

Army Vision: By 2028, 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

18 May 2017

Thursday

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


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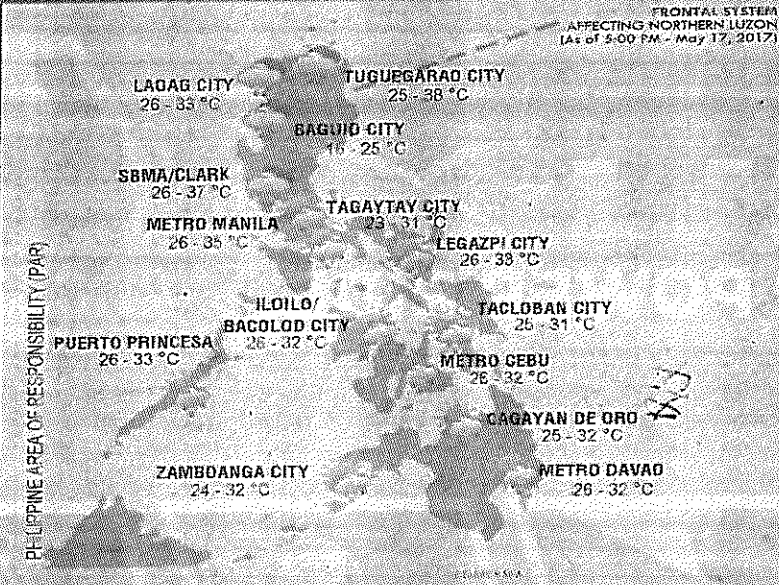
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST MAY 16 2017 THURSDAY


FRONTAL SYSTEM AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON (As of 9:00 PM - May 17, 2017)



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)




SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:28 AM	6:17 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
11:24 PM	11:13 AM
FULL MOON	LAST QUARTER
MAY 11 5:42 AM	MAY 16 6:33 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
MANILA SOUTH HARBOR	
11:05 PM	1:53 PM
0.01 Meter	0.56 Meter
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms.	
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms.	

	MAY 15	MAY 16	MAY 17	MAY 18
METRO MANILA	25 - 35 °C	26 - 34 °C	23 - 32 °C	22 - 31 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 - 37 °C	25 - 37 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
LAOAG	27 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	17 - 25 °C	17 - 25 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	26 - 36 °C	26 - 37 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 - 32 °C	23 - 31 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
LEGAZPI	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
METRO CEBU	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
TACLOBAN	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C
METRO DAVAO	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C
ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C



SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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18 May 2017



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China installs rocket launchers on disputed reef

BEIJING – China has installed rocket launchers on a disputed reef in the South China Sea to ward off Vietnamese military combat divers, according to a state-run newspaper, offering new details on China's ongoing military build-up.

China has said military construction on the islands it controls in the South China Sea will be limited to necessary defensive requirements, and that it can do what it likes on its own territory.

The United States has criticized what it has called China's militarization of its maritime outposts and stressed the need for freedom of navigation by conducting periodic air and naval patrols near them that have angered Beijing.

The state-run *Defense Times* newspaper, in a Tuesday report on its WeChat account, said Norinco CS/AR-1 55mm anti-frogman rocket launcher defense systems with the capability to discover, identify and attack enemy combat divers had been installed on Fiery Cross (Kagitingan) Reef in the Spratly Islands.

Fiery Cross Reef is administered by China but also claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

The report did not say when the defense system was installed, but said it was part of a response that began in May 2014, when Vietnamese divers

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China From Page 1

installed large numbers of fishing nets in the Parcel Islands.

China has conducted extensive land reclamation work at Fiery Cross Reef, including building an airport, one of several Chinese-controlled features in the South China Sea where China has carried

out such work.

More than \$5 trillion of world trade is shipped through the South China Sea every year. Besides China's territorial claims in the area, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

– Reuters

8 May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Cayetano confirmed in a breeze

CA defers confirmation of Taguiwalo, Ubial

By MARIO B. CASAYURAN

Sen. Alan Peter S. Cayetano yesterday breezed through the confirmation process of the powerful bicameral Commission on Appointments (CA) in record time.

Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson, chairman of

the CA Committee on Foreign Affairs, said the decision of his panel to recommend the confirmation of Cayetano was done in less than one minute – the fastest so far on record.

Just after Lacson formally opened the committee public hearing, Isabela Rep. Rodolfo T. Albano III, CA ►9

Cayetano confirmed...

majority leader, presented a motion that the CA committee members agree to recommend Cayetano's confirmation in a CA plenary session early in the afternoon. The committee members then unanimously voted to recommend Cayetano's confirmation.

Cayetano said he was humbled by the unanimous and painless decision of the CA committee and vowed to do his best "para di kayo mapahiya (so I will not be big letdown)."

He said he would do his best to represent the interest of 105 million Filipinos.

In a plenary session presided by Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, concurrent CA chairman, Lacson followed up his committee's swift decision by delivering the shortest nomination of Cayetano.

The bicameral body then unanimously confirmed Cayetano as DFA secretary.

The CA likewise confirmed the appointment of Adnan Villaluna Alonto as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Saudi Arabia; Wilfredo Cunanan Santos as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Islamic Republic of Iran; Bernardita Leonida Catalla as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Lebanon; Jim Gabrillo Minglana as foreign service officer (FSO),

Class I, and Robert Eric Alabado Borje, FSO, Class I.

Taguiwalo

The bicameral body, however, suspended its decision on whether or not to recommend the confirmation of the appointments of Department of Health (DOH) Secretary-designate Paulyn Jean B. Rosell Ubial and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Secretary-designate Judy Marigonen Taguiwalo.

"I am very disappointed by the cancellation of my confirmation hearing. I am willing and prepared to submit to their questioning. It is not clear as to why in my case the CA should continue to delay this process of confirmation or disapproval of my appointment, if such is their wish especially after it was shown that the CA can make a decision in a matter of minutes," Taguiwalo said.

This was the third time that the CA postponed deliberations on Taguiwalo's confirmation.

"This is a form of torture that I am being subjected to by the CA and its members," Taguiwalo said.

"It is not clear as to why the CA should continue to delay this process of confirmation or non-confirmation, if such is their wish. What is clear is that all this has the effect of torture on me," Taguiwalo added.



But Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III, CA Majority Leader, later said the CA Committee on Labor, Employment, and Social Welfare chaired by Rep. Joel Mayo Z. Almario could not resume its hearing on Taguiwalo for lack of time.

Cayetano, meanwhile, thanked some government groups that appeared at the CA committee hearing to show their support for him.

One of them, according to Cayetano, is Mocha Uson, a former model and former official of the Movie Television Review and Classification Board (MRTCB), who was recently appointed as assistant secretary of the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO).

Being the country's top diplomat, Cayetano said he is open to any suggestions and complaints and he would sit down with the DFA top brass to get their inputs and "try to align what President Duterte wants" – that the Philippines should be friends to all and enemies to none.

Cayetano said he would also try to repair any damaged ties with old allies. He did not elaborate.

He also restated the Philippines position – asserting sovereignty over the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and other territories recognized under the Treaty of Paris and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

"Tomorrow (May 18), I will see him (President Duterte)" as he had told

him about maintaining an independent Philippine foreign policy.

Ubial

Addressing Ubial, Sen. Gregorio Honasan, CA Committee on Health chairman, said the suspension of his committee's hearing on the Health secretary-designate was not deliberate.

"The CA is not dragging its feet. Because of the enormity of the responsibility on your shoulders, public interest demands the CA be allowed to deliberate," he said.

The Honasan committee hearing was centered on Rep. Harry Roque, who accused Ubial of incompetence; corruption; wastage of government resources; and persistent lying before House committee hearings on the ₱3-billion dengue vaccination program; neglect of the expanded immunization program at the DOH; refusal to implement President Duterte's aim to have a Universal Health Care law.

Roque also alleged that Ubial also practiced favoritism as shown by the rejection by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of more than 100 of her appointees in the Visayas. He termed these as illegal appointments.

He said Ubial consistently lied on the issue of Zika virus and her shifting of dengue vaccine purchases to pneumonia where the prices went up although they were bought in bulk.

He also took issue with Ubial's policy of pushing for the distribution of

condoms at the high school level to fight AIDS. But this did not take place.

Although Ubial had submitted her answers to Roque's allegations and those of two other oppositors - Rep. Aniceto Bertoz III and lawyer Restituto S. Mendoza - Honasan still wanted Roque and Ubial to publicly state their allegations and responses.

Ubial, a physician in the government service for the past 28 years, was emotional in reading her prepared statement before the Honasan committee.

She vowed not to back down in supporting President Duterte's anti-illegal drugs and anti-corruption campaign.

Ubial also told CA members made up of senators and congressmen that her department practices transparency and efficiency in government service.

Meanwhile, Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said Cayetano is a welcome addition to Duterte's official family.

"Secretary Cayetano's experience and legal acumen shall enrich the leadership of the Department of Foreign Affairs and promote and enhance our international relations with the countries of the world," Abella said in a statement.

Abella also recognized the efforts of former acting Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and the achievements that the DFA reached under Manalo's watch in just a short period of time. (With reports from Ellalyn de Vera Ruiz and Argyll B. Geducos)

18 May 2017



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Army soldier wounded in Kalinga clash with NPA

CAMP BADO DANGWA, La Trinidad, Benguet – A Philippine Army soldier was wounded in an encounter with New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Sitio Saltan, Barangay Balbalasang, Balbalan, Kalinga province Monday morning.

PFC Castro Fagonob Nestor, sustained a gunshot wound and was transported to the Western Kalinga District Hospital, where he was last listed in stable condition.

The Alpha Coy 501 IB, 503rd Brigade of the Philippine Army (PA), under the command of 1st Lt. Noel

Orven Baldonado was on routine patrol when they encountered the NPA rebels, which triggered the skirmish.

The military has yet to confirm whether or not the rebels suffered casualties.

The Balbalan municipal police station and the Regional Public Safety Battalion (RPSB) have established strategic checkpoints in Sitio Camadayan, Poblacion, Balbalan, Kalinga to plug any possible withdrawal points of the withdrawing communist armed group. (Larry P. Fabian)

18 May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 12

NPA frees businessman

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**
and **NONOY E. LACSON**

BUTUAN CITY — After two days in captivity, the businessman in Agusan del Sur, who was abducted in the mining site he was managing, was released Monday afternoon by the custodial force of the New people's Army (NPA).

Chief Supt. Rolando B. Felix, regional director of Northeastern Mindanao Police Regional Office 13 (PRO 13), confirmed the release of Carson Ceasar Lademora, a businessman and miner based in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur, who was forcibly taken by Communist guerillas from a mining site in the hinterlands of Sitio Salcedo, Barangay Bayugan 3 in Rosario, Agusan del Sur last Sunday.

On Tuesday, he was freed at 5 p.m. in the vicinity of Bislig City in Surigao del Sur.

He was freed by his hostage-taker at 5 p.m. on Tuesday at the vicinity of Bislig City, Surigao del Sur.

Rosario town Mayor Jose Cuyos in Rosario, Agusan del Sur and Sangguniang Bayan member Bellarmino Balagot, members of the Crisis Management Committee of Rosario, Agusan del Sur, accompanied the victim back to his residence.

"We acknowledge the cooperation of the security forces, communities, and members of the Crisis Management Committee that led to his successful and safe release," said Felix, who added that no ransom was paid to secure the release of Lademora.

Meanwhile, three NPA members operating in northeastern and western Mindanao surrendered to authorities.

Alvin Ladra, also known as Jason, 24; and Rey Anthony Sedenio Dungog, alias Mark, 19, turned themselves in to soldiers of the 53rd Infantry Battalion operating under the Joint Task Force Zampelan in Guipos, Zamboanga del Sur last Tuesday morning.

Armed Forces of the Philippines, Western Mindanao Command (AFP-

WestMinCom) Spokesman Army Capt. Jo-Ann Petinglay said Calibo and Dungog were members of the Main Regional Guerilla Unit, Western Mindanao Regional Party Committee.

In a report from Camp Bancasi here, Rudy Alimbuyong, who is also known as "Ka Bunso" in the Sandatahang Platoon Pangpropaganda (SPP) 16A, guerilla-front Committee 16 of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-NPA northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee, surrendered to 29th Infantry Battalion commander Lt. Col. Glenn Joy U. Aynera, Tuesday.

Second Lt. Ashley Mae A. Del Rosario, Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer of the Army's 29th Infantry (Matatag) Battalion (29th IB) said Alimbuyong was with the NPA for 13 months, operating in Santiago, Jabonga and Kitcharao, all of Agusan del Norte and was involved in the recent encounters at Barangay Hinimbangan, in Kitcharao town, Agusan del Norte until he decided to surrender.

18 May 2017



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Sayyaf men surrender in groups; 2 more slain

By ROEL PAREÑO and MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

ZAMBOANGA CITY – With the success of military operations and the surrender of more bandits, officials have expressed confidence they can beat the June 30 deadline to finish off the Abu Sayyaf.

"The number of surrenderees is unprecedented," Col. Edgard Arevalo, Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman, said yesterday, noting that bandits were surrendering in groups in Tawi-Tawi and Basilan.

"(Surrenderees) are giving us critical pieces of information such as the location of their cohorts," Arevalo said.

He said military offensives have diminished the strength of the bandits by more than half since February.

Arevalo cited the recent

operation in Basilan that left 20 bandits dead, which he credited to information provided by the surrenderees.

Two more bandits were slain in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Sandah, Patikul, Sulu on Tuesday.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said soldiers recovered three M16 rifles from the fatalities.

Musa Jamil Alsid, 19, and Mohammad Waddang Udding, 20, residents of Barangay

Pitogo, Kalingalang Caluang, surrendered to the 2nd Special Forces Battalion led by Lt. Col. Gaspar Panopio in Patikul Hill, Kalingalang Caluan, Sulu also on Tuesday.

Sobejana said Alsid and Udding, followers of slain Abu Sayyaf leader Alhabsy Misaya, yielded an M16 rifle.

At least 81 Abu Sayyaf bandits have been killed, 50 surrendered and 18 arrested since January, said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Western Mindanao Command chief.

Galvez said 70 firearms were also recovered from the bandits.

Among those recently arrested was Sahid Mohammad Alip, 18, who was driving his motorcycle when pulled over at a military checkpoint in

Barangay Muti in Zamboanga. He reportedly yielded a caliber .45 pistol and ammunition.

Alip is said to be a member of the group led by Jamuil Nasalon, alias Abu Harris, that is operating in Basilan and parts of Zamboanga.

Alip, who has a standing warrant of arrest for murder, was also tagged in the strafing of a Rural Transit bus that wounded eight passengers in Barangay Muti on Feb. 27.

Galvez said military offensives are at "full throttle" with less than two months before the deadline.

He said military operations are also supported by local officials, the Moro National Liberation Front in Sulu and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Basilan. – With Jaime Laude

18 May 2017

Mindanao
Standard

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2 more ASG men killed in Sulu

By Francisco Tuyay and Florante S. Solmerin

TWO more Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed during an encounter with security forces hunting the terrorist group on the outskirts of Patikul, Sulu Monday.

The latest killing of the still unidentified bandits in Sulu brought to four the number of Abu Sayyaf members slain since an 11-man terrorist team infiltrated Bohol province during the Asean Summit.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of Joint Task Force Sulu, said the slaying of the two bandits took place in Patikul Hill at about 7 a.m.

Sobejana said troops from the 10th Infantry Battalion were

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2 more...

From A1

scouring the area when they chance upon some 15 bandits. Two bandits were killed in the ensuing gunfight.

Ground troops recovered the two bodies as well as three rifles.

Sobejana said the fighting lasted for about five minutes before the ASG members fled in different directions.

The latest casualties bring to 81 the number of bandits killed since January, when the military launched a major offensive against the Abu Sayyaf.

Of the 81 bandits killed, 49 were slain in Sulu alone, while the rest were killed in Basilan.

At least 42 bandits were also wounded in various military engagements in the same period.

The government hopes to put an end to the ASG by June.

Military intelligence units, meanwhile, have stepped up operations to locate and arrest terrorists who fled the war zones of Basilan and Sulu, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, commander of the Western Mindanao Command, said Wednesday.

He said seven more members of the Abu Sayyaf Group were cornered by intelligence operatives together with elements of the 111th Marine Company at their hideout last Sunday in Barangay Muti Highway, Zamboanga City.

He said that after validating and confirming intelligence reports about the presence of Abu Sayyaf men, security forces immediately launched an operation to arrest the terrorists. The operation was completed at around 10:05 p.m.

Galvez identified the arrested terrorists as Salip Alip, Benhar Hasin, Bargaen Hasim, Karim Majad, Hadani Odjor, Mohammad Hatuiridin, and Jamric Ismani.

Galvez said the terrorists were about to rob a sari-sari store when the troops arrested them.

"Alip has a warrant of arrest for murder," Wesmincom spokesperson Captain Jo-Ann Petinglay said.

She said Alip was among the men who murdered eight fishermen on Siromon island in Zamboanga City on Jan. 10.

18 May 2017

The Manila Times

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2 Sayyaf bandits slain in Sulu clash

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Two Abu Sayyaf Group members were killed in a brief clash on Wednesday in Sulu.

Army Captain Jo-ann Petinglay, Western Mindanao Command spokesman, said the fighting erupted at Sandah village in Patikul, a known lair of the notorious group allied with the Islamic State.

She said troops from the 10th Infantry Battalion recovered the bodies of the slain terrorists, including three M16 automatic rifles.

A report from Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said "We were

also able to recover the remains of the two Abu Sayyaf bandits who are still yet to be identified. Fortunately, no one was hurt from among our soldiers."

Meanwhile, two bandits - Musa Jamil Alsid, 19, and Mohammad Waddang Udding, 20, - also surrendered on Tuesday to the 2nd Special Forces Battalion under Lt. Col. Gaspar Panopio in Talipao town. They turned over one M16 automatic rifle to the military.

"Both Alsid and Udding are undergoing custodial debriefing," Petinglay said.

AL JACINTO

May 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B1

Abu Sayyaf strength reduced by half: AFP

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday claimed to have reduced the strength of the Abu Sayyaf by about a half, from a high of 500 men, since January when the military waged another intensified campaign against the group which is notorious for kidnapping and beheading.

“Before the campaign started last January this year, we started going after more than 500 Abu Sayyaf members,” said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, commander of the military’s Western Mindanao Command

in Zamboanga City.

“With the support we are receiving from the local officials, and other stakeholders, including the MLF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) and the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front), we have strong reasons to believe that we are only confronting less than half the number of the bandits right now,” said Galvez.

In the past few years and up until December last year, the military placed the Abu Sayyaf strength at about 300 to 400 men, mostly based in the bandits’ bailiwick province of Sulu.

The Abu Sayyaf operates in Sulu and Basilan. It has presence in other parts of Mindanao, including Zamboanga City and Tawi-Tawi, but the number is not that significant.

Government forces launched relentless operations against the Abu Sayyaf in January after Armed Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año set a new deadline of six months to defeat the Abu Sayyaf.

Año’s predecessor, Ricardo Visaya, also vowed to “neutralize” the Abu Sayyaf. Visaya was appointed AFP chief in July last year. He retired last December.

Galvez said it is “just be a matter of time that we will defeat the entire group.”

Wesmincom spokeswoman Capt. Joann Petinglay said the military has neutralized 149 members of the Abu Sayyaf since January. The number is broken down into 81 killed, 50 surrendered, and 18 apprehended.

Petinglay said about a hundred others have left the group because of the relentless military operations.

“Other than that (149), we neutral-

See ABU ► Page B2

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ABU

ized others in some ways -- not through killing, apprehension or surrender. That's why we said we are confronting less than half of the number (500) when we started, that's our estimate," she said.

Asked if the military is confident of defeating the Abu Sayyaf by next month, Petinglay said: "He (Galvez)

is positive that we will reach it with what is happening right now."

Brig Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said there are 80 to 120 Abu Sayyaf members remaining in Sulu.

"There is already a significant reduction of their strength, I am talking about Sulu only," he said.

Early this year, the military said

there are about 200 or 300 Abu Sayyaf members operating in Sulu.

Col. Juvymax Uy, Joint Task Force Basilan commander, cannot be reached for comment but a source said there are about 100 Abu Sayyaf men operating in Basilan, from a high of about 150 to 200 last year.

The source also said it is also possible to defeat the Abu Sayyaf

in Basilan, as the task force has also been making headway in the fight against the group.

Two Abu Sayyaf members were killed in a firefight with government forces in Sulu yesterday, bringing to 49 the number of group members to be slain by the military in the province since February.

Seven others were arrested in Zamboanga City last Sunday.

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12 May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Balikatan improves learning facilities

GUIUAN, Eastern Samar - Balikatan 2017 has given opportunity for Philippine and US troops to do meaningful work, learn from each other, and build personal ties.

The training between the two forces has forged strong ties and relationships to work together in responding to emergencies, said Lt. Col. Ryan Scott, commander of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Task Force.

This year's military exercise constructed a school building, renovated a school stage, and built a water catchment facility at Surok Elementary School. The campus in this town was heavily devas-

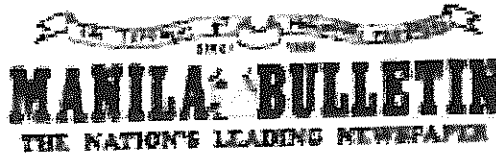
tated by super typhoon Yolanda in 2013.

On Tuesday, the US Armed Forces and the Philippine Army turned over the projects to the local government and schools officials.

"This will help in the cultivation of education ideals for young generation that they will hold on for years to come," said Lt. Col. Scott. "I am confident that if we quickly mitigate future effects of disaster to education because of the Balikatan Exercise."

Surok village, located within the national road leading to the town center, is home to 1,487 residents who suffered the brunt of the super typhoon. (PNA)

18 May 2017



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US plans quick-response team during Philippine disasters

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The United States Armed Forces is looking to send "within 24 hours" different teams to help intervene when a powerful typhoon similar to Yolanda hits the Philippines.

In an interview during the Balika-

tan 2017 Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief/Counterterrorism staff exercise (HADR/CT Staffex) held at the Armed Forces of the Philippines Command General and Staff College (CGSC) in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on Wednesday, Major Andrew Merz, US Exercise Director, CPX Staffex Combined Exercise Control Group BK 33-17, said: "We will provide support that are not available, things like lift support also other forms of logistics support needed for the exercise."

Merz told reporters that in an actual disaster, the US will send several different types of teams down almost immediately within 24 hours.

The US military will also fly in a joint humanitarian assistance team that will coordinate with the Philippine armed forces, he said.

"Oftentimes there are already US military forces in the region like in Japan that can respond quickly within 24 to 72 hours," Merz said.

He also made it clear that the US does not perform direct counter terrorism operations in the Philippines.

"That is not the US role but for this command post exercise the US is here to conduct support to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief that are being conducted by the AFP. The coun-

terterrorism aspect is being played by the AFP battle staff, discussions about the tactics, techniques and procedures regarding counter terrorism," he said.

Merz said the exercise is focused on general tactics, techniques and procedures to develop skills and capabilities that can be applied in every situation.

Lt. Col. Michael Logico, Philippine Exercise Director, CPX-Staffex Combined Exercise Control Group (BK-17), said what they are simulating and training the staff is the crisis action plan on HADR operations.

Logico said the scenario that has been created is a category 5 typhoon that hits Eastern Visayas in May 4.

"So we went through the story line of the Philippines conducting initial response connecting it to a multinational operation," Logico said.

"During the HADR operation we included counterterrorism scenarios that will also be a test for the AFP crisis action planning team so the scenario that we developed is hijacking incident that will disrupt the HADR operation and how the planners can resolve quickly the counter terrorist so that we can move on with the HADR operations," he said.

Logico said the civilians take a primary role in HADR operations.

13 May 2017

BusinessMirror

Page. A3

Senior US officer has good words for Philippine jungle warfare school

THE Philippines has a very good jungle warfare school in Ternate, Cavite, said a ranking American military official involved in the antiterrorism phase of this year's RP-US Exercise Balikatan.

The US Joint Task Force commander, Brig. Gen. John Jansen, said he has observed American and Filipino troops perform counterterrorism drills in Fort Magsaysay, Palayan City, Nueva Ecija, and Ternate, Cavite, a few days ago.

"They train to a very high level that brings in the kind of capabilities that you need to be able to locate, identify, track, close with and do the things that need to be done relative to terrorists," said Jansen, the deputy commander of the US's III Marine Expeditionary Force.

Drills include clearing a town infested with terrorists and disarming improvised bombs and explosives left by lawless elements.

"You've got a very good jungle warfare training school down there. In fact, we think we have a very good jungle warfare training school in Okinawa, Japan. It's very tough, they put you out there with a bottle of water and a Ka-Bar knife. They put you out there and pick you up in seven days kind of thing. Our Marines say yours is tougher here... down there in Ternate," he added.

This year's Balikatan exercises started on May 8 and will wind up on May 19.

US ready for disasters in PHL
AMERICAN forces can deploy units



to help the country's military forces within 24 hours in case a massive disaster hits the Philippines

This was bared by the US exercise director of the command post-staff exercise phase of the war games, Maj. Andrew Merz, in an interview on Wednesday.

The latter was held at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, where the Armed Forces General Headquarters and the office of the Department of National Defense are colocated.

Participating were 75 US military personnel along with 40 CGSC students.

Serving as observers were members of the Australian and Japanese militaries.

"In an actual disaster, the US will send several different type of teams down almost immediately within 24 hours, so not only will the US send their teams, there will also be a joint humanitarian assistance team to start coordinating with the AFP for the initial response," he added.

Merz added the US military will take a supporting role in this event

and will provide support that is not readily available, like lift support.

In Wednesday's Balikatan drills, he said US forces are focused on providing their Filipino counterparts with general tactics, techniques and procedures that can be used in a range of operations, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and counterterrorism.

Scenarios played in the Staffex were HADR, which include responses to a Category 5 typhoon, which battered the Eastern Visayas, with a bit of counterterrorism involving a hijacking incident.

These stimulated events are designed to test the Philippine military's crisis action planning team on how quickly they can resolve the terrorist scenario so they can move on with their HADR missions.

Militant group blasts war games

THE League of Filipino Students (LFS) on Wednesday condemned the holding of RP-US Exercise Balikatan, saying it is proof that the US continues to meddle in the country's affairs under President Duterte's "independent foreign policy".

Balikatan has been disguised as "humanitarian aid and disaster response training" to make it look palatable to the people, LFS stressed.

"With Duterte's interest in forging an alliance with China, the US quickly attempts to reestablish its hold on the Philippines. The challenge by a rising imperialist power compels the US to protect

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and ensure its dominance over the Philippines,” LFS National Spokesman JP Rosos said.

“Army officials from both US and the Philippines feed the public of Balikatan’s importance as a symbol for ‘strengthening’ US-RP relationship, but these excuses won’t mask their true hegemonic purpose.”

Rosos pointed out that tragedies, like Super typhoon Yolanda, are being used by the Armed Forces to justify invasive military training.

“By securing its [foothold] on eastern seaboard, it becomes apparent that it is a vital move for the US to gain advantage over the imperialist tug-of-war for Benham Rise and the whole Philippine territory itself,” he said.

“Duterte has promised to pursue an independent foreign policy by cutting treaties with China similar to the Visiting Forces Agreement. This will not defend Philippine sovereignty, but will further violate it. Now that China, too, is directly asserting itself on the Philippines, it is time to fulfill that promise and assert territorial integrity,” Rosos said.

LFS also called on the youth and the Filipino people to stand firm against foreign intrusion.

“Whether it is the US or China that is imposing itself upon us, we must fight for our national interest with the same fervor. After all, it is only the Filipino people, through collective action, who could free themselves from foreign stranglehold, imperialist exploitation and abuse,” Rosos added. *PNA and Marvyn N. Benaning*

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18 May 2017

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Soldiers use 'Tokhang' for anti-terror drive in Lanao Sur

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

MARAWI CITY — Army soldiers have launched house-to-house searches in this city and elsewhere in Lanao del Sur, applying their own version of the Philippine National Police (PNP) "Tokhang" anti-illegal drugs operation in running after religious extremists in Maranao communities, sources revealed this week.

Some 1,300 soldiers carried out first "Tokhang" mission last May 10 in house-to-house searches along the highway spanning Barangay Bangon in this city and Barangay Toca in Marantao, talking to households and operators of private Islamic schools (madaris), and urging them to shun religious extremists or radicals, sources told the Bulletin in interviews here.

The soldiers, mostly belonging to

103rd Infantry Brigade based here, operated in two groups positioned at Barangays Bangon and Toka from where they hiked from both ends and searched establishments until they met in the midway on the highway, residents said.

"The soldiers were courteous when they visited us. They inquired on the identities of our household members. In my case, they sought information about the specific curriculum of our madrasah and left later peacefully," an alim (Islamic scholar) operating an Arabic school in Maranao, told the Bulletin in Maranao dialect.

"The soldiers told me they were conducting 'tokhang' when I asked about the nature of their visit," the alim said.

"Tokhang" is an acronym for "toktok hangyo," Visayan words for knock and bargain.

PNP Director General Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, who spent two years of college at the Mindanao State University (MSU) main campus here in early 1980s, launched the anti-criminality campaign upon assuming office in 2016, mainly as part of the government's war on drugs.

The launch of the local military's "Tokhang" came three days after residents here reported about the hovering in their communities of drones and aircrafts amid rumors that alleged members of the jihadist Maute group had been sighted in nine suburban barangays in this city.

It came five days before elements of the Army's 6th Infantry Battalion captured 11 suspected Maute group militants at barangay Romagondong in Marogong, a mountainous town in Lanao del Sur, last Monday.

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WestMinCom launches Brigada Masjid ahead of Ramadan

By **NONOY E LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY — The Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom), through its Joint Task Forces launched Tuesday the “Brigada Masjid” which is aimed at assisting Muslim communities in preparing their respective mosques for the upcoming Ramadan season.

Brigada Masjid, which was conceptualized by AFP-WestMinCom Commander Lt Gen Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., was the first to be conducted in Mindanao involving Muslim soldiers and engineers.

The ceremonial launch was held last Tuesday at the Masjid in Barangay Arena Blanco in Zamboanga City.

Attending the ceremony were the Deputy Grand Mufti Sheik Abdul Tanjilil, representatives from the Zamboanga City Government and Office of Muslim Affairs, some Muslim religious leaders, and Islam followers of Barangay Arena Blanco.

Barangay Arena Blanco Chairman Abdulhusin lauded the AFP-WestMinCom for initiating the activity, saying that it was the first time that a Brigada Masjid was launched in Mindanao.

He also said that he was surprised by the undertaking since he did not expect soldiers, generally perceived to be combatants, to help them in the repair and rehabilitation of their mosque, which is a 30-year-old structure and symbol of their religion and faith.

The Deputy Grand Mufti Shiek Tanjilil expressed his support to the endeavor and said that “the mosque is a place where we should love one another and live in harmony. Therefore, keeping it safe and conducive for all Islam believers is important and significant.”

19 May 2017

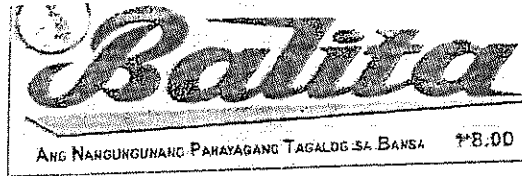
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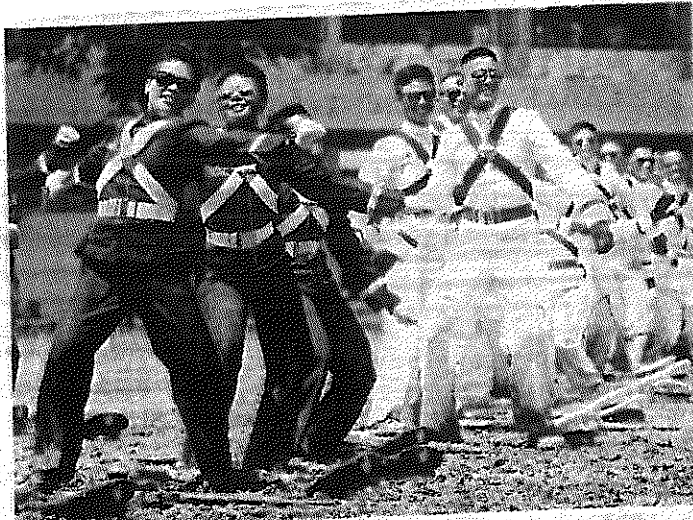


LOOSE FIREARMS - Rifles are in the air as members of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Mababask Class of 2019 perform a silent drill at the University of Southern Philippines in Davao City Wednesday. The PMA cadets are in the city as part of a tour of different military units in the country. (Keith Bacongco)

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GANITO LANG 'YAN... Nagsayaw ang mga kasapi ng Philippine Military Academy Mabalasik Class of 2019 matapos magsagawa ng silent drill sa University of Southeastern Philippines sa Davao City kahapon. Nasa siyudad ang mga kadete bilang bahagi ng paglilibot nila sa iba't ibang kampo ng militar sa bansa.

KEITH BACONGCO

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Navy, PNP hold anti-terror briefings

DUMAGUETE CITY - The Philippine Navy's intelligence group and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Negros Oriental are conducting a joint series of lectures to educate stakeholders, especially in the coastal areas, on the terror threat posed by the Abu Sayyaf and other similar extremist groups.

Acting provincial police director Sr Supt. Henry Biñas said Wednesday the PNP's task was to gather stakeholders in a specific area while naval intelligence personnel handle the briefing and lecture, such as on how to spot a potential terrorist.

Invited to the lectures are barangay officials, local government executives, security guards and other stakeholders identified as "frontliners" in the fight against terrorism, said Biñas.

This is part of the Joint Task Group

Deter's operational plan to ensure that Negros Oriental remains safe amid terror threat reports in the Visayas region, said Sr Supt. Biñas.

Just last week, barangay officials and other stakeholders in the municipality of Siaton attended the intelligence briefing, which also includes lectures on information gathering and reporting procedures, among others, he said.

The police director said Dauin, where majority of the beach resorts visited by tourists were located, had also previously conducted a similar briefing, while Dumaguete and Sibulan were up next.

Sr Supt. Biñas explained this would be a regular activity in areas potentially vulnerable to the terror threat.

Apo Island, famous worldwide as a

dive destination, is among these vulnerable areas but Biñas reiterated that it is safe for local and foreign tourists.

Biñas reiterated that the government security forces remain on full alert level despite Bohol being cleared recently of the Abu Sayyaf threat following the deaths of the last two remaining bandits there.

Joint patrols on land and at sea by the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines continue without let-up even as Sr Supt. Biñas reassured that Negros Oriental was safe from the terror threat.

There is nothing to worry about, he said, despite the travel advisory of the United Kingdom against going to Badian and Dalaguete in nearby Cebu because of the Abu Sayyaf threat, he added. (PNA)

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POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Reserve command, Sir, are we ready?

IN A WARLIKE national emergency, can we mobilize in three days at least a battalion-size fighting force (or about 500 reservists) in each of the 60 or so major provinces with a population of not less than 425,000?

We are asking, because in reaction to last Sunday's *Postscript* where we batted for making mandatory a reformed ROTC for college students, a reader asked what ever happened to the reserve force supposedly drawn from ROTC cadets and military trainees.



We don't know the answer, so we repeat the question in the hope that whoever is the commander of the reserve force, if any, would come out and enlighten the public.

We're keeping the discussion alive to advance the plan of President Rodrigo Duterte to bring back ROTC and/or conscription. As a UP Vanguard asset, this citizen-soldier knows the positive effects of military training on the person and the nation's defense posture.

Our advocacy for ROTC is premised on its first being reformed, considering that it was downgraded years back after being rocked by scandals and complaints of some students and their parents.

On Sept. 1, 1977, an Army Reserve Command was set up, but with the 1986 EDSA Revolt, the unit was swept away with the Marcos martial rule structure. In 1991, a new reservists law (RA 7077) was enacted to reactivate the Reserve Command.

It was reactivated on May 12, 1992, and renamed Army Reserve Command on Oct. 1, 1999. Its mission is to maintain, administer, develop, train, and organize reservist units to help enhance national security and development.

It claims a force of 120,000+ in ready reserve, with 50,000+ on standby. They must be masters of camouflage we hardly see the warm bodies. Last May 12, RESCOM's anniversary, they should have had their presence felt. Unit commanders, if any, should step forward to be recognized.

• Perfect time to reform ROTC

RIGHT now – with a no-nonsense President Duterte running the country – is the perfect time to reform ROTC, make it mandatory in college, and help sharpen our military preparedness.

In case a step is seriously taken in this direction, we want to contribute some thoughts:

Let's change the name ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps), which was only borrowed from the United States. It gives the wrong impression that it is for aspiring commissioned officers. It is not. It is actually a training ground for foot soldiers.

We can call the basic two-year training a Basic Militia or a Basic Reservist course. Those who want to advance to become commissioned officers can take an additional one or two years in an Officers' Candidate Course along with their regular studies for a college degree.

The focus should be the cultivation of Love of Country and Discipline alongside basic military proficiency, including tactics and handling of firearms. The entire scaffolding will collapse without love of country and discipline.

We can integrate a subject on the drug scourge so presented that it will cultivate an aversion to narcotics and other addictive substances associated with vice, and thereby motivate the youth to help a holistic drug drive.

We can also consider a drug test as requirement for military training – not to screen out drug users with the intention of penalizing them, but to wean them away from addiction and start them anew.

The course should not be all marching and saluting, although drills have proven instructive values. Community service and disaster rescue/rehab should be woven into the program.

In my simplified outlook, I would be happy to see trainees learn these Basic 3S's: **Stand steady, Say sir, Shoot straight.** If they can master those three building blocks, anything beyond will be a bonus.

The way a soldier or a policeman wears his uniform, or even by the way he stands or salutes, tells much about his state of discipline and his capacity to help fellow Filipinos.

• ROTC must live down past scandals

ASIDE from reader Marino Dizon's asking what ever happened to the reserve force, we received more feedback, mostly negative. Samples:

Edwin Amoranto: Reform ROTC before putting it back. ROTC during my time was useless. It was just marching and formation. A number of cadets were able to handle the Garand rifles (I hope not the Garand again today.) ROTC before was a waste of time. The program did not teach us how to defend the country. It should focus on war games, targeting the enemy, and survival with minimal means on hand. Those who underwent ROTC before cannot defend the country.

Dickson Que (recalling his Mapúa days in 1968-70): In my college years, ROTC was a training ground for corruption of cadets by the military officers overseeing the program. At the end of the semester, cadets went to the ROTC office to verify their attendance and grade. One who has no absences would find 2 or 3 absences in their record and money is demanded to remove the absences. I was a victim year in and year out. The drawers of cadet officers were full of money. During exams, payment was collected from each cadet so the answers would be given to him. The only training we gained was marching around with wooden rifles.

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Dr. Benjamin G. Tayabas, former president of Paman-tasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and Universidad de Manila. The National Service Training Program at the college level has these options: ROTC, civic welfare training service (CWTS), and literacy training service (LTS). Prior to the NSTP, the only mandatory military training was basic/advance ROTC.

Over the years, more students chose CWTS or LTS. The pool of ROTC graduates going into active service or a reservist group has declined. While todate, there is no definitive study on the impact of CWTS or LTS vis-a-vis its objectives, ROTC produces the trained manpower for military, law enforcement (police), and citizen's army reserve which our country needs.

A reformed and revitalized ROTC program must be mandatory beginning this school year. I unequivocally support President Duterte's marching orders for a strong ROTC for our youth.

* * *
ADVISORY: *Postscript* archives can be accessed at www.manilamail.com. Follow us on *Twitter* as @FD-Pascual. Email feedback to fdp333@yahoo.com

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12 May 2017

Manila
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Balikatan on life support

THE Philippines and the United States are now in the middle of a watered-down Balikatan exercise. Unlike in previous years when the exercise was conducted with much fanfare and were centered on seaborne operations against an imaginary enemy, this year's Balikatan is merely a training exercises for disaster relief operations. That it is being conducted at all must be the handiwork of the leadership of the President's national security team.

The aversion of the President to the exercise is such that he never attended any of the opening ceremonies of the two Balikatans under his administration. This year's Balikatan is actually no longer a military exercise in strict military terms but a disaster relief exercise whatever that means. We have to give credit to the planners of this year's exercise in coming up with activities that might be categorized as a military exercise.

But the Balikatan is on life support and might not last much longer. How much longer it will continue is hard to say. The President, it seems, is bent on moving the country towards China. In the last few months, the Russian navy made two port visits to Manila and the President's visit to the ships were much publicized. The Chinese navy also made a port call in Davao upon the invitation of the President and was honored with a briefing when he boarded the Chinese navy vessels remarking that the ship is so modern that it is even carpeted. He has now suggested that the Philippines and China conduct a joint military exercise which Supreme Court Justice Antonio Corpus pointed could be problematic and impractical. As the Justice pointed out, how would the public view a joint military exercise with a country that has already occupied part of our territory but could it become a reality?

The conventional wisdom would suggest no, but President Duterte has shown that he is a maverick and does not care much about conventions. So, let us not be too sure. Besides,

Turn to A5

Balikatan...

From A4

the joint military exercise that he wants is an anti-terrorism exercise to be conducted somewhere in the Sulu Sea.

It is a scenario that is a little difficult to explain—but who would have thought that we would even be talking about it now? Just a year ago, our government was not even talking to China. That was clearly shown in the frosty interaction between former President Aquino and Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Apec conference in Manila last year.

Today, it is a complete turnaround. We are now being offered a concessional loan of \$500 million to buy Chinese weapons. The Chinese also promised \$24 billion in development assistance and there is now a distinct possibility of jointly developing the South China Sea even most of the area is located within our exclusive economic zone.

A new era in foreign relations has truly descended upon us. It is being masterminded by a President with very limited experience in foreign relations. This however, is not unheard of. There have been heads of state with little experience in foreign relations but went on to do wonders for their countries.

It will remain to be seen whether our President can pull it off or be swallowed by an emerging super power with big ambitions to supplant the United States and break out into the vast Pacific Ocean because to China, the South China Sea is just a stepping stone to the Pacific Ocean.

Also, the President has consistently said that he is not giving up Panatag Shoal to the Chinese. But sometimes, countries are judged more on what they do than what they say. It might be that in the future, if the country decides to pursue the case more aggressively, our traditional allies might not be

too willing to help.

Our country engages in foreign relations to promote our national interests. As they say in diplomacy, there is no such thing as permanent friends, only permanent interests. This is why it was a little surprising to read a headline in one of the broadsheets quoting President Duterte as saying that China is going to help us without any conditions. I do not know of any such thing. Besides, the billions of dollars in concessional loans are not free. The country will have to pay the Chinese back. Unlike the concessional loans we get from Japan wherein the conditions are clearly stated, we still do not know the terms attached to the Chinese loans. For instance, what would be the interest rate? Will the arrangement be like the unimplemented north rail project where we borrowed \$500 million but the loan has now ballooned to something like \$800 million that the

government is now paying?

A lot therefore is still unknown. All we know are the huge amounts and the projects that will be financed. In addition, not all projects have been studied and planned. So, it will take some time for the projects to start. We might not even see them at all during the term of President Duterte. Before we know it, a new president will be inaugurated and might have other ideas in mind. We just do not know. Simply put, the amount of money being mentioned to finance all these projects under the BBB program is so dizzying that if something goes wrong, it could put the country in debt for generations to come. Already, there are some in government calling for the deficit to exceed the prudent figure of 3 percent of the national budget yet we have not seen many huge projects getting started. Maybe we should control our exuberance and be careful.

18 May 2017

NGAYON
Magandang balita sa ngayon

Pahina. 4



Sayang lang ang oras sa peace talks

HINDI ko maintindihan kung bakit pinagpipilitan ni President Digong na makipagkasundo sa mga rebeldeng komunista. Sinabi ko na noon pa na walang kahihinatnan ang peace talks na 'yan dahil traidor ang CPP-NPA. Kung talagang gusto ng mga komunista ng peace talks, dapat nakikiisa sila sa gobyerno. Hindi 'yung kasagsagan ng usapang pangkapayapaan, 'yung kanilang mga galamay pumapatay ng mga tropa ng gobyerno, nagsusunog ng mga bus at ang pinakabago nangidnap ng minero sa Agusan del Sur.

Hindi ako sang-ayon sa ginawa ni Digong na nagpalaya ng mga rebeldeng komunista sa Bilibid. Dinagdagan lang niya ang mga taong kaaway ng gobyerno dahil itong mga taong lumaya sa bilangguan ay babalik sa bundok. "Batuhin mo sila ng tinapay at babatuhin ka nila ng bato." 'Yung mga makakaliwa na nasa Gabinete sana man lang ay tulungan ang gobyerno na ipalaganap ang kapayapaan sa bansa. Para wala man lang yatang nangyari. Si President Digong lang naman yata ang may gusto ng peace talks dahil kung talagang gusto ng mga komunista ng peace talks sana noon pa ilang beses nang pabalik-balik ang mga Gabinete ni Digong para sa mga peace talk pero umuuwi silang nganga walang magandang nangyari.

Puwede silang maihalintulad sa mga teroristang Abu-Sayyaf, nag-umpisa na silang kumidnap ng mga sibilyan at nanghihingi ng ransom money. Ngayon pa ba sila sasali sa peace talk na gusto ni Digong eh natuto na silang magdelehensiya ng madaling pagkaki-taan. Kaya itong peace talk na ito ay pagsasayang lang ng oras at panahon.

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

ONLINE NEWS

18 MAY 2017

COLLABORATION | WestMinCom launches Brigada Masjid before Ramadan

Reported by Alvin Santiago on May 17, 2017 at 9:12 AM

HEADQUARTERS WESTERN MINDANAO COMMAND, Camp Navarro, Calarian, Zamboanga City – (DWDD) – In collaboration with the Muslim leaders, local officials, Ulama and other stakeholders, the Western Mindanao Command through its Joint Task Forces and the PNP launched the Brigada Masjid within the whole area of Western Mindanao today (May 16) to assist our Muslim brothers and sisters in preparing the mosques for the upcoming Ramadan.

The Brigada Masjid, which was conceptualized by Lieutenant General Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., Commander of the WestMinCom, is the first of its kind to be conducted in Mindanao involving Muslim soldiers and engineers.

The ceremonial launching was held in a 30 year old Masjid in Barangay Arena Blanco in Zamboanga City.

Attending the ceremony were the Deputy Grand Mufti Sheik Abdul Tanjillil; a representative of the Zamboanga City Government; an envoy from the Muslim Affairs; and the Muslim religious leaders, and Islam followers of Brgy Arena Blanco.

Honorable Abdulhusin, the Brgy Chairman of the place expressed his gratitude to the WestMinCom Commander for initiating the activity, saying this was the first time that the Brigada Masjid was launched in Mindanao. He also said that he was surprised of the endeavor since he did not expect soldiers whom they only perceive as combatants help them in the repair of an important structure and symbol for their religion and that is the mosque.

The Deputy Grand Mufti Shiek Tanjilil expressed his support to the endeavour saying "The mosque is a place where we should love one another and live in harmony. Therefore, keeping it safe and conducive for all Islam believers is important and significant.

* He also mentioned about some Muslim brothers who use religion for their own interest and for propagating terrorism. He emphasized that Islam never taught Terrorism as part of its preachings, therefore must be avoided.



The WestMinCom chief who sees the activity as a good venue to promote cultural understanding and harmony felt elated with the comments he heard from the community.

It is also his intent that Brigada Masjid be institutionalize in the AFP as a regular activity yearly before Ramadan season starts.

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"We are one. Christians and Muslims, in working for peace and development in Mindanao amid the diversity in culture and beliefs. The men and women of the armed forces join you as you prepare for the coming of the Ramadan," said Lieutenant General Carlito G Galvez, Jr, Commander of the Western Mindanao Command.

All units under the WestMinCom will adapt a mosque within their respective area of operations and help the Muslim brothers and sisters in cleaning, repairing, and repainting of said mosques.

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BK 17 | Bilateral Service Inter-operability in Calayan Island

By: Arwin Santiago | July 11, 2017 | 10:00 AM

CAMP GEN EMILIO AGUINALDO, Quezon City (DWDD) – “We conducted one of the important components of this year’s balikatan exercises at Calayan Island, in the province of Cagayan, an island municipality where typhoon frequently visits.”

According to Major Celeste Frank Sayson, spokesman BK17, the exercise is one of the few peculiar events of BK2017 for it involves **Combined Army Forces (CARFOR)** between PH and US. The exercise is called **Bilateral Service Interoperability Event** of our land base forces. The exercise was a culmination of a series of **Subject Matter Expert Exchanges Simulations** conducted by CaRFOR at various sites like headquarters 5th Infantry Division in Upo Isabela, and Sta Ana Cagayan and some areas of 7th Infantry Division. The event was participated by Calayan LGU, local populace, municipal disaster response teams, and US and PH forces coming from the Army of both forces. It was participated by more than 200 individuals. US Black Hawk helicopters were used during the air evacuation scenarios.

This event is one of the AFP’s training objectives for BK17, to prepare our ground troops in extreme scenarios and work together with local populace in emergency responses, especially in natural disasters. – **BK17 / MCAG**

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