

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



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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

14 March 2017

Tuesday

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

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SALAMAT NA SA... LEAGUES NEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 14, 2017 | TUESDAY

LAS PERLAS AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (As of 5:00 PM - Mar. 15, 2017)

LAOAG CITY 22 - 31 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY 21 - 32 °C

BAGUIO CITY 14 - 26 °C

SBMA/CLARK 23 - 32 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY 23 - 33 °C

METRO MANILA 23 - 32 °C

LEGAZPI CITY 25 - 31 °C

ILOILO/ BACOLOD CITY 26 - 30 °C

TACLOBAN CITY 24 - 31 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 32 °C

METRO CEBU 25 - 31 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO 23 - 30 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY 24 - 33 °C

METRO DAVAO 24 - 32 °C

SUNRISE 6:05 AM

SUNSET 6:06 PM

MOONRISE 7:34 PM

MOONSET 7:07 AM

FULL MOON MAR 22 10:34 AM

LAST QUARTER MAR 20 12:50 PM

LOW TIDE 6:45 AM

HIGH TIDE 11:40 PM

MANILA SOUTH HARBOR

9:00 Mea... 5:75 Mea...

Partly cloudy to clear skies with sun breaks

Partly cloudy to a hazy cloudy with sun breaks and/or thunderstorms

Cloudy skies with sun breaks and/or thunderstorms

	MAR 13	MAR 14	MAR 15	MAR 16	MAR 17
METRO MANILA	21 - 33 °C	21 - 31 °C			
TUGUEGARAO	21 - 31 °C	21 - 30 °C			
LAOAG	21 - 31 °C	21 - 31 °C			
BAGUIO	14 - 24 °C	15 - 25 °C			
SBMA/CLARK	23 - 31 °C	23 - 32 °C			
TAGAYTAY	23 - 32 °C	23 - 32 °C			
LEGAZPI	24 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C			
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C			
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 - 30 °C	25 - 29 °C			
METRO CEBU	25 - 30 °C	24 - 30 °C			
TACLOBAN	24 - 31 °C	24 - 30 °C			
CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 30 °C	24 - 31 °C			
METRO DAVAO	24 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C			
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C	23 - 32 °C			

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SECOT NA PADELO MO!

14 March 2017



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'Drugs, mining lobby funding destabilization'

Total mining ban mulled

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ
and ALEXIS ROMERO

Concerned about the impact of open pit mining in the country, President Duterte last night asserted he would not be cowed by some mining groups that, he bared, have partnered with the opposition and drug dealers in a campaign to oust him.

"Kauong mga mining (You mining firms), I know you are funding the opposite side. Alam ko na ngayon kung sinong gumagastos sa kanila (I know now who is financing them). I know that some of you are giving funding to the other side to destabilize me," Duterte said in a media briefing at Malacañang.

"If the police and military will allow it, it's their problem," the President added.

Duterte said he would not bow to the mining firms'

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Drugs From Page 1

pressure, adding he is ready to forgo the P70 billion in revenues from this sector.

"*Ngayon, kung mag-lobby-lobby lang kayo ng mining diyay o maggastos kayo. Gusto ninyo akong palitan na Presidente na paluhurin ninyo to do your bidding. (Now, if you're just lobbying on mining firms or provide funding. You want to replace me as President who would kneel to do your bidding.)*," he said before citing names of mining firms that destroyed the country's resources during their operations.

The Chief Executive talked about destabilization moves in the briefing where he and his party mates in PDP-Laban also issued party stands on major issues ranging from federalism, corruption and the death penalty to social justice and economic development.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III and Speaker Paritaldon Alvarez sat with the President to answer queries from reporters for about two hours. Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II and Interior Secretary Ismael Sueno and other officials were also present.

Duterte presented documentation and photos of the adverse impact of mining activities all over the country, as he reiterated support for Environment Secretary Gina Lopez, who failed to get

the nod of the Commission on Appointments (CA) last week.

Duterte commended Philex Mining for being a responsible firm, citing tree-planting activities it has spearheaded in areas where it operates.

Seeking explanation

Duterte then challenged the mining sector for a confrontation over the destruction on the environment by irresponsible firms, citing the Berong Nickel Corp in Narra, Palawan, Citinickel Mines and Development Corp, Oceanagold, Emit Minerals Corp and Adnama Mining.

"This is Berong Nickel Corp in Narra, Palawan. Look at the greens. You think you can live with it? Because of the P70 billion? Or because nag-contribute sa campaign funds mo (it contributed to your campaign funds)? *Hindi sa akin. Maski na mag-contribute ka, ganon din. Uupakan kita (Not to me. Even if you contribute, it's the same. I'll hit you)*," he said, as he showed photos of the firm's site.

"Explain to me how is this. *Sabihin mo sa akin dito, magherapan tayo (Tell it to me here, facing each other). What have you done to my country?*"

"Economy? Well, *siguro, mawawalan tayo (ng) trabaho sa mga tao. Maghiintay kayo (maybe, we'll lose jobs for people. You wait). We will scrape the*

bottom of the barrel to look for the money, but I'm going to give you food kung 'yan lang," he added.

Duterte expressed hope that the P70-billion revenues that could be lost from mining can be covered by new investments.

"And let us just pray that enough business will come in, new ones, but not as... not as devastating as this one. *Kasayang (What a waste)*," he said.

As he expressed his disappointment over the destruction of the environment, the President sought an explanation from the mining firms over their operations.

Duterte also shot down reports that he might be implicated in the destruction of the environment when these activities happened during the past administrations.

"*Tapos, i-charge mo sa akin ito sa aking panahon? Ay, anak ng... Sino mananagot nito? Eh 'di ako, pati ito, pati ito. Kayo 'yung nasa power, kayo 'yung pretentious diyay (Then, you will charge it to me during my term? Son of a... Who is responsible for this? It is I, for this one. You are the ones in power, you are the pretentious ones), that we will work for the benefit of the people. God d*** this people, you are always forgotten,*" he said.

Defending Lopez

A lawyer and a longtime politician, Duterte said he shares Lopez's serious concern for the environment.

"Now, is Gina a liar? No, I don't. *Mahirap 'to. Tingnan mong ginawa, o, green, tapos, dito* (This is hard. Look what was done, green, and then, here). So where are the trees that God gave us? Where is the environment that God gave us?" he said.

"It's visual eh. How can you argue with Gina when she's presenting, confronting you with a visual thing? So, kami rito (we here), it appalls us," he said.

In the same briefing, Duterte said he is amenable to the re-imposition of the mining ban.

"Maybe, it would be worth the while of Gina to re-impose the ban. Total (mining ban) *muna tayo, tapos mag-usap. Dito mag-prangka-prangkahan tayo* (Let's have a total mining ban first, then let's talk, let's be frank with one another)," he said.

Duterte urged mining firms to follow Australian or Canadian mining practices, which help preserve the environment. He also ordered Philippine National Police (PNP) Director General Ronald dela Rosa to impose strict guidelines when it comes to giving permits for procurement of explosives such as TNT, which are mostly used in illegal mining activities.

In other developments, President Duterte said he would do "what is necessary" to protect his country's environment when asked about his plan to impose a total mining ban.

"When it comes to the pres-

ervation of my country, the land... I will do what is necessary," Duterte said in the same briefing.

The firebrand leader earlier said it may be "worthwhile" for Lopez to implement a ban on mining, given the environmental damage that producers have caused.

Lopez has authority to do what she likes, according to Duterte.

It was not immediately clear whether Duterte was calling for a total ban on mining or a strengthening of Lopez's order closing more than half of the mines in the Philippines.

Graft charges vs Lopez

A nine-page complaint was filed yesterday before the Office of the Ombudsman by the Chamber of Mines, represented by its chairman Artemio Disini and spokesman Ronald Rex Recidoro.

The group charged Lopez with violation of Section 3 (e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and Sections 4 (b) and 5 (a) of RA 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

The complainant said Lopez caused "undue injuries" to the mining industry when it ordered the closure of 23 mining firms and suspension of five other firms based on an unsubstantiated mining audit.

The group lamented that as early as September last year, Lopez had already announced

the suspension of about 20 mining firms even before the results of the DENR mining audit was completed.

Lopez may also face graft charges after intervening with the Department of Energy (DOE) to award a service contract to a private company for a \$100-million power plant in Zamboanga City.

Vienna Tañada, business development officer of Eco Global Inc., will file on Wednesday before the Office of the Ombudsman cases for violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

"Lopez could be found guilty for having sought to influence the DOE to award the contract to Eco Global and for traveling to France with all expenses paid by the company to visit one of its partners in Paris," Lester Pascua, Tañada's spokesman said.

Pascua added that Eco Global paid for a trip to France for Lopez and her five-person party last Oct. 2, a day before the DOE awarded it the renewable energy service contract (RESC).

Last Sept. 29, Eco Global chief executive officer Jean-Philippe Henry, a Frenchman, issued a letter of guarantee to the French embassy in Manila pledging to pay Lopez's team's "airfare, hotel accommodations, insurance coverage and travel allowances for the entire duration of their business trip."

– With Reuters, Rhodina Villanueva, Louise Maureen Simeon, Non Alquitran

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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2 NPA ATTACKS MAR PEACE PROCESS

STORY BY EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ, WILLIAMOR MAGBANUA AND KIMBERLIE QUITASOL

Communist rebels torch a bus in North Cotabato and wound five policemen in an ambush in Abra, a day after the resumption of peace talks was announced

FROM A1

By Edwin O. Fernandez,
Williamor Magbanua
and Kimberlie Quitasol
@InqNational

A day after government and communist rebel negotiators announced the resumption of peace talks, New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas burned a bus in Mindanao and wounded five policemen in an ambush in northern Luzon.

Suspected NPA members torched on Monday a Davao City-bound Yellow Bus in Makilala, North Cotabato province, police said.

Another NPA group wounded five policemen in an ambush on the convoy of Senior Supt.

Alexander Tagum, Abra police director, while they were on their way to visit a police station that was attacked on Sunday night in the province's Malibcong town.

Tagum was not hurt. He was accompanied by a platoon of police officers when they were ambushed at Sitio Aguibo in Barangay Poblacion.

The attacks did not violate any ceasefire agreement between the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), as no cessation of hostilities had yet been declared.

Back-channel talks

In a joint statement issued on Saturday in Utrecht, The Netherlands, government and NDFP representatives, who

held back-channel negotiations, agreed that indefinite unilateral ceasefire declarations would be issued before the fourth round of talks in the first week of April.

The two sides are scheduled to meet in Oslo, Norway, on April 2-7 to resume the next round of talks, which were scuttled last month.

Makilala bus burning

The rebels lifted their unilateral ceasefire on Feb 10 after accusing the government of failing to release all political prisoners and the military of deploying troops in rebel-held areas.

The Duterte administration responded by scrapping its own unilateral ceasefire and suspending the peace talks.

Supt. Roneo Galgo,

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spokesperson of the police in Central Mindanao, said suspected NPA members flagged down the bus at Barangay San Vicente in Makilala town at 8:30 a.m. on Monday.

Victor Serondo, the bus driver, said six rebels boarded the bus, introduced themselves as NPA members and directed him to drive toward Sitio Bagong Silang in Barangay San Vicente.

"One of the suspects drew a pistol and told me to divert the vehicle to the secluded area toward San Vicente village," Serondo said.

"The suspects ordered us to vacate the bus and look for a safe place before they set it on fire," the driver said. He and the passengers were unharmed.

Galgo said the attackers belonged to the NPA's Guerrilla

Front 72 operating in Makilala and in Bansalan, Davao del Sur province.

The attack came five days after NPA rebels killed four policemen in an ambush in Bansalan.

Abra ambush

In Abra, PO2 Jessie Trinidad, PO1 Marlon dela Paz, PO1 Gerome Baldos, PO1 Kennon Sanggoy and PO1 Von Harold Layao were wounded when their vehicle hit an explosive device, followed by a burst of gunfire, according to Insp. Marcy Grace Marron, Abra police information officer.

The five policemen were brought to Abra Provincial Hospital in Bangued, the capital town.

Marron said probers did not know if the attackers were the

same rebels who raided a house that was serving as the temporary police station in Malibcong.

Five Malibcong policemen engaged 30 armed men in a 10-minute gun battle at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday.

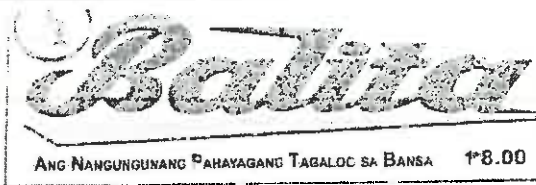
The firefight stopped when town elders intervened, allowing the five policemen to retreat to the house of Mayor Romando Bacuyag.

The Malibcong police station is under construction so the police there have been using Bacuyag's property as headquarters.

But the rebels managed to ransack the temporary police station, and fled with police-issued weapons, Marron said.

They took off with seven rifles, three pistols and three cell phones. INQ

12 March 2017



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4 na sibilyan patay sa bakbakang Army-BIFF

Apat na sibilyan ang kumpirmadong nasawiat maraming iba pa ang nasugatan makaraang magkasagupa ang militar at ang mga miyembro ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) sa Datu Salibo, Maguindanao, kahapon ng madaling araw.

Dahil dito, napilitan ang mga residente na magsilikas sa takot na madamay sa bakbakan.

Ayon sa ulat ng Datu Salibo

Municipal Police, dakong 2:20 ng umaga nang mangyari ang sagupaan ng Philippine Army at BIFF sa Datu Salibo.

Batay sa pahayag ni Capt Ervin Encinas, hepe ng Public Affairs Office ng 6th Infantry (Kampilan) Division ng Army, sunud-sunod na sinalakay ng mga miyembro ng BIFF ang posisyon ng militar sa naturang bayan.

Gumamit ng 105mm Howitzers

cannon ang mga sundalo para bombahin ang BIFF, sa pangunguna ni Kumander Bungos.

Tumagal ng dalawa at kalahating oras ang labanan bago dumating ang FA-50 fighter jet ng Philippine Air Force (PAF) at dalawang MG-520 attack helicopter bandang 5:00 ng umaga at binomba nito ang BIFF sa Sitio Andavit, Bgy. Balakanan, Datu Salibo.

Fer Taboy

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MISTAKEN FOR REBELS?

SOLDIERS FACE RAPS FOR DEATHS OF 2 MEN IN CAPIZ CLASH

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
@nestorburgosINQ

ILOILO CITY—The widows of two men killed in a clash between suspected communist rebels and government troops in Capiz province last month have filed criminal and administrative charges against Army soldiers in the Office of the Ombudsman.

In a three-page complaint submitted to the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices on March 6, Analyn Borres and Marjorie Dequiño insisted that their husbands were civilians and not members of the New People's Army (NPA).

They sought justice as they accused the troops under the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion (61IB) of murder.

Named respondents were soldiers belonging to the 61IB, including Lt. Col. Leonardo Peña, commanding officer; Maj. Allan Mangaser, executive officer; and soldiers led by Sgt. Jeffrey Belarmino.

Reports from the military's 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) identified Lorendo Borres, 48, and his nephew Ian Borres, 24, as NPA rebels who were killed in an encounter on Feb. 24 in Barangay Jebaca in Maayon town, Capiz.

Lt. Col. Ericson Rosana, 3ID spokesperson, denied the wid-

ows' allegations.

He said Ian and Lorendo Borres were part of a group of seven to 10 armed rebels that they engaged in a firefight. Three shotguns and two grenades were recovered from them, military reports said.

Rosana said the slain men were part of a rebel militia under the command of NPA leader Romulo Gangoso, alias Ka Regan.

But Dequiño said, "Everyone in our village knows that my (common-law) husband and his uncle were not NPA members. We want justice."

Dequiño, in a telephone interview, said her husband and the older Borres were carrying

bolos, not guns.

"[Lorendo] sought my husband's help because he said two men in plainclothes allegedly tried to take his cellular phone and threatened to shoot him. They thought the two men were cattle rustlers," Dequiño said.

She later heard a burst of gunfire but said she was afraid to look for Ian even after he failed to come home that night. The following day, she heard radio reports saying soldiers had killed two suspected NPA rebels in an encounter in their town.

Three other male relatives who were with Lorendo and Ian during that incident were unhurt. INQ

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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PMA GRADUATING CLASS

DEFENSE CHIEF WANTS MORE MEN THAN WOMEN FOR COMBAT DUTY

By **Leila B. Salaverria**
@LeilasINQ

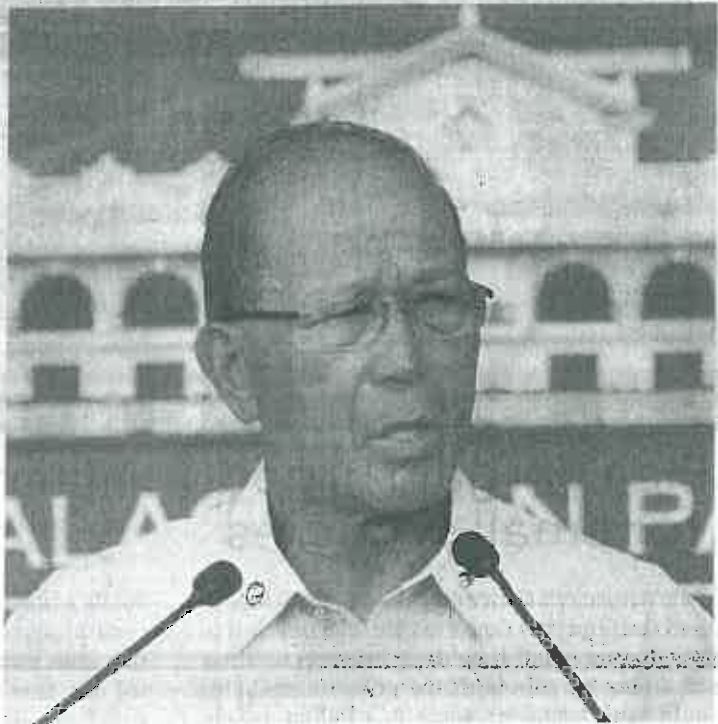
BAGUIO CITY—Women soldiers are fine, but you can't have too many of them on the battlefield—unless you have a deal with the enemy that allows only same-sex combat.

The question of more women soldiers taking combat duty has come up because most of the Top 10 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) this year, including the class valedictorian, are women.

There were only two men in the Top 10 of PMA Class of 2017. Of the 167 members of the class, 63 were women.

That, however, was "just an aberration," according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

He explained that this year's graduating class had many women because there were many female cadets turned back in previous years. At the same time, many male cadets were dismissed.



Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana

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20-percent quota

The PMA imposes a 20-percent quota for female cadets and this will remain, according to Lorenzana and Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año.

The military needs more male soldiers for combat duty, Lorenzana said.

"We need women in the military but we need more people for the field, for the combat units. We need platoon leaders and company commanders," he told reporters here on Sunday.

It is unlikely for women to dominate the military, he said.

"I think it would not probably happen that they would dominate, that there would be more women in the Armed Forces, because there are very practical considerations you have to consider when you bring women to combat," he said.

These include where women soldiers would sleep and how they would go to the toilet, Lorenzana said.

Protective of women

Men, he added, could sleep beside each other under the stars.

"We don't want to subject our women to that. We are protective of our women," he said.

Office duties currently handled by men could be given to the women so that the men could go to the field, he said.

Asked if this meant female soldiers were meant only for the offices, Lorenzana said the women could go to combat if they wanted.

"The problem is if they are married and they get pregnant. Where would you put them?" he said.

Año said the PMA would maintain the quota for female cadets, and it would adjust the quota in succeeding years if there were too many women.

"We need more males in the frontline units. So it would

be balanced. But, of course, we have gender advancement and development, so we would give them equal opportunity for the line positions, where women could also serve," he said.

Female commanders

Año noted that there had been female officers, including Col. Leah Lorenzo, who had served as line commanders on the field and had been given the Gold Cross, the military award for gallantry.

President Duterte, speaking at the PMA graduation on Sunday, hailed Class of 2017 as "historic" for having an unprecedented number of women in the Top 10 and in the class.

"Today, we make history. This is the first time female cadets occupied eight of the Top 10 spots in their graduating class. With the highest number of graduating women in PMA history, this breakthrough is a fitting tribute to our mothers, sisters and daughters as we celebrate Women's Month," Mr. Duterte said. INQ.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Lorenzana on Chinese ships: What 'innocent passage?'

BY VICTOR REYES

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana is disputing China's claim that its survey ships, spotted last year at Benham Rise – a vast undersea region east of Luzon – were there merely on "innocent passage."

"As far as we are concerned they have no business going there," he said.

Lorenzana also said government is "worried" about the Chinese activity at the Benham Rise.

"We will do something there, maybe we will increase our patrols at the

same time, maybe we will also put something there, structure that says this is ours... They (Chinese) know that it (Benham Rise) was awarded to us by the United Nations," he said.

The United Nations in 2012 declared Benham Rise, a 13-million hectare undersea region east of Luzon rich in biodiversity and fish stocks, part of the Philippine continental shelf.

On Thursday last week, Lorenzana said the military monitored Chinese survey ships at the Benham Rise from July to December last year, conducting surveys ap-

parently for the deployment of submarines.

The following day, the Chinese foreign ministry said China's research ships were "purely carrying out normal freedom of navigation and right of innocent passage, and there were no so-called other activities or operations."

Lorenzana said, "If that's innocent passage, you know what innocent passage is, it's like going from Point A to Point B straight and your steaming speed is constant."

"What we saw... their ships were steaming at low speed and they

stopped in one area, stayed there for a few days and transferred to another place. So that is not innocent passage," said Lorenzana.

Nevertheless, Lorenzana said it is good that China reacted to his disclosure. "They said they have no evil intention so we will leave it at that. We will trust what they say."

Lorenzana said President Duterte has been informed about the Chinese ships. "He (Duterte) said let us increase our patrol and declare it (in public) so that the people will know that we have jurisdiction over those areas." – *With Reuters*

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DND wants to drop OCD, PVAO

President Duterte should create separate agencies out of the Office of Civil Defense and the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), which are currently under the Department of National Defense (DND), an official said over the weekend.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the DND is burdened with the responsibility of protecting the country's internal and external security to fully attend to other serious concerns such as disasters and the needs of veterans.

"We want the OCD and PVAO to be segregated from" the DND, he said, adding that the department has asked

Duterte to issue executive orders to create two separate agencies.

As the mother unit, the DND's annual budget is tied up with PVAO and OCD and these two agencies are getting a lion's share of the funds, Lorenzana said.

The DND's approved budget for 2017 is P135.04 billion, and Lorenzana said under the present setup most of the money goes to personnel salaries and allowances rather than defense capability upgrades.

In addition, the 1987 Constitution prohibits the government from allocating more funds to the military than for education, he said.

– Jaime Laude

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Military to continue offensives vs NPA

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will continue operations against New People's Army (NPA) rebels unless President Duterte or-

ders otherwise, officials said yesterday.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP public affairs office chief, said the military has yet to receive instructions to suspend the military operations.

As this developed, five police officers were wounded in an ambush by communist insurgents in Malibcong, Abra while another group of rebels torched a passenger bus in Makilala, North Cotabato

yesterday.

On the same day, a fire-fight broke out between Army troopers and a band of NPA guerrillas in Gubat, Sorsogon.

On Sunday, a rebel was killed in another clash in Lagrooy, Camarines Sur.

Arevalo expressed support for the reported resumption of peace talks between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF).

"For years, the AFP has and will always be supportive of peace. We are hopeful the peace talks will be successful this time. Otherwise the AFP will not hesitate to defend the communities," he said.

Arevalo cited as proof of AFP's resolve the 120 rebels who were killed, arrested or surrendered in previous military operations and the seizure of 60 firearms.

The AFP will ensure that our people and the companies that provide them livelihood are safe from fear and harassment, he said.

Meanwhile, Sen-

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ate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto urged the government and the CPP-NDF to make good their promise to forge a truce before Holy Week.

Recto made the call after peace negotiators from both sides agreed over the weekend to resume the peace talks next month.

“Whether unilaterally declared or mutually agreed, the people will welcome a break from fighting,” Recto said.

Holy Week this year falls on April 9 to 16.

“If the timeframe of brokering a ceasefire before April will be met, peace negotiators couldn’t have picked a better time,” Recto said.

A ceasefire during Holy Week, he said, would give soldiers and rebels the opportunity to reunite with their families and loved ones during the holiday.

Among those wounded in the Abra ambush were Police Officer 2 Jessie Trinidad and PO1s Marlon dela Paz, Gerome Baldos, Kennon Sanggoy and Von Harold Layao. They were rushed to the Abra Provincial Hospital in Bangued for treatment of gunshot wounds.

The officers were in a convoy with Abra police director Senior Supt. Alexander Tagum when the rebels waylaid them in Barangay Poblacion.

The insurgents detonated an improvised explosive device and strafed the convoy, according to Senior Insp. Grace Marron, spokesperson for the

Abra police.

Tagum, who was not hurt in the attack, and his men were on their way to verify reports that a group of rebels raided a police station in the village the night before.

Although no one was wounded or killed in the attack on the police station, Marron said the rebels took several firearms and the cellphones of the officers.

Authorities tagged members of the NPA’s Guerrilla Front 72 in the bus attack in Makilala town.

At gunpoint, the rebels pulled over the bus as it was traveling in Barangay San Vicente and ordered the passengers to leave.

The gunmen poured kerosene and set the bus on fire, according to Supt. Romeo Galgo, Jr., spokesman for the Police Regional Office-12.

Authorities are eyeing extortion as the possible motive for the attack.

PNP on alert

The Philippine National Police (PNP) will remain on alert even after the announcement of the resumption of peace talks.

PNP spokesman Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos said lawmen would guard vital installations in rebel-infested areas to prevent the insurgents from carrying out attacks.

– With Paolo Romero, Cef Dematera, John Unson, Artemio Dumlaog, Cecille Suerte Felipe

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Abu Sayyaf frees teacher in Sulu

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits have released a public school teacher they seized in Patikul town in Sulu on Friday afternoon.

Policemen who responded to reports that the victim was seen in Maimbung recovered brahim Potong of the Jolo National High School on Sunday night.

Potong was brought to a hospital for checkup and reunited with his family also on Sunday.

The Sulu police said there was no immediate report if the victim paid ransom in exchange for his release.

Potong was driving his motorcycle on his way home from

Patikul to Maimbung when the bandits took him at gunpoint.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding 12 Vietnamese, seven Indonesians, five Malaysians, a Dutch man and six Filipinos. German hostage Juergen Kantner was beheaded on Feb. 26 after almost four months in captivity.

Trader rescued

Meanwhile, in Camarines Sur, a businessman has been rescued after almost four months in captivity. Five of his

alleged captors were arrested and P1.2 million in supposed ransom was recovered in police operations.

Francis Leo Maulion, who was taken from his poultry farm in Barangay Kamuning in Calabanga town on Nov. 23, was rescued on Thursday.

Gerry Mancera, chairman of Barangay Maninila; Jefferson Cuachun, 26; Prudencio Ruiz, 59; Cesar Garcia Jr. and Joven Ortiz, 34, of Camalig, Albay were arrested and presented to Maulion at Camp Crame yesterday.

Senior Superintendent Glenn Dumlao, Anti-Kidnapping Group (AKG) chief, said the family of Maulion sought the help of the police when the

kidnappers did not release the victim after payment of P1.4 million on Jan. 16.

Dumlao said the kidnappers contacted the family again and asked for P1.2 million.

"AKG operatives encountered about eight armed men in an entrapment during the pay-off," Dumlao said.

Seven of the suspects escaped, but the police arrested Ortiz, who took the P1.2 million.

The four other suspects were arrested when AKG operatives raided their safehouses, including one where Maulion was held.

A manhunt for the other suspects is underway.

– With Cecille Suerte Felipe

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NPA continues offensive as Duterte calls for end to killings

Despite President Rodrigo Duterte's peace initiative, which led to both the government and National Democratic Front (NDF) peace panels agreeing to resume formal peace talks, New People's Army (NPA) rebels have become more aggressive in their campaigns, attacking on Sunday night a town police station in Abra.

Police reinforcement from the Provincial Public Safety Company (PPSC), led by Abra provincial police

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Chief Supt. Alexander Tagam, were also ambushed, resulting in the wounding of five troops

Chief Supt. Elmo Francis Sarona, regional director of Cordillera Police Regional Office, said around 80 rebels attacked the Malibcong Municipal Police Station (MPS) around 7:30 p.m. Sunday.

Members of Malibcong MPS initially engaged the attacking rebels in a 10-minute firefight

"During the firefight with the enemies, the village elders and the community intervened and begged the policemen for a ceasefire to avoid crossfire and collateral damage from the populace," Sarona said in his report to Camp Crame

"However, the rebels took advantage of the outnumbered policemen on duty and they were able to cart away their firearms," he added

The rebels carted away seven long firearms and three short pistols, assorted ammunition and various personal and office equipment.

No policeman was hurt during the incident.

The attacking NPA rebels were led by a certain alias Payas.

Elements of the PPSC sent to reinforce Malibcong MPS were also ambushed around 11 a.m. yesterday along Malibcong-Malanas Bridge in Barangay Poblacion, Malibcong -- resulting in five policemen wounded.

Sarona said the NPA rebels initially detonated an improvised explosive device that trapped the police reinforcement.

The attack came a day after the government and NDF peace panels agreed last Saturday to hold the fourth round of peace talks next month.

Concerned groups are raising doubt that the leadership of the Communist party of the Philippines-NDF in the Hague, Netherlands, has any control over its members in the Philippines

'Just start talks'

Even with the absence of "compelling" reasons, the President, meanwhile, said he has ordered the government panel to start talks with communist rebels.

"I just gave my orders to start talking. There is no concrete proposal, there's not even a list of what should be taken up," he yesterday told reporters at a press briefing.

According to him, he is keen on stopping the killings between the communist rebels and state forces.

"As a Filipino, I'm still interested in preventing the slaughter of a Filipino by a Filipino," he stressed.

He, however, noted that the way rebels are operating in the name of their ideology is comparable to cannibalism.

"Communism is cannibalism. You devour your fellow Filipino with your ideology," he stressed.

Talks better be productive

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it will be constrained to fulfill its mandate of protecting all communities nationwide against armed threats if talks would not be productive and effective this time.

"For many years, the AFP has shown that it has been and will always be supportive of all peace. We are hopeful that the peace talks will be successful this time," said AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo.

"Because if not, the AFP will be constrained and will not hesitate to take on the task of defending the communities," he added.

Arevalo stressed the military has proved its capability when it succeeded in neutralizing 120 NPA insurgents and capturing more than 60 firearms starting February 4 when Mr. Duterte suspended peace negotiations in wake of the series of unprovoked rebel attacks which killed six soldiers and caused the abduction of three others early that month.

"This we hope the NPA should have realized by now. The 120 members of the NPA who were neutralized and more than 60 firearms divested from them could attest to that resolve of the AFP," he added.

And until the military receives official communication from the Office of the President ordering the suspension of military offensives against the NPAs, combat operations against the insurgents will continue, he said. **Mario Jr. Mallari, Ted Tuvera and PNA**

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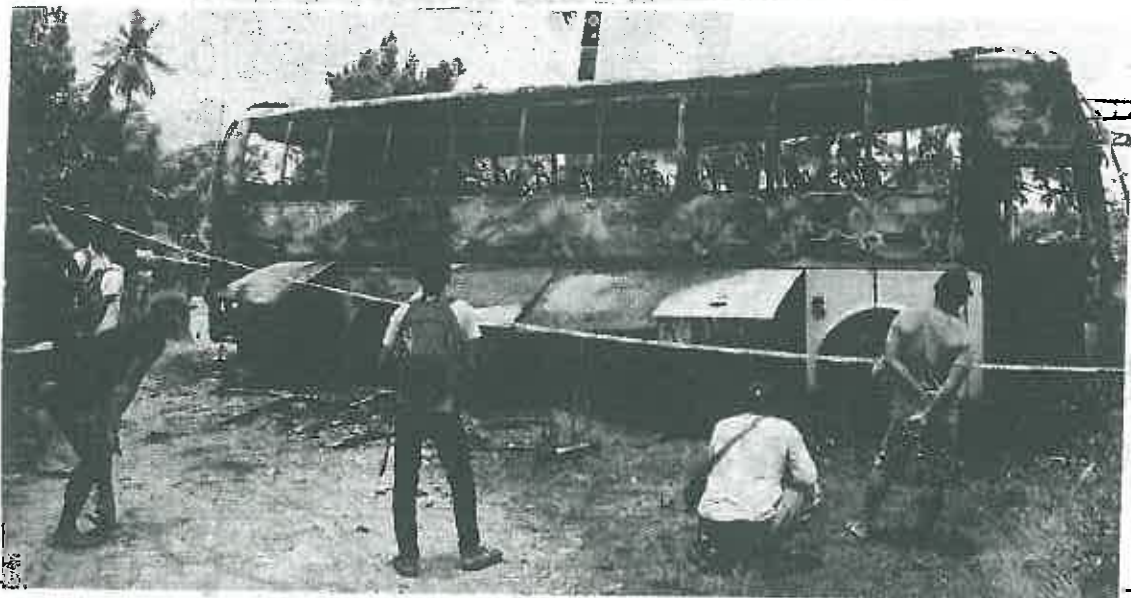
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NPAS BURN BUS

Attack comes hours after rebels agree to resume peace talks

MAKILALA, North Cotabato (PNA) – Just hours after the government and communist rebels agreed to revive derailed peace talks, a group of suspected New People's Army (NPA) insurgents burned a passenger yesterday on a highway in Barangay San Vicente here.

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CURIOUS villagers gather around a completely destroyed bus in Makilala, North Cotabato: Six armed men suspected to be New People's Army (NPA) fighters flagged down the vehicle, ordered the passengers to alight before setting it on fire. The attack came just hours after the resumption of peace talks. (Keith Bacongco)

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MAKILALA, North Cotabato (PNA) – Just hours after the government and Communist rebels agreed to revive derailed peace talks, a group of suspected New People's Army (NPA) insurgents burned a passenger Monday on a highway in Barangay San Vicente here.

Authorities said that YBL unit bearing body no. 1888 was heading towards Davao City from Tacurong City when it was flagged down by six men, described to be between 18–20 years old.

The men quickly boarded the bus, pulled out handguns and declared they were NPA members before the 30 terrified passengers.

The bus driver, identified as Victor Serondo, said the group ordered him to maneuver some 50 meters away from the highway to Sitio Bagong Silang in the same village, where he and the passengers were ordered by the armed men to disembark.

The armed men quickly opened

gasoline-filled containers from their backpacks and set the bus on fire.

The suspects fled from the scene aboard five get-away motorcycles.

Responding authorities said the bus driver, conductor, two bus inspectors and all the bus passengers were not harmed during the incident.

Joint police and military roadblocks were immediately set up along the Makilala highway as pursuit operations were launched.

Local officials condemned the incident, especially since it happened just as the peace talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) had gone back on-track after backchannel talks in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

The two parties announced Sunday that they were going to resume the talks in Oslo, Norway early next month.

Makilala is one of the towns in North Cotabato where the NPA rebels are often sighted.

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Military, NPAs resume clashes despite truce bid

DAVAO CITY—The fighting between the military and the communist rebels continued as their respective peace panels were yet to declare a unilateral ceasefire.

On Saturday, the military launched an air strike in Mabini in Compostela Valley after a fire-fight between the combatants injured three soldiers.

President Rodrigo Duterte had ordered the military to go all out

against the rebels and to use the government's newly purchased fighter planes to "flatten the hills."

Five policemen were also wounded after a police contingent reinforcing their beleaguered comrades were ambushed by about 30 rebels at the Malibcong police station in Abra on Sunday afternoon.

The rebels carted away 10 firearms, ammunition, personal

belongings and office equipment after they overwhelmed the policemen around 7:30 p.m.

The Armed Forces said Monday the operations against the New People's Army will continue until Duterte tells them otherwise and the peace talks resume between the government and the rebels.

"We will anxiously await the official message of our panel

Next page

Military...

From A1

and the instructions of our Commander-in-Chief," Armed Forces spokesman Restituto Padilla said.

"Pending this, all military operations will continue and remain at the current state."

Senate President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto said the communist and government negotiators who agreed over the weekend to resume their peace talks next month should make good on their promise to observe a truce before the Holy Week in April.

"Whether unilaterally declared or mutually agreed, the people will welcome a break from the fighting," Recto said.

"If their time frame of brokering a ceasefire before April will be met, the peace negotiators couldn't have picked a better time."

According to Exodus for Justice and Peace spokesman Jurie Jaime, about 5,000 peasants were displaced due to the recent air strikes by the 10-O-1st brigade on Saturday.

Jaime said the military conducted intensive operations against the rebels. Pearl A. Gajunera, Francisco Tuyay, PNA

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Pahina. 1

Informer ng militar nilikida ng NPA

Napatay ang 54-anyos na magsasaka na sinasabing informer ng militar matapos itong pagbabarilin ng mga kabataan na umano'y bagong recruit ng mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa naganap na pananambang sa Barangay Concepcion bayan ng San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur kamakalawa ng hapon. Base sa police report, na nakarating sa Camp Crame, bigla na lamang sumulpot sa mga ang mga kabataang rebeldis na sinasabing test mission at saka niratrat ang biktimang si Wilfredo Morales bandang alauria ng hapon sa Purok 6 sa nabanggit na barangay. Matapos na makasigurong patay na ang target ay mabilis na nagsitakas ang mga suspek patungo sa direksyon ng kagubatan. Samantala, lumilitaw naman sa inisyal na pagsisiyasat na ang pagiging confidential agent sa AFP ng biktima ang pangunahing motibo sa krimen. *Joy Santos*

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Pahina. 14

Opensiba vs NPA tuloy -AFP, PNP

Sa kabila ng panunumbalik muli ng peace talks, magpapatuloy ang opensiba ng tropa ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at ng mga elemento ng Philippine National Police (PNP) laban sa mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa bansa.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs Chief Manne Colonel Edgard Arevalo, tuloy ang kaniyang operasyon laban sa NPA rebels ang

armed wing ng CPP-NDF hanggat walang utos si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na itigil ito

"The AFP's conduct of combat operations continue until suspended. We are yet to receive an official communication from the Office of the President that will have the force and effect of restoration of the SOMO," pahayag ni Arevalo

Kamakalawa ay ini-

anunsyo ng Office of the Presidential Peace Process (OPAPP) na tuloy muli ang naudlot na peace talks matapos na magkasundo ang Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) at NDF peace panels

Sinabi ni Arevalo sa loob ng mahabang panahon ay suportado ng AFP ang peace talks pero sa kabila nito ay nasa 'defense mode' pa rin ang hanay ng militar para sa

mga patraydor na pagatake ng NPA rebels

Sa pahayag naman ni PNP Spokesman P/Sr. Supri Dionardo Carlos, nanatili sa 'high state of active defense' ang PNP bilang suporta sa AFP upang protektahan ang mga urban centers, komunidad, mga pangunahing imprastruktura, public property at mga sibilyan laban sa kara-

hasan ng NPA rebels

Magugunita na noong Pebrero 3 ng taong ito jahilan sa serye ng paghahasik ng communist rebels sa mga karyunon ay sinuspinde ni Pangulong Duterte ang unilateral ceasefire at ng hindi pa rin paawat ang mga rebelde ay isinunod na kinansela ang peace talks noong Pebrero 5. (Joy Cantos)

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Govt, NDF urged to forge cease-fire before Holy Week

SENATE President Pro Tempore Ralph G. Recto on Monday urged the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) to forge a cease-fire before the Holy Week next month.

Recto's call came after negotiators from both sides agreed to resume peace negotiations anew.

He said a cease-fire before and during Holy Week will give soldiers and rebels the "opportunity to reunite with their loved ones" and for communities to observe it "in peace".

"Whether unilaterally declared or mutually agreed, the people will welcome a break from fighting. If their time frame of brokering a cease-fire before April will be met, the peace negotiators couldn't have picked a better time," Recto said.

"It is the right time because we don't want the solemnity of Lent broken by



RECTO: "It is the right time because we don't want the solemnity of Lent broken by needless bloodletting among brothers."

needless bloodletting among brothers," he added.

He added a cease-fire also allows

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government forces to pour more resources, manpower and matériel into the all-out war being waged against the Abu Sayyaf.

The Kapayapaan Campaign for a Just and Lasting Peace (Kapayapaan), meanwhile, welcomed the resumption of the peace talks.

In a statement, Kapayapaan convenor Fr. Benjamin E. Alforque said: "We thank the government and the NDF for agreeing to continue the peace talks, to reinstitute their respective unilateral cease-fires, to work toward the completion of the substantive agenda on social and economic reforms, move toward the political and constitutional reforms and work out an agreement on a mutual bilateral cease-fire."

However, even as Alforque was optimistic on the progress of the peace negotiations, he opposed President Duterte's order to use all available offensive weapons against the New People's Army (NPA).

"We are concerned, however, over President Duterte's recent order to police and

military forces to use all available assets, including bombs, in fighting the NPA and treating civilians as collateral damage. We would like to remind the President that under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, actions that harm or threaten civilian communities are prohibited," he added.

Alforque appealed to both the government and the NDF to be steadfast in forging a just and comprehensive peace agreement for the benefit of the Filipino people.

"Finally, we urge both parties to have the courage to stick it out together for the sake of peace and the interests of the people. Outstanding issues, such as the release of political prisoners, human-rights violations and the militarization and displacement of communities, should be resolved.

"We of Kapayapaan, together with the people and nation, are fully behind the peace negotiations and the continuing quest for a just and lasting peace," Alforque added. *PNA with Marvyn N. Benaning*

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Investment in national security

On Feb 18, 2017, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Alumni Association celebrated its annual alumni homecoming in Fort del Pilar, Baguio City, with no less than President Roa Duterte as the guest of honor and speaker. This yearly event brings alumni from all parts of the country and around the globe to the hallowed grounds of our alma mater.

Every homecoming is replete with pomp and pageantry that reflect the rich military traditions of the PMA.

The reminiscences of cadet life reinvigorate the wellspring of professionalism and excellence that are associated with its graduates.

In the light of the major changes and developments in the external environment, particularly modern technology and geo-political realities, the question has been asked often enough: is PMA still relevant? Is it still a wise investment worth supporting with taxpayer money, or has it lost its unique value?

This question becomes even more urgent in the light of the involvement of some PMA alumni in unprofessional conduct.

These questions can best be answered by reflecting on the foundation of the institution. Is it still solid and stable? In investment parlance, is the quality of the portfolio still attractive to its investors, the nation?

PMAyers, by virtue of their training and character development, are exemplars of discipline and repository of excellent leadership skills.

As cadets and later as active military and police professionals, their lives have been all about strict adherence to rules and regulations where the margin of deflection almost ap-

proaches perfection.

Throughout the four incomparable years, mere excess demerits, deficiency in academics, failure in physical fitness, and more importantly violation of the honor system are reasons for dismissal and expulsion. They went through a process of stiff competition in all aspects of cadet life, which emphasized exceptional achievement and shunned mediocrity.

The focal point of every purpose was and will always be the accomplishment of the mission. It can be assumed that only the best and the brightest, the cream of the youth of the land can claim membership.

Every graduate passed through a process that inducted them into warriors, leaders, public servants.

PMA demands unconditionally that its graduates swear to dedicate thought, word and deed in service to God, country and people.

This sacred vow demands loyalty to flag without any reservation. Offering of life as an investment instrument to the nation is priceless.

Because of this sacred vow, the nation has enjoyed the fruits of an enlightened and enduring state of peace and security that has enabled the nation to move forward, and for the political, social, and economic processes to proceed in a normal mode.

The world will turn many more times, advances in technology will revolutionize social and cultural values, but the attributes of courage, loyalty, and integrity will remain immutable and relevant under all seasons and generations.

The exacting standards of performance have ensured that every graduate is primed and ready to hold the mantle of leadership in the military and police services.

The character and training



MAPPING THE FUTURE

JAIME S. DE LOS SANTOS



PMA demands unconditionally that its graduates swear to dedicate thought, word and deed in service to God, country and people.

imbued in them are the tools and instruments of efficiency, effectiveness and meritocracy in public and private service.

From time to time though, some of its graduates are involved in unprofessional conduct. Incidents that are regrettable and deplorable. The PMA Alumni Association has stated in the strongest terms its disgust and intolerance of such unacceptable behavior. The association has imposed strict and severe sanctions on these

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erring alumni.

No institution is perfect, nor infallible. There is always a chance for a deviation from the standards. Even in a manufacturing concern, a certain percentage become rejects or are below par in quality.

With this in mind, the presence of these undesirable alumni is not a reason to castigate the entire institution.

It needs utmost understanding. It also portrays the strong influence that the external environment can impose on individual conduct.

Furthermore, many factors obtaining in the real world are uncontrollable. They are facts of life, such as political intervention, economic necessity, personal ambitions and many more.

This is not a justification of deviant behavior from any alumni, but rather a nod of support for the necessity of continuous reforms and periodic review of the military and police services in order to reduce the factor of graft and abuse of authority.

It is a national collective effort that will play the role of check and balance and complement whatever shortcomings and limitations the military educational system may have. Four years is not sufficient to change the world. Sunk cost is natural in whatever form of investment.

In spite of the remarkable changes occurring in the present and future generations, PMA will continue to be relevant and useful to the nation. It shall continue to be the well-spring of hope that will further strengthen the democratic process, guard our freedom and liberties, and make the republic stronger and responsive.

The PMA continues to undergo changes in curriculum, training mode, calibrating and

balancing its customs and traditions consistent with the advent of new technology and adjusting to the social and cultural development in society.

These changes will facilitate intellectual growth opening up new thinking and encouraging innovation, all of which will allow change and transformation to take root. In the light of all these reforms, understanding and open-mindedness from the public and all the stakeholders would be the best way to support the institution that has been the breeding ground of brave and visionary leaders.

"When bells for us rung and our last taps is sung, let generation see our country free" "PMA, Oh Hail To Thee" the alma mater song.

These sacred words connect and reconnect all alumni from the past to the future, affirming the perpetual responsibility that goes beyond their lifetime. A collective task to lead and defend, for the rest to follow in their footsteps. A strong assurance that the nation will continue to enjoy freedom and liberty. It is a forthright responsibility, unequivocal, distinct.

This awesome role is measured in terms of the state of security and stability of the nation under extreme conditions of war and conflict; they who have been trained to lead will provide the strength and motivation for all citizens to rally behind the flag.

They who have been imbued with discipline and respect for authority will manifest and nurture the spirit of nationalism and patriotism so that they in turn can inspire and infect a whole nation, to generate the momentum needed for victory.

What better metrics can you use to evaluate the cost of educating a single alumni and the service that he gives to the na-

tion. Giving life and limb, sacrificing family in favor of the service, being modestly compensated, harassed and intimidated by the power that be, and occasional ridicule of political forces. The service, the sacrifice, the selfless dedication. How does one put a number, a value even, for every life devoted singularly to defending the very ideals that our country stands for?

In conclusion, investment in favor of national security cannot be compromised, nor devalued. It is an investment that nurtures and cradles national existence.

The social, political, and economic returns are directly proportional to the level of importance that is allocated to the security agenda, which defines the quality and state of the country.

In the total scheme of things, that investment is not only priceless, it is also imperative to preserving that which so many have fought and died for.



(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines or MAP. The author is a member of the M.A.P. National Issues Committee and presently part-time professorial lecturer at UP Diliman and director, Graduate Studies at the Manuel L. Quezon University.

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

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Postscript

By FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

No need for PMA honorary 'mistahs'

THE MAIN issue in the case of Mighty Corp., which has been accused of using at least P2 billion worth of fake tax stamps on its cigarette packs, is alleged tax-evasion and economic sabotage. That is already in the hands of the proper government agencies.



On a side issue, additionally, we wonder at the wisdom of Philippine Military Academy classes adopting rank outsiders as honorary "mistahs" or classmates in a manner that could affect their performance in the service and when they move to the private sector.

President Rodrigo Duterte himself had disclosed that he knew well Alexander Wong Chu King, the owner of Mighty Corp., because he is a fellow "mistah" of PMA Class 1967 of which they are both honorary members.

We note also that Lt. Gen. Edilberto Pardo Adan (PMA '72), who served as PMA superintendent (2002-2004) and deputy chief of staff (2004-2005), became Mighty Corp. president in 2014. His last military assignment was as chief of the AFP Southern Command.

Lest we be misunderstood, we stress that the Academy and its impressive roster of alumni are not being denigrated or their integrity questioned. It is precisely to protect their name and that of the service that we here suggest a review of their "mistah" adoption practice.

The adoption of presidents and other high or promising officials, as well as powerful persons in civil society, enhances the political and business connections of class members without benefiting public interest. We dare not speculate on ulterior motives, if any.

The lassoing of influential or powerful figures as honorary "mistahs" could degenerate into a mere variation, or a refinement, of the discredited "padrino system" that has abetted corruption in government.

This is not to say that the disposition of the Mighty Corp. case will be influenced by its "mistah" entanglements – in the same way that we prefer not to prejudge the integrity and competence of government officials on the basis of their alma mater or fraternity ties.

Somebody should defend the "mistah" adoption practice and highlight its redeeming social benefits.

Before the Martial Law years, PMA alumni were not concerned with cornering honorary "mistah" figures to help them along, but the officers and gentlemen generally performed with integrity and loyalty.

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• **What happens to bribery attempt?**

ONE ASPECT of the Mighty case that jolted us was the revelation of President Duterte of an attempt to bribe him when he was still Davao mayor.

STAR reporter Alexis Romero said that Duterte narrated the other night in Pasay City two incidents where Mighty owner Wong Chu King gave him cash (when he was still mayor) and a gun (only last December). He said he returned the items promptly.

Duterte has ordered the arrest of Wong Chu King, but when he presented himself to the National Bureau of Investigation days ago, he was not detained.

The President previously said the businessman could settle his tax deficiencies by paying P3 billion, or double the P1.5 billion that he had offered, and build three hospitals in Basilan, Jolo, and Tondo.

But Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez interposed that Mighty's owner should pay not P3 billion but as much as P15 billion. Until this writing, it is not clear who between the two officials will be followed – the President or his finance secretary.

We expect that neither the wishes of Duterte nor of Dominguez will be controlling. From where we sit, it looks like the tax imbroglio will be resolved by the high-flying lawyers and the judges manning the courts and issuing TROs (temporary restraining orders).

Those are on the tax issues. The bribery and the economic sabotage cases are something else. The crowd keenly watching the President they had elected into office are praying that the Lord will not allow him to be led into temptation, amen.

Duterte recalled in his speech that when he was mayor, Wong Chu King approached him regarding his case, but that he brushed him off. The businessman left a bag, but when the mayor saw the money in it he said he had it returned.

In his speech at the PDP-Laban meeting, Duterte reiterated that he was ready to go to jail for the killings in his drug war, but not for corruption. He added that he would not tolerate corruption among his friends.

• **Phil rights over Benham Rise explained**

WE ARE amazed that not many Filipinos, including those in government, are alarmed by revelations that the Chinese have expanded their trespassing from the West Philippine Sea to the country's Benham Rise continental shelf facing the Pacific Ocean.

Benham Rise is a 13-million-hectare area extending some 250 kilometers eastward from the coast of Isabela and Aurora. In 2012, the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf recognized Philippine exclusive ownership of that shelf. There are no other claimants.

Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Philippines as the coastal State owning Benham Rise has these rights:

- The coastal State exercises sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring it and exploiting its natural resources.

- The rights referred to above are exclusive in the sense that if the coastal State does not explore the continental shelf or exploit its natural resources, no one may undertake these activities without its express consent.

- The rights of the Philippines over the continental shelf do not depend on occupation, effective or notional, or on any express proclamation.

- The natural resources referred to here consist of the mineral and other non-living resources of the seabed and subsoil together with living organisms belonging to sedentary species, that is to say, organisms which, at the harvestable stage, either are immobile on or under the seabed or are unable to move except in constant physical contact with the seabed or the subsoil.

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POLICE FILES

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Editorial

Nakikipaglokohan lang sa CPP- NDF-NPA

SABI ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte noong Pebrero, **S**ilang araw makaraang tandingan ng New People's Army ang tatlong sundalo sa Malaybalay, Bukidnon, maghanda na sapagkat tuloy na ang pakikipaggiyera sa mga rebelde. Pinalilinis na niya ang mga baril at maghanda sa pakikipagbambakan. Ayaw daw niya ng giyera pero kung mga sundalo na ang brutal na pinapatay, resume na ang pakikipaglaban. Giyera na raw talaga ito.

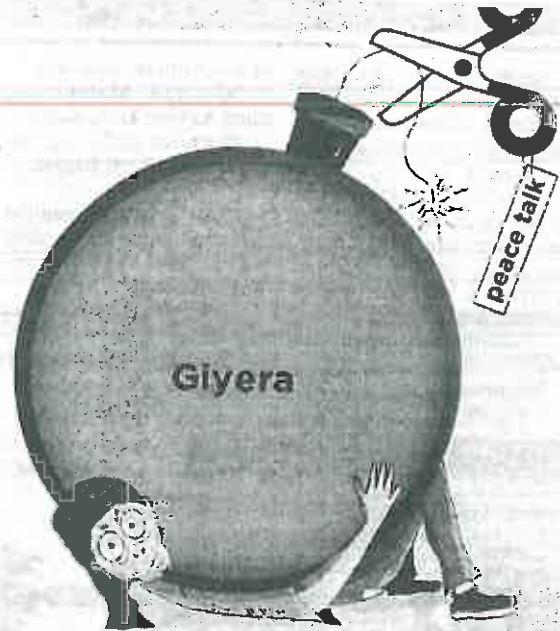
At noong nakaraang linggo na tandingan ang apat na pulis sa Dansalan, Davao del Norte, nagpakita na naman ng pagkadismaya si Duterte sa ginagawa ng NPA. Bakit kailangang tandingan ang mga pulis na mag-iimbestiga lamang sa isang nangyaring patayan sa isang barangay. Sa himig nang pananalita ng Presidente ay wala na talagang makakapigil pa sa muling pakikipagdigmaan

ng gobyerno sa mga komunista. Nang dalawin niya ang burol ng mga napatay na pulis, nangako siya ng tulong sa mga kaanak ng biktima. Hindi raw niya pababayaan ang mga naulila at makakaasa ng lubusang tulong mula sa pamahalaan.

Pero makalipas ang ilang araw, tila lumambot na ang matigas na paninindigan ng Presidente at gusto na muling makipag-peace talk sa Communist Party of the Philippines at National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF). Ayon kay Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza mag-uusap na muli ang gobyerno at CPP-NDF sa susunod na buwan at magiging malawak na raw ang pag-uusapan sa kapayapaan. Nag-usap na raw ang mga miyembro ng magkabilang grupo sa Netherlands noong nakaraang Biyernes at Sabado.

Pero ang nakakatawa nito, habang nag-uusap ang dalawang grupo, nirararat naman ng NPA ang mga sundalo at pulis. Habang masayang nag-uusap sa Netherlands ang mga matataas na lider ng gobyerno at CPP-NDF, nag-paulan naman ng tingga ang NPA sa mga sundalo. Ano ba ito? Nakikipaglokohan lang ba ang gobyerno sa mga komunista?

Kung seryoso ang mga lider ng komunista, pagbawalan ang kanilang armadong grupo na mangambush bilang pagkilala sa pag-uusap. Kung hindi nila kayang rendahan ang NPA, huwag na silang makipag-usap pa.



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ONLINE NEWS

14 MARCH 2017

www.interaksyon.com/national

Farmers accuse ex-AFP chief Visaya of rights violations, nix his appointment as NIA chief

By: **Diego Mora**, *InterAksyon.com*

March 13, 2017 10:55 AM

MANILA, Philippines - Militant peasant group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) held a picket at the National Irrigation Administration office in Quezon City Monday morning to protest the appointment of former AFP chief Ricardo Visaya as NIA administrator.

"We have two important issues to raise before the NIA -- first is the free irrigation service or non-collection of irrigation service fees which President Duterte and the NIA had consistently promised. Second is our strong opposition to Visaya's appointment. His mere appointment at NIA is an insult to farmers and an undermining of our strong demand and nationwide campaign for free irrigation," said KMP chairperson Joseph Canlas.

"There is no way that we would allow Ricardo Visaya, a known violator of farmers' rights to take helm at NIA, which is mandated to provide irrigation services to farmers," the KMP leader added.

Visaya is allegedly accountable for numerous killings of peasant leaders and activists in Central Luzon from 2005 to 2007 as well as the intense military operations of Lumad communities in Mindanao from 2014 to 2016, according to Canlas.

"What would Visaya do at NIA? Would he order the harassment and killing of farmers demanding free irrigation? He has no business running a civilian agency. His appointment has no merit and just grounds. Farmers nationwide will reject Visaya as NIA chief," said Canlas.

KMP said Visaya had been blamed for the deaths of at least eight farmer-leaders in the region, namely, Jhon Facunla Gado of Guimba, Nueva Ecija, Perla Torno Rodriguez of Mexico, Pampanga, Tirzo Cruz, from Hacienda Luisita, Ricardo Ramos, a farmer-leader in Hacienda Luisita, Federico de Leon, Bulacan coordinator of Anakpawis, William Tadena, a parish priest in Pampanga and Bishop Alberto Ravento, a pastor of Iglesia Filipina Independiente and Francisco "Tatang" Rivera of Angeles City, Pampanga.

He is also accused of allegedly having a role in the killing, torture, abduction and disappearance of farmer-activists in Mindanao, where he served as commander of the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division.

"We urge President Duterte to conscientiously reconsider his appointment of Visaya at NIA. We want a pro-farmer administrator at NIA," the KMP leader said.

Also, Canlas scored the NIA for collecting irrigation service fees from farmers even after the agency was allotted an additional P2-billion budget to cover the ISF collected by the NIA from farmers' irrigators associations.

The allocation will be used to cover the operating requirements of NIA and the maintenance of existing irrigation facilities that were previously funded from the ISF collections.

Late last year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) and NIA said irrigation services would be free of charge starting January 2017.

However, the DA has no control over NIA, which was under the control of the Office of the Presidential Assistant for Food Security and Agricultural Modernization during the latter years of the administration of President Benigno Aquino III.

Currently, NIA is supervised by Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco Jr. along with the National Food Authority, Philippine Coconut Authority, and the Fertilizer and Pesticides Authority.

"NIA is not abiding by its own commitment that irrigation services would be free of charge starting this year. We demand that NIA refrain from collecting irrigation service fees that are burdening our farmers," KMP said.

If the NIA insists in collecting the ISF, Canlas said farmers would be forced to launch a campaign to encourage its non-payment, along with back accounts.

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

Military ops vs NPA to continue until Duterte orders a halt

By Kristian Javier (philstar.com) | Updated March 13, 2017 - 3:18pm



The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) last July, 2016 resumed operations against the New People's Army (NPA) after President Duterte scuttled the ceasefire with communist rebels **PPD/Kiwi Butaciac**

MANILA, Philippines — The Armed Forces of the Philippines will continue military operations against the New People's Army until President Rodrigo Duterte orders otherwise.

Brig. Gen Restituto Padilla, AFP spokesperson, said Sunday that the military will wait for orders from President Duterte and official word from the government peace panel.

"Pending this, all military operations will continue and remain at current state," Padilla said.

This is despite the announcement of government and National Democratic Front panels on Sunday that formal talks are set to resume.

On Sunday, the GRP and the NDF released a joint statement of their agreement to resume peace talks. Both parties has also agreed to reinstate their respective unilateral ceasefire declarations.

Padilla, however, reiterated that the AFP supports all peace initiatives by the government, adding that the AFP has a proven track record of being a reliable partner in all peace talks.

"We share the commander-in-chief's aspiration to attain a just and lasting peace for our country," Padilla said.

He added that the military will do all it can "to deliver on this" for the benefit of the Filipinos, especially in conflicted areas.

Last February 3, President Duterte declared that he will end the unilateral cease fire with the rebels after the NPA announced it would end its unilateral cease fire with the government and resumed attacks on government troops.

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We will not fail our nation – AFP on forthcoming modern assets

PNA

As President Rodrigo Duterte pledged more equipment and support for the military in the coming years, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it will continue fulfilling its mandate and will not fail the nation.

“The pronouncement by our Commander-in-Chief resonates with inspiration and gratitude from and poses a challenge to every Soldier, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines,” said AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo in a message to the PNA Monday.

Duterte, during Sunday’s graduation ceremonies for the Philippine Military Academy’s Saiaknib Class of 2017, said more modern military aircraft, sea vessels, and other equipment are forthcoming in the next two to three years to better patrol the country’s territory and combat security threats.

“In the next two to three years, the AFP will have flight simulators, radars, support, patrol and assault vehicles as well as new surveillance and fighter aircraft so that you can better patrol our borders and guard our seas,” the Chief Executive stressed.

With this pending arrivals, Arevalo said the morale of the AFP will be further boosted.

“The delivery of new ships, aircraft, and equipment will not only boost the morale and the capability of your armed forces, it will also redound to the benefit of the Filipino people and the nation whom we sworn to protect and defend with honor, service, patriotism,” Arevalo added.

“This gesture of support from the President also presents itself as a challenge to your AFP for it to measure up to the high expectations and meet steep standards of service and mission accomplishment. We will not fail our nation,” Arevalo emphasized.

<http://www.update.ph>

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<http://www.update.ph>

Philippines may build structure to protect Benham Rise

Ruben Santos

National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that the Philippine government will trust what China said regarding its marine research vessels sailing to Benham Rise last year. However, the defense secretary said Philippines will increase patrols and may build structure in Benham Rise.

Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuan said the vessels only exercised Freedom of navigation and right to innocent passage without conducting any other activities or operations.

"We will trust what they say. But at the same time we will keep patrolling our area and find out kung pumupunta pa rin sila doon," Secretary Lorenzana said, as quoted by GMA News Online, at the sidelines of PMA graduation held Sunday.

"We will do something there. We will increase our patrols at the same time siguro we will put something there na structure na this is ours," the defense secretary said.

Also on Sunday, Senate President Pro-Tempore Ralph Recto called for the Duterte administration to craft a 'Benham Rise Protection Strategy'.

"No ifs or buts. The government must have a 'Benham Rise Protection Strategy'. A comprehensive strategy – military, diplomatic, economic – in holding on to and developing Benham Rise," the senator said.

Recto also urged his colleagues to consider expediting a bill filed by Senator Sonny Angara providing for the creation of a Benham Rise Development Authority – the lead agency that will be mandated to conduct scientific research and exploration in the plateau.

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Air Force conducts preemptive, reconnaissance operations against BIFF

PNA

Government forces in Maguindanao have been conducting preemptive and reconnaissance patrols in the vicinity of military installations following renewed harassment by the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), the military here said Friday.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, speaking for the 6th Infantry Division, said the reconnaissance patrol in Maguindanao's adjoining towns of Shariff Aguak, Datu Saudi Ampatuan, Datu Salibo and Mamasapano was a pro-active stance as the BIFF launched a series of "pocket offensives" in Datu Salibo and Datu Saudi Ampatuan towns over the weekend.

Two Huey helicopters of the 12th Composite Air Support of the Philippine Air Force were seen hovering around Maguindanao in Sunday and early Monday to back ground troops.

The BIFF harassment, Encinas said, left one soldier slightly injured after the bandits set off an improvised explosive in Barangay Sambolawan, Datu Salibo town on Friday.

Encinas said an undetermined number of BIFF armed men attacked at 7 p.m. the detachment of 57th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Sambolawan that injured Sgt. Greg Jordan.

A 10-minute firefight ensued until the gunmen fled.

It was the second harassment by suspected BIFF since last week. On Wednesday, an IED was set off by the BIFF in Barangay Timbangan, Datu Salibo that left a soldier injured.

"The BIFF is training to prove it is still a force to reckon with so they conduct occasional harassment," Encinas said.

Encinas assured commuters using the Cotabato-Islulan highway that the road remained passable but discouraged motorists to travel at night.

"We have security forces deployed along the highway to ensure the safety of motorists. The BIFF harassment was a desperate attempt by the lawless elements to send the message they are still there," Encinas said.

BIFF spokesperson Abu Misry Mama said their enemies are government forces and not civilians or non-combatants.

He said his group will continue harassing soldiers.

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Pursuit operations on for NPA suspects in bus torching

Philippine News Agency

MAKILALA, North Cotabato -- Pursuit operations are underway for suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels who torched around 8:30 a.m. Monday a unit of the Yellow Bus Line (YBL) at a secluded section of the highway in Barangay San Vicente here.

Authorities said that YBL unit bearing body no. 1888 was heading towards Davao City from Tacurong City when flagged down by six young men, aged between 18–20 years old.

The men quickly boarded the bus, pulled out handguns and declared they are NPA members amid the presence of some 30 terrified passengers.

The bus driver, identified as Victor Serondo, said the group ordered him to maneuver some 50 meters away from the highway to Sitio Bagong Silang in the same village and were told to disembark together with the passengers.

The armed men quickly opened gasoline-filled containers from their backpacks and set the bus on fire.

The suspects fled from the scene aboard five get-away motorcycles.

Responding authorities said the bus driver, conductor, two bus inspectors and all the bus passengers were not harmed during the incident.

Joint police and military roadblocks were immediately set up along the Makilala highway as pursuit operations were launched.

Local officials condemned the incident.

Makilala is one of the towns in North Cotabato where the NPA rebels are often sighted.

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[www. retiredanalyst.blogspot.com](http://www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com)

Troops hold preemptive patrol in Maguindanao after BIFF harassment

Philippine News Agency

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