks, he will just order the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) to wage war against the communist rebels.

"I will allow the police and the military this time to use all available assets. Eropiano (Airplanes), jet, use them. Gamitin ang rockets (Use the rockets). Collateral damage? Pasensya (I'm sorry)," he said.

He also apologized to the public that the "gory" incident had to happen but

assured everybody that the AFP and the PNP will respond accordingly.

"This time, I'm using everything. I have encouraged the police to call in the air assets. Make use of the rockets and bomb [them]," he said.

Reports said a team of policemen from Bansalan and the Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) provincial office was heading for Barangay Sibayan in Bansalan to investigate a murder case when they were fired upon at around 6 a.m.

Ideological cannibalism

Duterte said the ambush of the four policemen was not overkill but this time, a question of honor.

What the communist rebels are doing right now is committing 'ideological cannibalism' since they devour their own countrymen for the sake of revolution, Duterte said. (Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos)

March 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 2

DND orders PN to drive away Sino ships from Benham Rise

By Mario J. Mallari

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has ordered the Philippine Navy (PN) to start accosting Chinese survey ships that would enter Benham Rise which has been awarded by the United Nations (UN) to the Philippines.

This, as Lorenzana revealed that a Chinese survey ship was monitored to have stayed along Benham Rise for three months last year – apparently conducting survey on the seabed.

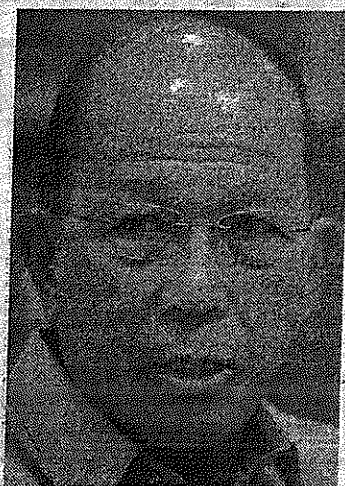
"I have ordered the Philippine Navy that if they see this survey ship this year start to accost them and driving them away," Lorenzana said.

Benham Rise is located in the eastern part of the Philippines which is as big as the land mass of Regions I, II and III. It is believed that the area is not only a rich fishing ground but may contain minerals.

According to Lorenzana, the Chinese survey ship monitored last year could be conducting study on the seabed of Benham Rise.

He said government authorities are patrolling the area to monitor the situation there.

Over in the West Philippine



LORENZANA

Sea, particularly in Panatag Shoal off Zambales; Lorenzana said that China attempted to conduct reclamation over the shoal also known as Scarborough Shoal last June.

Lorenzana said that the Chinese plan to reclaim Panatag Shoal was prevented by the United States.

He said barges loaded with soil and construction materials were monitored going to Panatag Shoal – a month before the UN Permanent Arbitration Court (PCA) ruled that the area is part of the 200 nautical miles

exclusive economic zone of the Philippines and dismissed Beijing's nine dash line.

"There was a plan by the Chinese in June to build, to reclaim Scarborough Shoal...but the Americans I think told the Chinese 'don't do it.' For some reason, the Chinese stopped," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said that even President Duterte stated that it will be the "red line" if China start exploring on Panatag Shoal which located about 124 nautical miles from the shoreline of Masinloc in Zambales.

Currently, the Defense chief said that Chinese coast guard ships are still in the vicinity of Panatag Shoal. In fact, he said that based on monitoring, Chinese vessels are as near as 60 miles from Masinloc.

"That is already here, very near, which according to them still part of their nine dash line," Lorenzana said.

The only benefit of the talks between Duterte and Chinese leader Xi Jin Ping, according to Lorenzana, was that Filipino fishermen are now allowed to freely venture into Panatag Shoal.

Lorenzana said that Chinese survey ships are also common sights along Reed Bank or Recto

Bank – which is believed to have oil deposits.

The DND chief said that reports of Chinese encroachment have been forwarded to the Department of Foreign Affairs for the filing of formal protest.

Last year, Lorenzana said that about a dozen protests were filed by the DFA but the Chinese side kept on denying.

"We have to protest because we have to show to these people that we consider those areas as ours," Lorenzana stressed.

The Defense chief noted how China occupied, then developed Mischief Reef, which is among the areas being claimed by the Philippines under the Kalayaan Islands Group (KIGs) or the Spratlys in the West Philippine Sea, in 1995.

Aside from Mischief Reef, Chinese have also conducted massive development in other disputed reefs in the West Philippine Sea – that raised concerns that Beijing is flexing its military might in the area which is a vital international sea lane.

"They (Chinese) have already reclaimed close to about 500 hectares of land in that area," Lorenzana said.

16 March 2017



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Peace talks out, all-out war vs NPA on

BANSALAN, Davao del Sur – Enough is enough. Too many government troops are being butchered by the communist New People's Army (NPA).

Having had enough, President Duterte yesterday ordered the Armed Forces to use all its assets, including the newly acquired jets and drop bombs on the rebels.

"Go ahead, flatten the hills," he said, to the delight of the crowd present.

Mr. Duterte ruled out peace talks with the communist rebels and declared that the police and the military can now pursue them.

Thursday, the NPA targeted non-combatants when they shot dead four members of the Scene of the Crime operatives of the local police in Bansalan, Davao del Sur during an ambush.

"They (police officers) were only about to investigate (the ambush) What color is there?" Duterte said. "The team of police investigators was sent to Bansalan to investigate a murder case.

He stressed that peace talks with the communist rebels are no longer viable as they divert the issues in the talks and they muddle the talks.

On his claim of the peace talks terminated, the President said, "We have been fighting for 50 years. So we extend it to another 50 years but (you communists) never will have the chance to gain power.

The people do not want it."

Mr. Duterte said the killing of the policemen was part of a "well-laid trap."

"There are no peace talks. It's totally absent. So, in the meantime, I will also ask the Armed Forces to go ahead and wage a war against them. I'll allow police and military to use all available assets," Duterte told reporters in Davao del Sur. "I'm sorry this gory incident (ambush) had to happen. But I can assure everybody that the Armed Forces and the PNP (Philippine National Police) will respond. This time, I'm using everything.

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From page 1

I've encouraged the police to call in the air assets."

As for the expected collateral damage due to rocket bombs and fighter planes dropping bombs, Mr. Duterte was apologetic, but said this has to happen. "I am sorry for the collateral damage, but there is nothing I can do."

The ambush occurred yesterday in Bansalan, Davao del Sur.

The policemen were said to be responding to a report from a barangay official that a murder happened in the area, when they were attacked by suspected members of the communist NPA.

Killed in action were PO1 Rolly Benelayo, PO1 Joe Narvaza, PO1 Saro Mangutara, all members of Bansalan Municipal Police Station, and PO3 Jayden May Rabor, a member of the Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) in Digos City.

The ambush occurred just as the government and the communist rebels were to hold back channel talks on resuming formal peace negotiations.

The Tiamzon couple and Vic Ladiad, who are said to be in the hierarchy of the NPS, were again in Europe, reportedly for the back channeling talks for the possible resumption of peace talks between the Philippine peace panel and the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front NPA (CPP-NDF-NPA).

Clashes between NPA rebels and the government troops occur frequently despite so many peace talks meetings between the two negotiating panels because, as many ex-communists say, the CCP-NDF no longer has any control over the NPA, which operates on its own steam and ignores the directives of the CPP chiefs.

Malacañang earlier Thursday said the deaths of four policemen in an ambush allegedly staged by the NPA in Davao del Sur might affect efforts to revive peace negotiations with the communists.

At a Palace press briefing, Presidential Spokesman Ernesto

Abella said the deadly incident would provide a distraction in reviving the stalled peace talks with the CPP-NDF-NPA.

"So how it would affect the peace talks? It will provide some sort of influence but, however, there's a bigger thing which is the pursuit of peace," he said.

"I cannot qualify, but quality-wise, I am sure it will influence... It will influence the talks. I suppose the conversation would be that there should be a firmer action coming from the CPP-NDF-NPA on the people on the ground," Abella said.

The Palace official reiterated President Duterte's "compelling reasons" to revive peace talks with the communists.

"Well, the President has actually laid down some conditionalities. Well, basically, some things that he would like – he would like the communist groups to abide by, for example, that they should stop extortion and that there should be a bilateral ceasefire," he said.

"In other words that they should also cease action. That they should, in fact, take it upon themselves to be responsible for their own people and also to release prisoners. I suppose the conversation would be – that there should be firmer action from the people on the ground," Abella said.

Earlier, the Philippine National Police (PNP) condemned the latest hostility launched by the NPA on police crime scene investigators in Bansalan town, Davao del Sur.

A police team en route to investigate a murder incident were fired at in Barangay (village) Sibayan early Wednesday morning resulting in the deaths of four policemen and causing injuries to another.

Both the police and military tagged the communist guerrillas behind the ambush.

President Duterte is set to visit the wake of the killed-in-police-operation (KIPOs) officers at the Bansalan Municipal Hall Lobby Thursday afternoon. **With Ted Tuvera and PNA**

16 March 2017

The Manila Times

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NPA rebels execute 3 in Pagadian

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Police on Thursday said suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels executed three men whom they accused of murdering four people in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur.

Police said the victims – Alipio Andus, 39; Ariston Paroc, 46; and Julieto Candao, 28 – were killed in the village of Dampalan. Paroc's wife – Merlin – who was with the group, was spared

by the attackers.

Police investigators recovered forty 40 empty shells of caliber 5.56 mm [M16 automatic rifles] and a piece of yellow paper with a handwritten message accusing the victims of killing six people. Senior Supt. Rogelio Alabata, a regional police spokesman, said.

The accusations cannot be independently confirmed but the note said the trio was meted death pen-

alty after a kangaroo court found them guilty of allegedly murdering four people and landgrabbing.

Last Wednesday, communist rebels also killed four members of Scene of the Crime Operations (SOCO) and wounded one in an ambush in Bansalan, Davao del Sur.

The SOCO team was onboard a police vehicle and on its way to investigate a reported killing in the

village of Sibayan when they were attacked at about 7:30 a.m.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday went to the wake of the policemen in Davao del Sur.

Meanwhile, as of this writing, the President or any member of the government panel that was holding backchannel talks with the communist rebels for resumption of peace negotiations had not issued any statement on

the latest NPA attack.

Duterte suspended the peace talks last month after the rebels launched a series of deadly attacks in the restive region over the government's failure to release some 400 political detainees – mostly NPA leaders and members arrested and captured in the past by authorities – a promise made by the President during the election campaign last year.

10 March 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Permanent command to be set up in Jolo by AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said the military is considering moving one of its divisions to Sulu as part of government's all-out war against the Abu Sayyaf.

Lorenzana did not say where the division will come from, although sources said it could be the 1st Infantry Division based in Zamboanga del Sur.

A division has nine battalions or three brigades.

Fourteen battalions (about 7,000 soldiers) are currently based in Sulu, operating under the Joint Task Force Sulu led by Col. Cirilito Sobejana.

"I believe we can solve this problem by maybe end of June or if now, we'll give them another couple of months, maybe,"

said Lorenzana, referring to the military's target to defeat the Abu Sayyaf within the first six months of the year.

The Abu Sayyaf, composed of 300 to 400 men, mostly based in Sulu, is holding 31 foreign and Filipino kidnap victims in the province.

Lorenzana said a "permanent command" will be stationed in Jolo, Sulu's capital town. He said Sulu residents have raised concerns about the absence of a permanent military presence in Sulu.

Lorenzana said government is embarrassed by the unabated kidnapping by the Abu Sayyaf.

"When the President was inaugurated on June 30, there were only 18 hostages being held by the Abu Sayyaf. Now, there are 31, so there is an increase. It's very embarrassing and very embarrassing to the

whole (country) that they are doing this," he said.

Lorenzana also said the military is going to establish a task force to be based in Bongao town in Tawi-Tawi to enhance operations against piracy and kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf.

Lorenzana said did not say if the task force will be separate from the Joint Task Force Tawi-Tawi under Col. Custodio Parcon.

A military official, speaking on condition of anonymity said the task force that will be formed will be in support of patrols being planned by the Philippines with Indonesia and Malaysia to put a stop to Abu Sayyaf piracy and kidnapping in the waters of the three countries.

"We are inaugurating sometime in April, or May a joint patrol of the three nations in that area," he said.

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ONLINE NEWS

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If forced to, Duterte might declare martial law in Mindanao

By: Nestor Corrales - Reporter / @NCorralesINQ
INQUIRER.net / 07:29 PM March 09, 2017



President Rodrigo Duterte. (File photo by TONEE DESPOJO/ Cebu Daily News)

President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday said he would be forced to use “extraordinary powers” if local chief executives in Mindanao would be uncooperative in addressing lawlessness in the region.

“Either tulungan ninyo ako or I will declare martial law tomorrow for Mindanao,” Duterte said during a speech in Davao City before Mindanaoan local chief executives.

The President said local officials should help address the worsening problem on illegal drugs and terrorism otherwise he would declare martial law.

I am not declaring anything yet, except to ask you: May pulis kayo (You have a police force). Use it. Huwag niyong protektahan ang durugista (Don’t protect drug users),” he told the officials.

“I plead to you, nakikiusap ako, tulungan niyo ako. Sabihin niyo sa mga terrorista: Huwag kayo dito (I’m requesting you to help me. Tell terrorists: Get out of here). Find your place where you can be comfortable kasi I am uncomfortable,” he added.

But if the local officials fail to do their job, he said he might use extraordinary powers.

“I’m President and I’m called upon to protect everybody,” he said. “I will be compelled now to exercise extraordinary powers, not to perpetuate myself.” /atm

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Duterte to AFP: Drop bombs on NPA rebels, flatten hills

President rules out peace talks with communist rebels after Davao ambush

By: Allan Nawal, Eldic Aguirre - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao - 04:46 PM March 09, 2017

Update

BANSALAN, Davao del Sur — President Duterte has ruled out peace talks with the communist rebels and declared that the police and the military can now pursue them.

He lamented on Thursday, that the NPA targeted non-combatants when they shot dead four members of the Scene of the Crime operatives of the local police in Bansalan, Davao del Sur, during an ambush.

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"They (police officers) were only about to investigate. What color is there?" Duterte said. The team of police investigators was sent to Bansalan to investigate a murder case.

He said he has ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines to use all its assets, including the newly acquired jets and drop bombs on the rebels.

"Go ahead, flatten the hills," he said, to the delight of the crowd present.

Addressing the NPA, the President said "Look at what you have done. Look at how the people responded."

He said it was no longer viable to talk with the rebels because "nililigaw nila (they're diverting issues in the talks, they're muddling the talks)."

Duterte said the killing of the policemen was part of a "well-laid trap."

In asking the military to pursue the rebels, the President said the peace talks have been suspended anyway.

"It's totally absent so in the meantime, I will just ask the armed forces and the police, just go ahead wage a war against them, anything goes for now," he said.

Duterte said he would now allow the police and the military to use all available assets such as fighter jets and rockets.

"Collateral damage, pasensya (Collateral damage, my apologies)," he said.

Duterte said he had offered peace from the start but the rebels did the opposite.

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"Well, I'm sorry this gory incident had to happen (ambush on police investigators). But I can assure everybody that the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police will respond this time. I'm using everything," he said.

"So what you receive you give also," he added. **SFM**

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DND welcomes back-channeling moves with NDF

From the Philippine News Agency (Mar 9): **DND welcomes back-channeling moves with NDF**

The Department of National Defense (DND) gladly welcomed back-channeling moves that aim to restart the stalled peace talks between the government and National Democratic Front (NDF).

DND Secretary Delfin Lorenzana made this statement during the first-ever "Kapihan sa Kampo" held at the Honor Hall of the National Defense College of the Philippines, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on Thursday.

This was in reference to Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process Jesus Dureza's trip to Europe Wednesday to do back-channeling moves with NDF negotiators Benito and Wilma Tiamzon and Vicente Ladlad.

"So yesterday, Secretary Dureza left for Europe again and last night, we allowed the departure of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon and Mr. Ladlad to also do some back-channeling. A lot of people are urging us, that before we will go back to the formal peace talks, back-channeling must first take place so that we will already have a concrete proposal from each side acceptable by both sides," Lorenzana said in Filipino.

Prior to restarting negotiations with the NDF, President Rodrigo Duterte earlier said he wants the rebels to sign a bilateral ceasefire agreement with the government, stop extortion attempts against businessmen and release all their prisoners and hostages, especially the military personnel.

"We in the military and the defense welcome this development because we want to stop the fighting in the hinterlands and in the rural areas so we can bring development," the DND chief stressed.

The Duterte administration on Feb. 4 suspended its peace talks with the NDF in wake of several unprovoked attacks by rebel forces against military and civilian targets early that month.

These offensives resulted in the death of six unarmed troopers and capture of three and destruction of millions worth of farm, engineering and commercial equipment.

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