

Army Vision: By 2128, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

28 March 2017

Tuesday

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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 28, 2017 | TUESDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

(C) PHILIPINA

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON (As of 5:00 PM - Mar. 27, 2017)

SUNRISE		SUNSET	
5:55 AM	6:06 PM		
MOONRISE		MOONSET	
5:57 AM	6:23 PM		
LAST QUARTER		NEW MOON	
MAR 26 1:34 PM	MAR 29 6:57 PM		
LOW TIDE		HIGH TIDE	
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR			
4:51 AM	10:49 PM		
0.05 Meter	0.80 Meter		

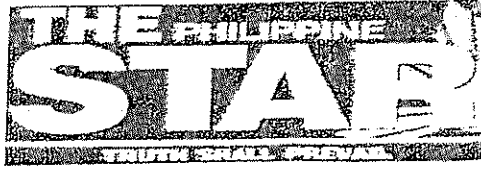
Partly cloudy skies
 Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers
 Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rain showers and/or thunderstorms
 Light rain

	MAR 27	MAR 28	MAR 29	MAR 30	MAR 31
METRO MANILA	24 - 34 °C	24 - 33 °C	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	23 - 32 °C
LAOAG	23 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 26 °C	16 - 26 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 34 °C	23 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C
LEGAZPI	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
TACLOBAN	24 - 32 °C	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	23 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C
METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C

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China wants sea cooperation

BEIJING – China and the countries surrounding the South China Sea should set up a cooperation mechanism to boost exchanges in efforts ranging from disaster relief to safety of navigation, a senior diplomat

said in comments reported yesterday.

China claims most of the resource-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes every year. Neighbors Brunei, Malaysia, the

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China From Page 1

Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims on the strategic waterway.

While China's construction of artificial islands and military deployments in the area have unnerved its neighbors, Beijing has also been trying to reassure Southeast Asia, with efforts such as talking

up a code of conduct for the waterway.

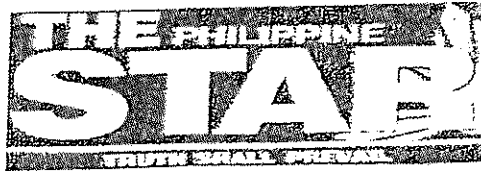
Speaking at a weekend forum on the southern island province of Hainan, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said the mechanism would enhance mutual trust and strengthen cooperation, according to a transcript of

his speech released yesterday.

It would contribute to exchanges in such areas as disaster prevention, maritime rescue, environmental protection, biodiversity, scientific research and navigational safety, he added.

"The mechanism is aimed at strengthening pragmatic cooperation and increasing mutual trust, and is not about resolving disputes," Liu said. – Reuters

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Barangay chiefs linked to drugs? PNP verifying list

By **CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE**

The Philippine National Police (PNP) is verifying the possible link to illegal drugs of about 40 percent of barangay captains nationwide.

PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa said

the list is being verified by the police Directorate for Intelligence out of the total 42,028 barangay officials.

He said the PNP and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency are confirming the barangay officials involved in

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Barangay From Page 1

the illegal drug trade.

After verification, the PNP chief said investigators will then proceed to case buildup, but if the barangay chairman has really turned his back on the illegal drug trade, his records will be updated.

He said that once they confirm that the village officials are clean, they would be cleared and given the chance to change.

Earlier, President Duterte claimed that 40 percent of all barangay captains in the

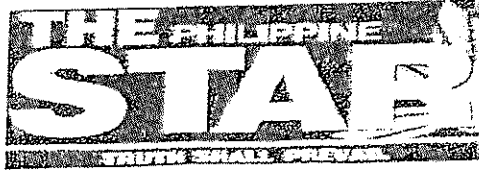
country are involved in drugs.

The President expressed desire that the barangay elections would again be postponed since he will not allow drug-tainted personalities to be elected as village officials.

Duterte said drug money may be used if there will be elections this year.

He revealed that he has advised lawmakers not to conduct elections in order to prevent narco-politicians from assuming barangay posts.

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3 more Malaysians rescued from Abu Sayyaf

By ROEL PAREÑO

AL-BARKA, Basilan – The three remaining Malaysian crewmembers of a tugboat kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf bandits last year have been rescued in Sulu.

Mohammad Jumadil Rahim, Mohammad Ridzuan Bin Ismail and Fandy Bin Bakran of *Serudong* were rescued at the boundary of Sitio Kasanyangan in Barangay Tuyang in Talipao and Jingga, Panglima Estino at around 11:30 p.m. on Sunday, Col. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said yesterday.

"Days of unrelenting and massive search and rescue operations by sea, air and land units under Joint Task Force Sulu led to the rescue of the victims," Sobejana said.

The victims were taken to the Camp Navarro General

Hospital for checkup before they were presented to Brig. Gen. Marsani Bin Paiman, head of the international monitoring team.

Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez, Western Mindanao Command chief, said the victims would be flown to Manila today.

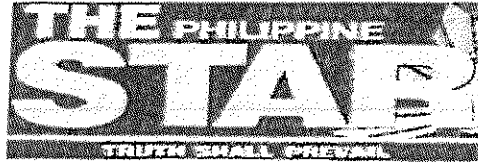
Two other tugboat crewmen – Tayudin Anjut and Abdul Rahim Bin Summas – were abandoned by their captors at the height of a military offensive near a mangrove in Barangay Karudong in Kalinggalang Caluang town on Thursday.

The Malaysians were snatched in the waters off Lahad Datu in Sabah on July 19.

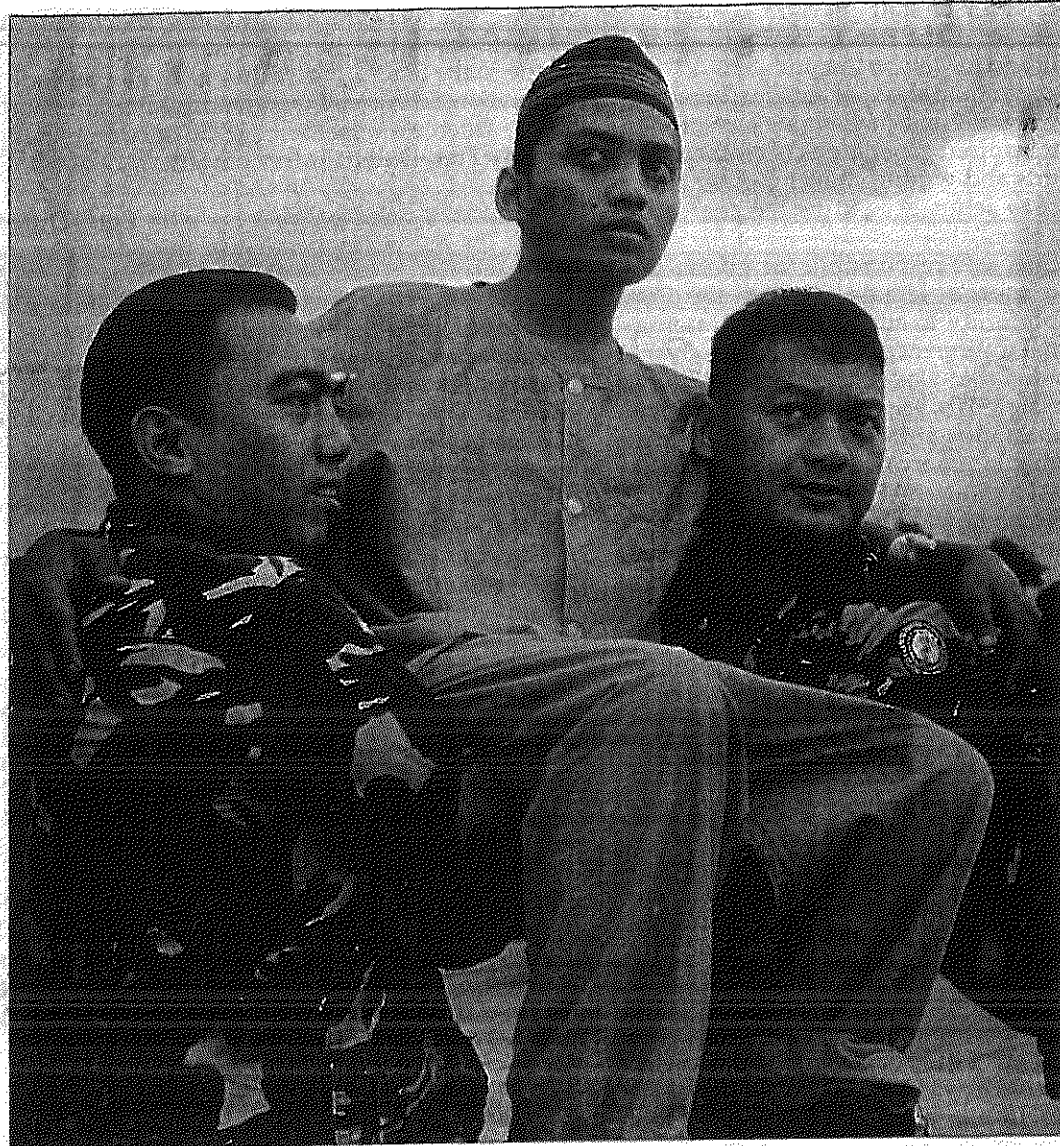
"We will continue to exert all effort to rescue all those being held by the bandits," Sobejana said.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding 20 foreigners and nine Filipinos. – With Michael Punongbayan

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Government troops carry one of three rescued Malaysians kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Jolo, Sulu yesterday. EPA

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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3 more Malaysians freed

Army says hostages rescued, but mayor counters military story



Members of the Naval Forces Special Operations Group patrol the seas off Basilan province during the hunt for kidnappers of Malaysian tugboat crewmen kidnapped in waters near Tawi-Tawi and Sabah. —JULIES.ALIPALA

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AL BARKA, BASILAN—After nine months in captivity, three Malaysians were freed by their Abu Sayyaf captors in Sulu on Monday.

But Maj. Gen. Carlito Galvez, head of the Army's Western Mindanao Command (Wesmiucorn), said the three Malaysians—Mohammad Ridzuan bin Ismael, Mohammad Jumadil bin Rahim and Fandy bin Bakran—were rescued in the town of Panglima Estino in Sulu on Sunday night.

Galvez made the announcement during "People's Day," where residents receive government social services, in Barangay Macalang here yesterday.

"They are physically OK compared to the two who were earlier freed," Galvez said.

Last week, two other kidnapped Malaysians were freed by their captors.

The five Malaysians were crew members of Tugboat Serudong 3. They were snatched by armed men off the water of

Sabah and Tawi-Tawi on July 18 last year.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana, head of the antiterror Joint Task Group Sulu, said the captors of the Malaysians were forced to let go of their captives after days of relentless military search-and-rescue operations by sea, air and land.

Mayor's version

But Panglima Estino Mayor Ben Estino denied the military's claim.

"There was no rescue effort or military operation," Estino said.

He said the three Malaysians were freed after a series of negotiations.

"They were released in Barangay Tuyang in Talipao town," the mayor said.

"Our place is peaceful. We don't have Abu Sayyaf or armed men here," he added.

"With that erroneous claim, the military can easily launch a military operation in an area

where innocent people are living peacefully," he said.

Galvez said the Malaysians were to be taken to Zamboanga City for media presentation.

Col. Said Fazly, team leader of the Malaysian contingent of the International Monitoring Team, told the Inquirer that they were "pleased by this good news."

"We are thankful and grateful to the Philippine government and the Philippine Armed Forces for assisting and securing the release of our people," Fazly said.

"All the five kidnapped Malaysians are now fully accounted for, and we hope that they will be the last," he added.

Embarrassment

The three men released on Monday were the last Malaysians in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf, which has its roots in separatism but engages mostly in banditry.

It has proven a formidable opponent for the military, with

its small, agile and well-equipped network entrenched in the jungles of Basilan and Jolo, from which they prey on slow cargo boats.

It has gained a reputation as one of the world's most brutal groups, delivering on its promises to behead hostages for whom ransoms were not paid before a deadline. Among its victims in the past eight months were a German and two Canadians.

Netherlands, Indonesian, Filipino and Japanese citizens are among those still held.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana recently described Abu Sayyaf's kidnappings as a national embarrassment.

The government is concerned that hardliners in the group have been in contact with extremists in the Middle East with a view to setting up Islamic State cells in the restive south of the vast archipelago nation.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JULIE S. ALIPALA AND REUTERS INQ

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NPA holds

lightning rally in Cubao

By Inquirer.net
@inquirerdotnet

Supporters of the New People's Army (NPA) on Monday staged a lightning rally in Cubao, Quezon City, to mark the 48th founding anniversary of the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

At the rally, underground revolutionary organizations in Metro Manila under the banner of the CPP called on Filipinos to join the NPA.

The founding anniversary of the NPA is on March 29.

CPP-NPA leaders on Saturday said they were set to declare a unilateral ceasefire before March 31, ahead of the resumption of peace talks with the government next month.

The CPP expects the Philippine government to declare a similar unilateral ceasefire as part of an agreement reached during back-channel talks from March 10 to 11, the group said in a statement.

Negotiators from both sides agreed on March 12 to resume formal peace negotiations in The Netherlands from April 2 to 6, a month after an angry President Duterte canceled talks because the NPA ambushed soldiers and unilaterally ended a previous ceasefire.

Mr. Duterte, in an interview on Saturday with reporters in Bukidnon province, said he would consult with the country's political and security

leaders "whether it would be good at this time" to resume the government's unilateral ceasefire.

"I have to consult the (House) Speaker. I have to consult the Senate President. I have to convene the National Security Council and I have to ask the generals of the Army and the police," the President said.

In the statement, the CPP

urged the President to order the military to "slow down its ongoing all-out offensive military operations and aerial bombing and shelling campaigns against rural (communities), to help create a favorable atmosphere for the mutual ceasefire."

To give the peace talks a boost, the CPP said it also expected the government to release 19 elderly and sick political

prisoners, as well as five detained consultants of its political arm, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

The CPP said the NPA released on Friday two "prisoners of war" in Mati town in Davao Oriental province, as a "confidence-building" measure and would also set four more prisoners free.

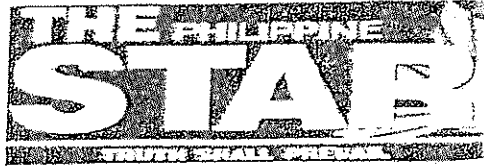
The conflict between the

government and the communists has raged for nearly five decades and killed more than 40,000 people.

Both sides in the conflict unilaterally declare ceasefires that the opposite party typically accuses the other of violating, leading to a fragile peace in the conflict zones where the rebels operate. —WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INQ

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AFP denies monitoring Leni, Leila, Trillanes

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday corrected reports that the military is monitoring political personalities, including Vice President Leni Robredo.

"We appeal to everyone to respect the apolitical stance of the AFP and ensure that we are free from political intrigues

and distractions," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said.

"We serve and work for the interest of the people and our nation, not individuals. We also ensured free and honest elections that paved the way for a credible electoral process last year and fully respect the mandate of duly elected officials," he added.

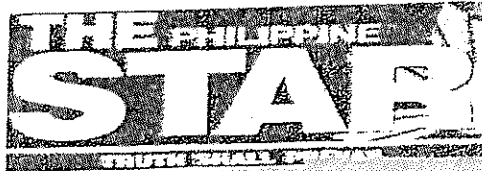
Padilla made the clarification in light of a report that the AFP is monitoring the movements of Robredo and opposition Senators Leila de Lima and Antonio Trillanes IV.

The military is not meddling in politics, Padilla said.

He added that President Duterte has told the military that its loyalty should be to the flag and not to politicians.

"No less than the commander-in-chief has mentioned the need to respect and uphold the mandate of elected officials to allow them to do their work," the AFP official said.

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Phi to conduct air patrols in Benham

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will use its newly acquired TC-90 aircraft from Japan to patrol the West Philippine Sea and Benham Rise where incidents of China's incursion were recorded.

The Philippine Navy officially received the first two of five TC-90 patrol planes from the government of Japan yesterday.

Japan has agreed to lease five patrol planes to the Philippines at minimal cost. The delivery of the other three planes is expected in 2018.

"We can use that anywhere, any part of the country where these are needed," AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año told reporters during the turnover ceremony of the two patrol planes in Sangley Point, Cavite yesterday morning.

Asked if the West Philippine Sea and Benham Rise are among the areas that will be patrolled, Año said "yes."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Japanese State

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Phi From Page 1

Minister for Defense Kenji Wakamiya led the turnover ceremony at the Naval Air Group headquarters in Sangley Point.

Japan has temporarily leased TC-90 patrol aircraft to the Philippines under several agreements in 2015 and 2016 pending another agreement that will allow Japan to donate the aircraft.

Lorenzana said these agreements are the memorandum on defense cooperation and

exchange that the Philippines entered with Japan in 2015; the agreement concerning the transfer of defense equipment and technology entered in 2016; and the memorandum of implementation for the transfer of Japan's TC-90 aircraft to the Philippines.

"These newly acquired planes are expected to enhance our country's capacity in maritime security as well as provide the Philippine Navy the needed air asset

for their missions concerning humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, transportation and maritime domain awareness, including maritime air surveillance and intelligence surveillance reconnaissance in support of maritime security operations and training for these missions," he said.

"Likewise, these TC-90s will also enhance cooperative relationship, promoting mutual understanding and trust as well as contributing to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region," he added.

The acquisition of the air-

craft forms part of the AFP Modernization Program, which aims to synchronize improvements in materiel and technology capabilities of the military.

Lorenzana said the government is looking into the acquisition of more equipment for the country's external defense missions, including the possible acquisition of UH-1H helicopter spare parts for the Philippine Air Force.

"I am grateful that we are indeed getting all the support of our neighbors in Asia, such as Japan. And as we acquire

more equipment, we shall also enhance the capabilities of our troops, making them ready for all kinds of operations. Together with the other members of the one defense team, let us continue transforming together for the attainment of a credible defense posture," he said.

The Japanese government also expressed hope of building a stronger relationship with the Philippines in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations as well as in the aspect of military and defense cooperation.

"Japan is dependent on the supply of resources and energy and all of which comes through maritime transport and therefore stronger relationship with the Philippines is important as the country is located in the important point of such sea lanes," Wakamiya said in a joint press conference with Lorenzana.

"So in this regard, the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the Japan self defense force play a very important role in building defense cooperation with the Philippines in those areas," he added.

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TRAINING AND RECONNAISSANCE

PH NAVY GETS 2 PATROL AIRCRAFT FROM JAPAN

Japan turned over to the Philippine Navy on Monday two military aircraft that will help improve its surveillance of the country's maritime borders.

Japanese Defense Minister Kenji Wakamiya formally turned over the Beechcraft TC-90 training aircraft to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and other

Philippine officials at the Naval Air Group headquarters in Sangley Point, Cavite City.

The two aircraft landed at Sangley Point at around 10 a.m. Navy spokesperson Capt. Lued Lincuna said the TC-90s were leased from the Japanese Ministry of Defense as part of the Navy's efforts to improve

its humanitarian relief, disaster response and surveillance capabilities.

The TC-90's patrol range is said to be 1,900 kilometers or double that of small Philippine Navy aircraft.

Lincuna said that the Navy leased from Japan five TC-90s

—PHILIP C. TUBEZA INQ

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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FINDING ANSWERS

Rising up for Benham Rise



By **ATTY. JOEY D. LINA**
Former Senator

IT'S an invigorating piece of good news that came from Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana amid what was seen as a "puzzling show of defeatism" arising from a view that nothing can be done against what are perceived to be China's creeping moves to gobble up areas within our country's jurisdiction.

That the Philippine Navy has deployed its warship BRP Ramon Alcaraz to form part of intensified patrols over the 13-million-hectare Benham Rise, an undersea region rich in biodiversity, minerals, and gas deposits off eastern Luzon, is certainly reassuring to Filipinos who fear that we are slowly losing territory by default, timidity, or even cowardice.

"The Navy will henceforth regularly patrol Benham Rise partly due to past Chinese activities there but, more importantly, because it is part of our continental shelf and awarded to us [by the United Nations]," Lorenzana said last week. "Our next activity is to have the area surveyed to clearly determine its limits, depths, coral formations."

The furor over Benham Rise arose when Lorenzana earlier disclosed that Chinese survey ships had a prolonged stay in the area for about three months, raising suspicions that the ships were out there not only for "innocent passage" as claimed by Chinese officials. In an apparent bid to allay fears resulting from the seemingly suspicious activities, President Duterte said he had given permission for China to conduct oceanographic surveys in the area.

But many couldn't help being alarmed. Lorenzana's revelation came at about the same time that news broke out over reports of China's intent to build radar facilities on Panatag Shoal in the West Philippine Sea. And many find unacceptable our President's response to the disturbing news: "Wala tayong magagawa dyan (There's nothing we can do)," he said. "What do you want me to do? Declare war against China?"

Describing the presidential response as a "show of defeatism" that was quite disheartening, some are asking: Does war have to be the only option to resolve the conflict? Should we be "mobilizing the tools and opportunities of international diplomacy to pressure China to ease up on its expansionism?" And considering that our country holds this year's chairmanship of the Asean, how about "mobilizing the consensus of Asean, a number of whose members are also disputing China's claims in the region?"

Social media was also ablaze over the President's reaction. "The Chinese carefully calculates our cowardice. We are telling them they are right. They are winning a war without firing a shot," commented a dismayed netizen.

The public uproar over the seeming assertiveness of China on both sides of our archipelago clearly shows the level of distrust that most Filipinos have towards China. Even during the latest DZMM teleradyo program, Magpayo nga Kayo (Saturdays, 9:30 to 10:30 am), which I now co-host with veteran broadcaster May Valle Ceniza, most of the listeners who called in or sent text messages viewed China negatively.

And they can't be blamed. The apparent trickery in past incursions into islands within our Exclusive Economic Zone can't be forgotten. China erected a weather station on Fiery Cross Reef in 1987 ostensibly "to help UNESCO's global oceanic survey," only to transform it into a 250-hectare military base. In 1995, China snatched Mischief Reef on the pretext of building on it a shelter for fishermen caught in storms at sea. China was also able to grab Panatag Shoal in 2012 when it didn't honor an agreement to withdraw after a standoff.

Thus, any hint that our exclusive sovereign rights and jurisdiction over Benham Rise—recognized in April 2012 by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as part of the continental shelf of the Philippines—could probably suffer the same fate as that of other areas in our EEZ, ought to be met with stiff resistance and condemnation.

Our leaders and we as a patriotic people, owe it to the future generations of Filipinos to preserve our natural patrimony. Our sense of patriotism and nationhood ought to impel us to do all we can to show the world that ours is a self-respecting country.

If a tiny nation like Taiwan is able to face up to a giant bully all these years, or if Israel can stand its ground despite being surrounded by its enemies, so can the Philippines. Our glorious past—with our heroes resisting foreign invaders who trampled upon our sacred shores—is a shining testament to our courage and tenacity to defend and protect what is rightfully ours.

E-mail: finding.lina@yahoo.com

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Upholding frameworks of peace and security

With all the changes in the Philippines' foreign relations, there is something to be said for going back to basics: understanding the foundations of our alliance, what it has accomplished, and its possible future. Last week, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop returned to these fundamentals when she spoke in Manila on the rules-based order. Keeping on with this effort, Stratbase ADR Institute is launching a series of special studies, where we highlight Filipino expertise.

In "The Role of America's Alliances in the Philippines' Balancing Policy on China: From the Aquino to the Duterte Administration" ADRi trustee Renato de Castro looks at the US-led alliance system in Asia. The system has been the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific for almost seven decades. As De Castro shows, the Philippines has benefited from decades of international cooperation to address challenges in internal and maritime security, and natural disasters.

The alliance system. The US-led security alliance system is composed of American bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines, and a trilateral one with Australia and New Zealand. The objective was to surround the Eurasian landmass with American and allied power to limit communist expansion and deepen US participation in Asian security affairs.

After the Cold War, the system has evolved from the simple sums of national capabilities into a platform for harmonizing

COMMENTARY

DINDO MANHIT

divergent national interests and building processes for political-security coordination. Out of their shared interests, members have sought to maintain their *raison d'être*, maximize their benefits and minimize alliance cost, and promote unity amid the turbulence of our times.

Positive contributions. The alliance system has boosted the material capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and provided extended deterrence as the country continues to address threats to its security: from terrorism and political violence, assertiveness in the West Philippine Sea, and natural disasters. First, the Philippine government received substantial US support for its counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns during the global war on terror.

Second, alarmed by China's increasing actions to alter the status quo in the West Philippine Sea since 2010, Manila and Washington decided to complement each other's military capabilities, enhance interoperability between their armed forces, and strengthen the AFP's territorial defense capabilities through tangible US security assistance and joint training exercises.

Third, in the aftermath of Super typhoon "Yolanda" (Haiyan), the US, Australian, Japanese and South Korean militaries launched Operation Damayan. Demonstrating their

strong solidarity, the allies supported the AFP's humanitarian assistance and disaster response operations and helped transport displaced persons in affected areas.

Old friends, new friends. President Duterte has helped introduce uncertainty in the alliance system. His adoption of an "independent foreign policy" resembles more a discreet withdrawal from the alliance in favor of a new one with China and Russia than a true diversification of strategic partnerships. This has threatened to reverse the Philippines' previous gains from security ties. In the interest of the nation, Mr. Duterte ought to cultivate new friendships without severing ties with those who have helped the country.

The Philippines is best served by fully implementing the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, pursuing its partnerships with US bilateral allies (Japan, South Korea and Australia), laying the groundwork for constructive negotiation with China, guided by the primacy of law, beefing up maritime capacity, and ensuring the complementarity of our foreign and defense policies with our partners through annual defense consultations, joint training in counterterrorism, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

These steps will help the Philippines maximize its own potential to contribute to the international rules-based order.

Dindo Manhit is president of Stratbase ADR Institute.



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

ONLINE NEWS

28 MARCH 2017

www.dwdd.com.ph

HARASSMENT | NPA Terrorizes Antipas, N. Cotabato

Posted by Alvin Santiago on March 27, 2017 at 7:50 AM

ANTIPAS, North Cotabato (DWDD) – A total of two hundred thirty seven (237) families returns home at Barangay Camutan, Antipas after evacuating at the municipal gym due to the harassment of New People's Army members on the evening of March 22.

According to the evacuees, the NPA headed by a local commander named *Alvin Gulmatico alias Joel of Guerilla Front 53* tried to summon them at Brgy Camutan proper, with more or less 30 armed NPA on the evening of March 22. This caused alarm and scandal that forced the residents to evacuate on the morning of March 23.

Due to the incident, the LGU of Antipas headed by the municipal mayor, Hon Egidio Cadungon immediately convened the crisis management and requested for PNP and Army assistance. Joint Army/PNP operations were conducted to pursue the NPA and drive them away from the communities.

On the evening of March 23 at exactly 7:15pm, an encounter between the pursuing Army/PNP and NPA occurred at Sitio Embangan of Brgy Camutan, fire fight lasted for ten (10) minutes after which the NPA withdrew. There was no casualty from the government forces.

March 25, after two days of joint Army/PNP security operations, the crisis management of Antipas declared the affected areas of Brgy Camutan safe from the presence of NPA. Four (4) municipal dump trucks and two (2) Army trucks were utilized to transport the families back to their respective homes in order for them to live their normal lives.

It can be recalled that the municipality of Antipas was declared conflict manageable and ready for further development during the area clearing validation board on February 22, 2017. Hence, the NPA is trying to recover brgy Camutan, unfortunately they were not welcomed and had only caused fear to the communities.

"Dili mi dawatonang NPA kunghadlukonnilaangcivilyan (we won't accept the NPA if they are threatening the civilian)", Mayor Cadungon said during a short program on the distribution of relief goods to the evacuated families on March 25. **CMO 39IB / MCAG**

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Gov't troops encounter NPAs in Occidental Mindoro

Photo by Lui Claudio / Inquirer Mindanao / 06:55 PM

Troops of 4th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, Philippine Army encountered an undetermined number of New People's Army (NPAs) today, March 27, 2017 at around 9:00 AM following a sniping incident happened earlier, around 6:00 AM, at a Patrol Base in Sitio Naibuan, Brgy Batasan, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.

While scouring the vicinity, the troops encountered the armed rebels that lasted for one minute. The said encounter inflicted no casualty from the government while undetermined number on the enemy side.

However, the sniping incident caused a slight wound on the left arm of Pvt Carvey C Bande. Presently, the troops in the area are conducting pursuit operations in order to track down fleeing enemies.

MGen Rhoderick Parayno, Commander of 2nd Division, assures that the army will continue to go after the rebels until they stop terror acts they commit against the people.

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NPA asks for 10-day ceasefire in 74 Bukidnon villages for release of cop

By: Jigger J. Jerusalem - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 06:55 PM March 27, 2017



Members of underground groups under the Communist Party of the Philippines mark the 48th anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA) on March 27, 2017 in Quezon City. (PHOTO BY NIÑO JESUS ORBETA / INQUIRER)
CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – The National Democratic Front in Northern Mindanao has asked the military to implement a 10-day suspension of military and police operations in at least 74 villages in Bukidnon starting March 27 so it can safely release a policeman from the custody of communist rebels.

Police Officer 2 Anthony Natividad, who is assigned at the Kailangan municipal police in Bukidnon, was on his way to the headquarters in Camp Alagar on board his motorcycle to undergo medical examination when taken by the members of the New People's Army in Barangay Tikalaan, Talakag town on Feb. 9.

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Cesar Renerio, spokesperson of the NDF-North Central Mindanao Region, in a statement said they would release Natividad on condition that the army and police would order their forces to stand down in some villages in the towns of Talakag, Lantapan, Baungon, Pangantucan, and Kalilangan, and the cities of Malaybalay and Valencia.

Renerio said the NDF-NCMR through the NPA would declare its own temporary cessation of hostilities once law enforcers agree to the condition.

The group has assured the police and the public that Natividad has remained in good condition. The NPA added it no longer had any no reason to detain him further.

"After a thorough investigation and background check on his personal life and as a police officer, we found out that he (Natividad) committed no crime against the people and we see no reason to keep him," Renerio said in the statement.

The communist rebels have also asked the local third-party facilitators, the local crisis committee of Bukidnon, as well as the Philippine Army officials and Philippine National Police regional and provincial leaderships to cooperate in ensuring the safe return of Natividad to his family.

The military would wait for instructions from President Duterte through the Department of National Defense before acting on the NDF Northern Mindanao's request, said Capt. Joe Patrick Martinez, spokesperson of the Philippine Army's 4th Infantry Division.

Martinez said the Armed Forces of the Philippines would welcome imoves from third-party facilitators and the local crisis committee to arrange for Natividad's release. **SFM**

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Suspected Reds torch backhoe in Quirino province

By: Villamor Visaya Jr. - [@inquirerdotnet](https://twitter.com/inquirerdotnet)

[Inquirer Northern Luzon](#) / 08:25 PM March 27, 2017

JONES, Isabela – Four suspected communist rebels burned a backhoe at a road construction site at Maddela town in Quirino province on Sunday – the same day three construction equipment were burned in Alcala town in Cagayan province, the military said.

The backhoe, owned by the Ricardo Interior Construction Corporation, was being used to build a road in Sitio (sub-village) Dinungon, Ysmael village.

The excavator was torched after the construction firm's officials have allegedly refused to pay revolutionary taxes, said Col. Jose Vladimir Cagara, commander of the Philippine Army's 86th Infantry Battalion which is stationed here.

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Cagara urged residents to alert the Army of suspicious activities in the area.

www.pna.gov.ph

(News Feature)Epic "Battle of the Pockets" in WWII remembered

By Ben Cal

MANILA, March 27 (PNA) -- Little is known about the "Battle of the Pockets" during the Second World War, but it was one of the major victories scored by Filipino forces against the Japanese, killing about 1,000 of the invading troops in a close-quarter fighting in Bataan that lasted over two weeks in January 1942.

A re-enactment of the epic battle was staged last Saturday at Camp Aguinaldo parade ground in Quezon City witnessed by top defense-military officials and surviving World War 2 veterans and their families.

Defense Undersecretary Ernesto G. Carolina, administrator of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), read the prepared speech of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who was out of town.

Lorenzana said that the "Battle of the Pockets was one of the most important during the Second World War as it further delayed the timetable of the Japanese Imperial Army in conquering the Philippine archipelago."

The Japanese thought that they would conquer the Philippines easily without much resistance, they underestimated the fighting spirit of the Filipino and American forces, who defended Bataan for four months before they surrendered.

The re-enactment of the "Battle of the Pockets" showed the dexterity of the Filipinos composed mostly of cadets from the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and cadets from the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) class of 1942, and other civilian volunteers.

Lorenzana explained that "in warfare jargon, 'pocket' refers to an isolated group contrasted with a surrounding element. It carries with it a connotation that the encircled forces have not allowed themselves to be encircled intentionally."

It was in Bagac, Bataan that heavy fighting broke out between the Filipino and Japanese forces on the last week of January 1942.

The enemy was 'pocketed' during the heavy fighting and the ensuing engagement was dubbed as the "Battle of the Pockets."

Similar fighting also broke out in Gogo-Cotar River Valley in Bataan.

The Japanese who tried to infiltrate to the rear of the 1st Regular Division suffered a crushing defeat on Feb. 18, 1942.

"The Battle of the Pockets is just one of the testaments that the Second War War was the most difficult yet the most heroic era in our nation's life," Lorenzana said.

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Another speaker during the re-enactment was Undersecretary Eliseo Rio Jr. of the Department of Information and Communications Technology, whose father, Col. Eliseo Rio Sr., was a member of PMA class 1942, who fought during the war, recalled his father's memoirs on the bravery of the Filipinos.

"In the Battle of the Pockets, we pulled off what undoubtedly was a signal and decisive victory. For the first time in the war, we had engaged the enemy in a major offensive operation and wiped out an entire battalion of about a thousand men," the young Rio quoted his father as saying.

"Our troops had prevailed over an enemy not only far better armed and equipped but also decidedly battle-hardened with their long years of war elsewhere. We had proven that despite our deficiencies in training and armaments, we were fully capable of slugging it out with the Japanese toe."

He cited the bravery of Brig. Gen. Fidel Segundo, commander of the 1st Regular Division, who led his troops in the epic Battle of the Pockets, in crushing the highly superior Japanese Imperial forces.

The re-enactment was part of the series of events of the Bataan Day anniversary to be celebrated nationwide on April 9. (PNA)

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