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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

31 October 2017

Tuesday

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

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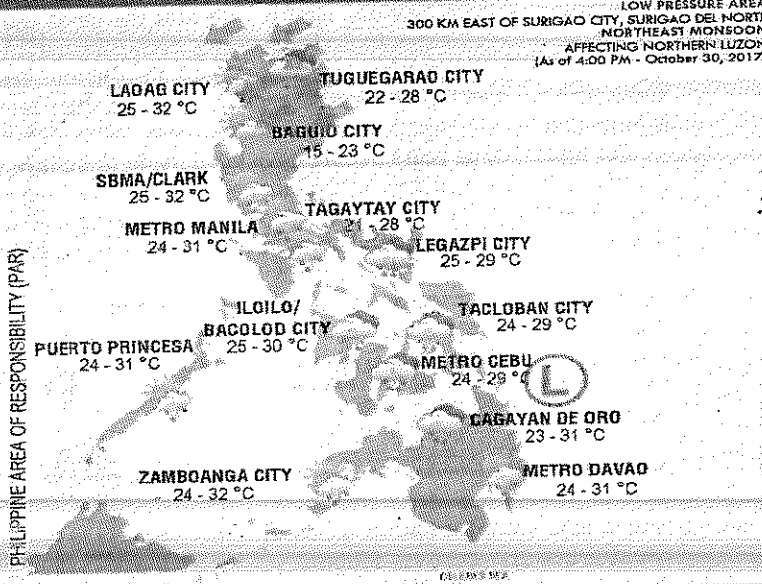
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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | OCTOBER 31, 2017 | TUESDAY


LOW PRESSURE AREA
300 KM EAST OF SURIGAO CITY, SURIGAO DEL NORTE
NORTHEAST MONSOON
AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON
(As of 4:00 PM - October 30, 2017)




PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:51 AM	5:28 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
2:39 PM	1:56 AM
FIRST QUARTER OCT 25 8:22 AM	FULL MOON NOV 4 1:23 PM
LOW TIDE 12:35 PM 0.10 Meter	HIGH TIDE MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 3:15 AM 0.80 Meter
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers	
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms	
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms	
Light rains	

OCT 31		NOV 1		NOV 2	
METRO MANILA	24 - 30 °C	25 - 31 °C	TAGAYTAY	20 - 27 °C	20 - 27 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 - 29 °C	23 - 30 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 29 °C	25 - 31 °C
LADAG	24 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 23 °C	15 - 23 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	25 - 29 °C	25 - 30 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	25 - 32 °C	25 - 31 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 30 °C	25 - 32 °C
			TACLOBAN	24 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
			CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 - 31 °C	23 - 32 °C
			METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
			ZAMBOANGA	24 - 31 °C	24 - 33 °C



MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM



WEEKDAYS
6 AM, 6:30 PM & 9 PM
WEEKENDS
6 AM

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Japan vows maximum aid for Marawi rehab

TOKYO – Japan yesterday promised to help the Philippines rebuild conflict-torn Marawi City as well as other infrastructure in a deepening of ties to counter China's regional influence.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made the pledge in a joint statement with President Duterte following talks here.

Duterte on Oct. 23 announced the end of five months of military operations in Marawi held by Islamic State-inspired terrorists in a conflict that destroyed much of the city's center and displaced some 300,000 people.

"The government of Japan recognizes that rehabilitation and reconstruction of the city of Marawi is extremely important," the joint statement declared. "We will provide maximum support to the restoration and reconstruction of Marawi City and we will strengthen support of Mindanao toward the establishment of an autonomous government."

Japan also offered to help with other projects ranging from rail infrastructure to river defenses, including a possible 600-billion-yen loan to help fund development of a subway in Manila.

The meeting was an opportunity for Abe to discuss security in Asia ahead of key regional meetings beginning with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

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Japan From Page 1

gathering in Vietnam in November.

"I confirmed with President Duterte that we are both maritime nations sharing basic values and strategic interests," Abe said.

Duterte thanked Abe for supporting the Philippines' efforts to address terrorism and violent extremism and his readiness to provide timely assistance to

residents affected by the Marawi crisis.

"It is, therefore, fitting and proper, that after the liberation of Marawi City from the grip of Maute terrorists, my first official visit overseas takes place in Japan - a true friend who has stood squarely behind the Philippines in my country's onward advance (to) greater peace, progress and prosperity," Duterte said.

The two countries, Abe said, would address common issues including North Korea and "a free and open Indo-Pacific"

Japan is concerned about China's growing power in the South China Sea and sees cooperation with the Philippines, which lies on the waterway's eastern side, as key in helping prevent Beijing's influence spreading into the western Pacific.

Duterte, unlike his predecessor Benigno Aquino III, has been less critical of Beijing's island building in the South China Sea. The Philippine leader is set to return to Manila today after an audience

with the Japanese emperor.

Abe and Duterte will travel to Vietnam for the two-day APEC meeting from Nov. 11, which US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping will attend.

Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other countries in the region will meet again in the Philippines after the APEC gathering for the ASEAN and East Asia summits that will be chaired by Duterte. - With Reuters

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SSS EXECES PROBED FOR PROFITEERING

SSS Chair Amado Valdez has ordered an investigation of his chief investment manager and three others who allegedly made money from buying and selling stocks for their personal accounts using brokers managing the pension fund's portfolio.

By Daxim L. Lucas
@daxing

Is the chief investment manager of the Social Security System (SSS) illegally profiting from his position by trading stocks for their personal accounts using the same stockbrokers who manage the portfolio of the state-administered pension fund?

SSS Commissioner Jose Gabriel "Pompee" La Viña thinks so, and he has filed a complaint against Rizaldy Capulong, the fund's executive vice president for investments, and three other officers whom he accused of "serious dishonesty and grave misconduct."

La Viña—known more prominently as the social media manager

of the 2016 election campaign of President Duterte—leveled the accusations against the SSS officials in an interview with the Inquirer, shortly after making the allegations public in a televised appearance on ABS-CBN News Channel on Monday morning.

SSS Chair Amado Valdez told the Inquirer that the issue was being in-

vestigated by the Social Security Commission, but assured the public that members' funds were not jeopardized by the alleged malfeasance.

"We also want to know whether there's any outside influence involved," Valdez added.

The Inquirer tried to contact Capulong, but he had yet to reply as of press time.

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FROM A

OFFICE OF THE

"He's a bright guy and I feel sad," La Viña said of the SSS chief investment officer. "But it's my job. And I have reports that he engaged in the same thing."

The alleged malfeasance in the SSS comes as the pension fund seeks to increase next year the rate of contribution of members from the current 11 percent to over 12.5 percent of the monthly salary credit to enable it to cover higher pensions of retirees.

3 others named in complaint

Apart from Capulong, included in his complaint filed with the Social Security Commission were equities investment division chief Reginald Candelaria, equities product development head Ernesto Francisco Jr. and chief actuary George Ongkeko Jr.

"The first problem is that three guys have a major role in approving stockbrokers and allocating trades," La Viña said.

He noted that accrediting stockbrokers for the SSS gave the three officials a large degree of leverage with brokerage houses that were lobbying for the coveted account.

The SSS manages almost P500 billion in assets, accumulated through the mandatory monthly contributions of its 35 million members who are employees in the private sector.

Up to 30 percent of the reserve fund can be invested in the equities market, subject to strict criteria set by the fund's investment oversight committee that La Viña chairs.

He explained that the previous SSS administration had tried to head off potential abuses by officials in the fund's investments unit by requiring them to declare all their investments and having these approved by their superiors.

"The previous Social Security Commission tried to con-



SSS Commissioner Jose Gabriel "Pompee" La Viña

trol the trading. SSS said you can still trade, but you need to get an endorsement from your immediate supervisor," La Viña said.

He said Candelaria and Francisco endorsed each other's stock purchases, while Capulong approved them.

La Viña noted, however, that these stock market trades—which yielded substantial profits for Candelaria and Francisco—were executed by a broker who was also accredited to handle the SSS portfolio.

And more critically, the three officials have a direct hand in allocating trades to the many stockbrokers accredited with the pension fund, thus being able to decide which brokerage would enjoy the commissions from the SSS buying and selling of shares on the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Conflict of interest

"They used an SSS-accredited broker for their own [personal] trades," La Viña said. "It's a conflict of interest. And our rules [define] conflict of interest as 'real or apparent' on its face."

La Viña pointed out that

one stockbroker had claimed to serve only high net worth individuals and corporate accounts, but were found to have been the conduit for the trades of these SSS officials.

"Tell me, are these high net worth individuals?" he asked.

IPOs, high returns

The three officials even received coveted allocations for shares of companies in the initial public offering (IPO) stage, which allowed them to make returns of 15 percent in one to two weeks, according to La Viña.

Opportunities for returns like this should have been brought before the SSS so that the members' funds could have been invested as well, he said.

"These opportunities belong to the SSS. They don't belong to you. You have a duty to present the opportunity to the commission," he said.

La Viña said Ongkeko, who is in charge of keeping tabs on the SSS' investment managers, failed to provide him with complete records of the trading activities of the key officials.

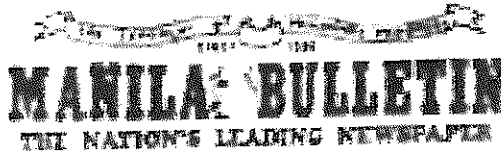
Ongkeko, he said, was grossly negligent for failing to fulfill this duty. INQ

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF - EMBASSY SECURE

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• 79 troopers back from Marawi

By FRANCO G. REGALA
FORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija
– At least 79 soldiers of the 72nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) who battled Maute Group gunmen in Marawi City were given a hero's welcome by Maj. Gen. Fellmon T. Santos, 7th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army (7ID-PA) commander, in this camp recently. Santos said the troops served as rear defenders during the Marawi City battle. "They've played their role, they've played it well," said Santos, underscoring the importance of preventing enemy reinforcements. 1Lt. Beethoven Cabanlit, 7th ID commander, praised the troopers for returning home safe. "They are here intact. No more, no less." (Franco G. Regala)

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More troops reunited with families

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who defeated the Islamic State-inspired Maute terrorists in Marawi City after five months of fighting returned to Manila yesterday to be with their families for Christmas.

More than 500 sailors, Marines and Seals of the Philippine Navy were welcomed as heroes by their spouses, children and parents.

The soldiers were honored in recognition of their heroism followed by a motorcade from Manila's Pier 13 to the Marine Base at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig.

Members of the Fleet Marine contingent deployed in the Naval Forces Western Mindanao (NFWM) were also received by Philippine Navy Flag Officer In Command Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado during the ceremony.

Mercado said the gallant men and women of the Philippine Navy who fought in Marawi would be given much-needed rest.

"After this heroes' welcome, we will be giving them a short break to be with their families," he said.

"They are in high spirits, having successfully completed their mission in Marawi City," Mercado added.

He said the Philippine Navy alone suffered 36 casualties and over 300 injuries during the Marawi siege.

The Philippine Navy spent nearly P500 million in ammunition and fuel for its naval and delivery operations during the five-month Marawi siege.

Mercado said the battle for Marawi was costly.

In Zamboanga City, the military gave a heroes' welcome to troops who were among the composite team that killed Is-

nilon Hapilon and Omar Maute.

The Fleet Marines and sailors were received by NFWM commander Rear Admiral Rene Medina and their families upon their arrival from Iligan City.

Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. also received the contingents of the Army Scout Ranger who were deployed in Marawi.

Galvez commended the soldiers for liberating Marawi from terrorists.

Families of the soldiers and civilians showered the Marawi troopers with confetti and balloons.

Thousands joined a symbolic prayer at the Marawi City hall to highlight its liberation from the Maute terrorists.

The event was led by Mayor Majul Gandamra, officials of the Lanao del Sur provincial government, Gov. Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous

Region in Muslim Mindanao and representatives from the Wesmincom.

Senators to visit Marawi

The government can rebuild the devastated Marawi into a model city of Mindanao with proper planning, sufficient

funding and political will, Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito said yesterday.

Ejercito, chairman of the Senate committee on urban planning and housing, said he and other members of the panel would visit Marawi along with experts to come up with a master plan to rebuild

the city.

Joining them will be Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who leads the inter-agency task force on the rehabilitation of Marawi, architect and urban planner Felino Palafox Jr. and other experts.

- With Roel Pareño, John Unson, Paolo Romero

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500 NAVY, MARINE TROOPS GET HEROES' WELCOME

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

Cpl. Reginald Dangani was fighting pro-Islamic State (IS) terrorists in Marawi City when his youngest daughter, Zia, was born.

His homecoming on Monday morning was a relief to his wife, Zara, and his other children: He was safe and they would spend Christmas together.

"It was so hard to be away from them. Every day, I wondered if I would be able to go home alive. My family was always on my mind," Dangani said.

Heroes' welcome

Dangani was one of more than 500 Navy and Marine troops who arrived at Manila South Harbor to a heroes' welcome organized by the Philippine Navy at its headquarters in Manila.

The heroes—including the Navy SEALs and aviators—were transported from

Iligan City to Manila on the BRP Tarlac.

Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado, the Navy's flag officer in command, lauded the troops as heroes, pointing out that the success of the military over the terrorists in Marawi was due to their bravery.

Combat operations ceased last week, after five months of battle against Maute group and Abu Sayyaf terrorists who seized large parts of Marawi on May 23 to establish an IS enclave in Southeast Asia.

Of the 165 soldiers and policemen killed in the clashes, 36 were from the Navy while more than 300 Navy personnel were wounded.

"Allow me to share with you, half of the success of the Marawi battle were the significant contributions by these sailors and Marines," Mercado said in his speech.

What they did in the war

He cited the work of intelligence operatives, who gave vital information on the leaders

of the Maute terrorist group, as well as the efforts of the Marine Battalion Landing Team, the Marine Special Operations Group and the Naval Special Operations Group who were among the first responders.

Mercado said it was the Marines who retook from the terrorists three bridges—in the villages of Mapandi, Bangolo and Masiu—that were critical to access to the main battle zone in Marawi.

The Navy's pilots, on the other hand, conducted aerial surveillance, airstrikes on the enemy positions, with the Naval Special Operations Group securing Lake Lanao.

The Navy's ships—the BRP Tarlac and BRP Davao del Sur—transported logistics and troops to Marawi.

"It is my honor to personally express my deepest admiration and gratitude to our heroes. We prepared for this day because they truly deserve a heroes' welcome for their return," Mercado said.

After a brief program at

Manila South Harbor, the troops were taken on a motorcade to Philippine Marines headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

So difficult

Dangani, a Marine and resident of Makati City, said being away from his family for so long was more difficult than to be in the heat of the war.

"It was so hard to be away from them, my children are still too young. But we all pulled through it," he said, adding that he was looking forward to spending Christmas with his family.

His wife was beaming with pride for her husband, who was feted as a hero.

"We are very proud and relieved that he was able to come home safely," Zara said. INQ



WATCH: PH Navy gives heroes' welcome to returning forces from Marawi
<http://inq.news/HeroesWelcome>



HOME IS THE SOLDIER - Cpl. Reginald Dangani, who fought in Marawi City, says he is looking forward to spending Christmas with his 4-month-old daughter, Zia, and his family. —**MARIANNE BERMUDEZ**

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'Rescue remaining Sayyaf captives'

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Newly installed Armed Forces chief Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero has ordered government troops in Sulu to step up operations to rescue the remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf.

Guerrero issued the directive during his first visit as military chief to

the Western Mindanao Command in this city yesterday, Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said.

Sobejana said soldiers who fought in Marawi would be redeployed in Sulu for the operations.

Emerging from a closed-door briefing, Guerrero confirmed to journalists his order to resolve kidnappings

perpetrated by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu.

Guerrero said he did not give a deadline, "but the order is at the soonest possible time."

"We are just making sure we have the necessary intelligence reports for us to implement the operations.

The safety of all the hostages is the paramount consideration," he said.

Six Vietnamese, five

Indonesians, a Dutch man and eight Filipinos remain in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

Guerrero gave assurance that soldiers would continue to conduct maritime patrols to prevent the bandits from escaping.

He also stressed the need for joint Marine, Navy, Air Force and Army operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

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MARILIA BULLETIN

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2 Indonesian Navy ships arrive in GenSan for goodwill visit

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Two Indonesian ships, the Kri Sultan Hasanuddin-366 and the Kri Sultan Iskandar-367, arrived on Sunday at the Makar Wharf in General Santos City as part of a goodwill visit to the Philippines.

Kri Sultan Hasanuddin is being skippered by Lt. Col. Bina Irawan Marpaung, while Kri Sultan Iskandar has Lt. Col. Andri Kristianto at the helm.

The Indonesian sailors were welcomed by the Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao, led by the Chief of Staff of the Command, Captain Aldrin B. Doctor.

Also welcoming the two ships are Indonesian Consul General Berlian Napitupulu, General Santos City Vice Mayor Shirlyn Nograles, acting General Santos Police Office chief Police Senior Supt. Romeo Ruel Berango, and the 74th Naval Group chief Lt. Col. Alano S. Abdulhalim.

In a press briefing, Napitupulu cited the importance of the visit as it will forge deeper mutual understanding between the two navies and security personnel of the two countries through active participation in upcoming activities like the Goodwill Games and Dinner Reception.

He also emphasized the importance of discovering tourism and potential trade partnerships between the Philippines and Indonesia.

Part of the goodwill visit is the public viewing of the two vessels particularly among locals of General Santos City today (October 31) from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the Makar Wharf.

The vessels will depart tomorrow (November 1) after a simple send-off ceremony prepared by the Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao.

Contact: Tel. No. (02) 645-9155 Local 5265, 5295

Duterte to lawmakers: Assure immediate BBL passage

DAVAO CITY—President Duterte is urging Congress to act “expeditiously” on the approval of the Bangsamoro basic law (BBL), warning that more incidents similar to the Marawi siege may be forthcoming in Mindanao if lawmakers dilly-dally on the passage of the measure.

“If they [lawmakers] do not act on it [BBL] expeditiously enough, I think we will be headed for trouble. We must continue to talk and urge Congress to fast-track it because they [the Moro people] are getting impatient,” he said at a news conference last Sunday night at the Davao International Airport shortly before he took off for his second visit to Japan.

He said the government has to continue talking with the two Moro revolutionary fronts—the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)—but hoped “Congress would expedite [BBL’s] approval.”

Duterte said the MNLF and the MILF have agreed to work for a federal setup as he also disclosed government’s willingness “to grant them the territories they want, and

the kind of framework of governance that they want.”

“I told them [MILF and MNLF] we have to continue negotiating with the peace, and that we would comply on the outside of what we have committed. That is our commitment to the Moro fronts,” he said.

The President also assured of government commitment to pursue the rehabilitation of Marawi City, saying that at least two powerhouse countries, Japan and China, have already gave their commitment of support.

Duterte said that, while the issue of the North Korean nuclear threat and the terror threats to regional security would “occupy much space” in his talk with Japan’s recently elected Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, he said Japan’s commitment to rehabilitate Marawi City would be discussed.

“I think the damage alone and

the dimension of the destruction would tell us, and Japan, that we would need their very best,” Duterte said. He said though, that, “I do not doubt that Japan can’t graciously grant us the help. We would not expect Japan to solve all the rest, but I would see significant assistance considering, [as] I said, the dimension of the destruction.”

China, the President said, has dispatched its construction equipment and would be arriving soon in the devastated city.

Prim and proper

EXPECT Duterte to be prim and proper when he convenes with his United States counterpart, Donald J. Trump, in November, as the President has expressed willingness to tone down his language just to meet halfway with Washington’s leader.

According to Duterte, he will “deal with Trump in the most righteous way” when they meet in November for a bilateral talk. Trump is stopping over Manila on November 12 for the 31st Asean summit, which the Philippines is hosting.

“I would deal with President Trump in the most righteous way, welcome him as an important leader. I would have to also listen to him and what he has to say,” the President said in an interview with reporters also last Sunday night.

“My responses would be calibrating of what he would ask me,”

Duterte added.

The President expressed his admiration for Trump, saying he and the US leader moves their mouth in the "same cadence."

Asked what he will bring up with Trump in their bilateral meeting, Duterte said he will raise the usual matters of convergence between Manila and Washington. "It would be terrorism, cooperation between the two countries, the fight against illegal drugs and all of these..." the Chief Executive said.

Unlike former US President Barack Obama, Trump has backed Duterte's war on drugs, which has reportedly claimed thousands of lives in police operations and vigilante-style killings. In fact, the US leader has called the President on April 29 after the latter hosted the 30th Asean summit.

The two leaders have conveyed similar views on the security situation in the Korean Peninsula, with Trump aiming to bring North Korea to its knees if it does not stop its nuclear program and Duterte condemning Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong Un for "playing with dangerous toys."

The President, however, said he believes that the North Korean leader could be persuaded to "tone down, or stand down" in its nuclear-arms buildup "if he [Kim] could be also assured that no one is really planning to remove him."

The problem is that "nobody is talking to him. If somebody could just reach him out, talk to him and say something like, "My friend, why just not join me at the table", and we just have to talk about this," he added.

"It would be good if the US, Japan and South Korea and Mr. Kim talk, and to convince him to sit down in a round table and to tell him that nobody is interested to get him out, and that there will be no war, if he would just tone down and stand down, and stop the threats," Duterte said.

Senators' expectations

SENATORS are keenly expecting Japan's renewed commitment to boost Philippine development efforts when the President and his delegation meet with top Japanese officials during a brief visit. Senate President Aquilino L. Pimentel III indicated on Monday that he has yet to confirm if Japan will also bare plans to provide new naval-patrol vessels to help the Armed Forces of the Philippines protect borders in the West Philippine Sea.

"I have no idea [yet] what assistance Japan intends to give the Philippines," Pimentel said, even as he admitted expectations of a sizeable Japanese funding assistance resulting from Duterte's visit to Tokyo. "What I monitored is their commitment of ¥1 trillion of "assistance" in the next five years."

Senate Majority Leader Vicente C. Sotto III told the BUSINESSMIRROR he, too, expects Japan to reaffirm support for the Philippine Armed Forces border-defense capabilities. "Yes, if necessary," Sotto said, adding: "We have very good trade and security relationships with Japan."

Sen. Joseph Victor G. Ejercito, who joined the Philippine delegation for the Japan mission, said he is also looking forward to Japan's funding commitment to help modernize the Philippine railways system.

Ejercito, in a text message to the BUSINESSMIRROR, said the funding assistance could come "from Jica [Japan International Cooperation Agency] ODA [official development assistance]."

In an earlier interview, Ejercito admitted he was hoping to bring home the good news about funding source for the railway-modernization program. Before he left for Japan, Ejercito said he was upbeat about the Tokyo trip telling reporters he was likely invited to join the delegation to witness signing of documents, likely to include "my railways advocacy."

"So let us hope for the best," Ejercito told reporters, voicing aspirations that funding for the "subway and other railway projects will already be signed." *Manuel T. Cayon, Elijah Felice E. Rosales and Butch Fernandez*

31 October 2017

Pahina. 2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

BBL 'pag hindi naipasa

BABALA NI DUTERTE: MAGKAKAGULO

POSIBLENG magkagulo sa sandaling hindi mapasa ang panukalang Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"If we do not act on it (the BBL) expeditiously, I think that we are headed for trouble," babalan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte bago ang kanyang flight sa Francisco Bangoy International Airport sa Davao City, bago tumungo sa Japan.

Kabilang sa tinukoy ni Pangulong Duterte ang Moro Islamic Liberation

Front (MILF) at ang Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), ang mahigpit na nagtutulak ng BBL upang palawigin ang Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Dahil dito, umapela si Pangulong Duterte sa Kongreso na ipasa na ang naturang panukala.

"I will urge Congress to fast-track it because they are getting impatient," pahayag pa ni Duterte.

Ang BBL ay isa sa mga

panukalang-batas na masahang ipaprayoridad ng Kongreso ngayong taon.

Ayon kay Pangulong Duterte, ipinangako niya sa dalawang grupo na isusulong nito ang federal system of government at para na rin umano sa kapayapaan ng Mindanao. *"The failure to rehabilitate Marawi could have grave consequences for Mindanao and for the entire country,"* dagdag pa ng Punong Ehekutibo.

(Mylene Alfonso)

General Año – from AFP to DILG

IT will take years – perhaps 70, according to one estimate – to restore Marawi City to what it used to be. The destruction is so widespread, it looks like the pictures of Manila after its liberation in World War II, with not one building left unscathed in the main battle zone where the Maute rebels and their Islamic State cohorts made their last stand. Private buildings are filled with bullet and shell holes. The domes of the mosques rise above the destroyed buildings but they too are broken and battered.

Behind all this physical destruction are the following statistics on the human toll: About 920 terrorists killed, along with 165 soldiers and policemen and 47 civilians; 1,700 troopers wounded; 1,780 hostages rescued; and hundreds of thousands of Marawi residents displaced.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has won praise from many quarters for the way its men handled their mission, with all due concern for the safety and interests of the local populace, holding back on assaults that might endanger hostages. Last August, President Duterte, concerned that the war had taken too long, said he was leaving it to the AFP to decide if they should now launch an all-out attack, including the bombing of all buildings, including mosques, the rebels were using as defensive bulwarks. But the AFP leadership and field commanders stayed on with the policy of restraint, to fight but with due concern for what the people of Marawi hold dear, including their places of worship.

When finally the fighting ended last week and the troops started leaving Marawi City, grateful

residents went out into the streets to cheer and thank the men returning to their camp in Cagayan de Oro City.

The AFP has truly done well in Marawi and President Duterte has lauded the leadership of Gen. Eduardo Año, its chief of staff. "The liberation of Marawi was the crowning jewel of General Año's career," he said. "His distinguished leadership resulted in a stronger AFP that did not just secure our nation, but also secured our people's trust and confidence in the military establishment and the soldiers that it represents." 400

General Año was appointed secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), but since the law calls for a one-year interval between his military service and his Cabinet position, the appointment will take effect only after a year. In the meantime, President Duterte asked General Año to serve as special assistant to the President or an undersecretary – whichever is legally tenable – and begin supervising the Philippine National Police (PNP), which is under the DILG.

The PNP has not fared well in the public's assessment in recent months largely because of so many unexplained killings in the PNP campaign against drugs. President Duterte has pulled out the PNP from the anti-drugs campaign and assigned the Philippine Drug Enforcement Authority (PDEA) as lead enforcement group in the campaign.

This may be well be a big challenge facing General Año but we are confident that with what he was able to accomplish in the AFP, he will be able to carry out his new duties in the DILG, including supervision of the PNP, with great capability and competence.

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FROM THE STANDS

DOMINI M. TORREVILLAS



154 days of Marawi doom over

I congratulate President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for his decisiveness in ending the war in Marawi. And the government troops, including 165 fallen soldiers and policemen who gave up their lives to secure peace in the once-quiet, beautiful mountaintop city in Mindanao.

It took the government nearly five months, beginning on May 23, to silence the frightening sounds of guns and bombs in the Muslim-dominated city. On Oct. 17, President Duterte declared Marawi free from "terrorist influence, (marking) the beginning of rehabilitation of Marawi."

The death of terrorist leaders Omar Maute and Isnilon Hapilon led to Marawi's liberation. The two were killed in the main battle zone of Marawi, the provincial capital of Lanao del Sur, some 1,400 kilometers south of Manila.

Reports say a total of 920 of the Maute group, 163 government troops and 47 civilians were killed during the military operations.

Now the task of rehabilitation has begun - a painful process, to say the least. Estimates place the rehabilitation to cost P50 billion. Television footages show majority of the buildings blown up to smithereens. What harrowing sights. Families are bunched up in refugee centers, the women crying, the men bitter: where will they stay when they return "home"? There are around 400,000 homeless people wondering where they will live for now, when temporary shelters are just being built.

It will take months, nay, years, for people to live normal lives; for their children - the trauma will be there forever.

We onlookers from the outside, are relieved by the death of elements of terrorism.

Still, we could not boast that the Maute and ISIS forces have been totally defeated. An observer quickly noted that the ISIS are still everywhere - with other extremists ready to fight and kill. Of this we should all watch out for.

* * *

There is yet another war that we must brace ourselves against - the attempt of legislators to legalize medical marijuana. Here we must support Buhay Rep. Lito Atienza in fighting this impending devil.

Atienza is urging his colleagues in Congress to throw out the bill legalizing medical marijuana, warning that the measure is bound to create a public health emergency here, just like the opioid crisis in America.

Atienza, the House senior deputy minority leader, fears that allowing medical marijuana to be prescribed by Filipino physicians will result in the opioid crisis that is happening in the US

US President Donald Trump has declared a public health emergency over the growing misuse of and addiction to opioids that claim the lives of 91 Americans every day.

The crisis is due to the over-prescription of opioids such as oxycodone and fentanyl as pain medication, resulting in uncontrolled dependency and fatal overdose among users.

Atienza warns that the bill that seeks to authorize physicians to prescribe medical marijuana, once enacted, would "open the floodgates to abuse and addiction."

The legalization of marijuana in the US has meant big business, as small and big time farmers have planted the substance in millions of acres. Marijuana is just one step away from addicts turning to more destructive substances.

The House committee on health earlier recommended the passage of the proposed Act Providing Filipinos Right of Access to Medical Marijuana, or House Bill 6517.

Floor debates on the bill are expected to begin when the House reconvenes on Nov. 20. Atienza said the susceptibility to abuse far outweighs any and all of the unproven benefits of allowing the prescription of marijuana.

"Marijuana is a poison. No amount of sugar-coating will make the illegal drug less toxic," he said, adding that even the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has rejected medical marijuana.

According to the US FDA, marijuana does not meet the criteria for currently accepted medical use in treatment, that there is a lack of accepted safety for its use under medical supervision, and that it has a high potential for abuse.

As a result of the US FDA ruling, marijuana remains a prohibited drug at the federal level in America, says Atienza.

The Philippines' Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) is following the US FDA standard, and so will not allow the use of marijuana for medical purposes.

The Philippine Medical Association is categorically opposed to the passage of HB 6517, saying it runs counter to the State's policy to protect the well-being of its citizenry, says Atienza.

Emmanuel M. Cabusao, chair of the National Rizal Youth Leadership Institute Knights of Rizal, sent me a copy of a petition by 606 students of the Sultan Kudarat State University-Glan campus decrying the closure of their school by 2019 and the refusal of the school to accept freshmen enrollees starting last

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TORREVILLAS From page 11

year. Cabusao was in Sarangani last June for a leadership conference for the youth who impressed him for their patriotic character and their resolve to take active roles in their communities, conducting outreach programs in extremely poor elementary schools in mountain barangays, holding fora on federalism, and planting mangroves in lake shores.

The Glan extension program, located in the province of Sarangani, opened in 2005 through a memorandum of agreement signed between the local government of Glan, and the Sultan Kudarat State University whose main campus is located in Tacorong, Sultan Kudarat province. The province nearest Glan is General Santos, one-and-a-half hour bus ride away. The aim of the establishment of the SKSU-Glan extension campus was to provide access and equity to higher education through quality and affordable tuition fees for children of poor farmers and fisherfolk.

From 2007 to 2017, the Glan extension campus has produced more than 3,000 graduates, many of them gainfully employed in government and private institutions, and some are working abroad. It offered bachelor degrees in information technology and accounting technology, and education. It also offered a master in education management and public management.

The Glan extension is one of four extension programs of the SKSU, the other three being in Surula, Bagumbayan, and Sen. Ninoy Aquino; these were established by MOAs between the towns and the university, and as such, do not fall under the Commission

on Higher Education. Four other SKSU programs are the so-called chartered programs which have been converted by the Department of Education to state colleges; these are in Lupayan, Kalamansing, Palimbog and Isulon.

The closure of the SKSU-Glan extension did not need the approval of CHED as it is a product of SKSU-LGU decision. It only needed to inform the SKSU board of regents composed of a CHED representative, the SKSU vice president, an alumnus, a student and faculty, two prominent citizens, one each from the Senate and Congress, and regional directors of NEDA and DOST.

The university Glan extension campus changed many lives in the community, and, as the students' petition says, "is considered the most important vehicle to transform our people into a productive component of society."

A feud between the past and present mayors of the town has proven to be disruptive, resulting in the decision of the SKSU to close down the Glan campus. Instead, the present town administration has put up its own school, called the Glan Institute of Technology.

According to the dean Dulce de la Cerna, the "older" Glan campus extension did not accept freshmen enrollees last year, and simply maintains the third and fourth year levels that is, classes for the 2018-2019 school years. Then the institute of technology rules over the town's college education.

How sad what local politics can do to students' education.

* * *
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The Manila Times

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Editorial

Remember our WWII Filipino veterans

THE belated recognition by the US Congress of Filipino veterans who fought and died alongside American forces during World War II would have been more meaningful had the US legislature not reneged on the promises made to them by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the immediate aftermath of the war.

The Filipino veterans and their families still remember that the 79th United States Congress enacted the Rescission Act of 1946 on February 18, 1946.

The Rescission Act retroactively annulled benefits that would have been payable to the Filipino troops on account of their military service under the auspices of the US during the time that the Philippines was a US territory and Filipinos were US nationals.

The law showed its hardheartedness in its opening paragraph: "Service before July 1, 1946, in the organized military forces of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, while such forces were in the service of the Armed Forces of the United States pursuant to the military order of the President dated July 26, 1941, including among such military forces organized guerrilla forces under commanders appointed, designated, or subsequently recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, or other competent authority in the Army of the United States, shall not be deemed to have been active military, naval, or air service for the purposes of any law of the United States conferring rights, privileges, or benefits upon any person by reason of the service of such person or the service of any other person in the Armed Forces."

We should mark and remember these words in light of our history. During World War II, more than 200,000 Filipinos fought in defense of the United States against the Japanese in the Pacific theater of military operations, and more than half of them died. As a commonwealth

of the United States before and during the war, Filipinos were legally American nationals. With American nationality, Filipinos were promised all the benefits afforded to those serving in the armed forces of the United States. In 1946, Congress passed the Rescission Act, stripping Filipinos of the benefits they were promised, citing the reason that the US gave the Philippines \$200,000,000 after the war.

In the US ceremony on the 25th of last month, a Filipino veteran of World War II, the 100-year-old Celestino Almeda, and his fellow veterans were presented a Congressional Gold Medal after fighting in the war.

It should not be lost on anyone that Almeda had been waiting 75 years for the moment to come. It's wonderful and just that this veteran will also be getting health benefits and US citizenship, and that he will finally receive \$15,000 under an equity bill signed by President Barack Obama in 2009. This money took long in coming because of lots of red tape and past denials of the claims to compensation.

As we mark All Souls Day this week, it is fitting that we say a prayer and remember the 200,000 Filipino soldiers who died in the war during their time of service. We also remember those who survived the war, but did not live to see the day when they could justly receive the benefits for their service and sacrifice.

We are glad that Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, sponsored the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015, along with four co-sponsors. The bipartisan list of sponsors grew to 71 until it was finally passed.

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

ONLINE NEWS

31 OCTOBER 2017

KAPUSO SUPPORT OUR TROOPS | GMA, Willie Revillame Donate P3M for Soldiers

Posted by Alvin Santiago on October 30, 2017 at 1:33 PM www.dwdd.com

FOR THE SOLDIERS' SACRIFICES

Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año receives P3-Million in cheque from GMA Network and Mr. Willie Revillame during his studio guesting, with 800 other AFP personnel, to Wowowin.

Mr. Revillame also made a special birthday greeting for the Chief of Staff who had his mandatory retirement on October 26, 2017.

Of the donation, P1 Million from Willie Revillame will be given to the wounded soldiers in Marawi, while P2 Million from GMA Network will be deposited to the AFP Marawi Casualty Landbank account.



TRIBUTE TO HEROES

Armed Forces of the Philippines wounded soldiers from the AFP Health Service Command, officers, and enlisted personnel from the General Headquarters, and Major Services participated as studio audience and contestants on the afternoon variety show, Wowowin which airs October 26-27, 2017.

Mr. Willie Revillame, host-producer of the show, honors around 800 soldiers with songs entitled "Awit sa Marawi" by Esang de Torres, "Puso Para sa Bayan" written by Vehnee Saturno, and other songs dedicated for the protectors of our country; he gave the soldiers cash prizes, jackets, mobile phones, and three house and lot packages for the grand winners courtesy of the Villar Family, represented by Sen. Cynthia Villar. Photo by SN1 Viluan/PAO/AFP/MCAG

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

Navy spends P500-M in ammo, fuel in Marawi fighting

By Priam Nepomuceno | October 30, 2017, 8:17 am

MANILA -- The Philippine Navy (PN) has spent nearly half a billion pesos for ammunition and fuel during the five-month battle to remove the Maute Group terrorists in Marawi City.

This was emphasized by PN flag-officer-in-command Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado during the sidelights of the welcoming ceremonies for the returning Fleet-Marine contingent held in Pier 13, Manila South Harbor on Monday.

"Well, as far as the PN is concerned, just for the ammunition (and fuel) alone, we nearly extended half a billion pesos and just imagine the number of trips this year undertook to bring all our AFP combat vehicles, artillery, ammunition and people from all over the different islands down to Iligan and the fuel for our helicopters," he said.

Also, Mercado said that he is more than satisfied with the PN's combat performance in the Marawi City campaign.

"Very, very satisfied if the President is satisfied with the performance of the AFP, I am more than satisfied with the performance of our sailors and marines," he added.

Mercado also pointed out that it was the Philippine Marines Corps who recaptured three important bridges -- Mapandi, Banggolo and Masiu -- in the Marawi City campaign.

The PN chief added that regaining control of these bridges allowed the government to deploy more troops and combat vehicles in the main battle area.

The returning contingent's size is estimated to be around 500 to 600 personnel and consists of marines, sailors, aviators and "Seals" deployed in Marawi City during the height of the battle.

These personnel were transported from Iligan City to Manila by the BRP Tarlac (LD-601), one of the two brand-new strategic sealift vessels of the PN.

After the ceremony honoring them, members of the Fleet-Marine contingent were transported via motorcade from Pier 13 to their headquarters in Marine Base Rudiardo Brown in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

During the motorcade, the PN's AgustaWestland AW-109 combat utility helicopters dropped flowers on the procession to honor the victorious troops.

Around 920 Maute Group terrorists were killed in the five-month campaign that started last May 23 when government troops tried to arrest Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and his cohorts.

In the fierce fighting that followed, around 165 government troops were killed including 35 marines. *(PNA)*

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

Army vision: By 2023, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

HOME SAFE | Western Mindanao Troops back Home

BAGONG CALARIAN, Zamboanga City (DWDD) – *"We are now home and safe."* The Civil Military

Operations Unit-Western Mindanao, Field Artillery Battalion, Motor Pool Transport Battalion, Service Support Battalion, Combat Service Support Brigade, Marine Special Operations Group, Philippine Marine Corps and Special Boat Unit-Western Mindanao was welcome by the Commander Naval Forces Western Mindanao, Rear Admiral Rene V. Medina and his Staff at BGen. Asuncion Beaching Area, Naval Forces Western Mindanao, Bagong Calarian, Zamboanga City via LC-289 on October 30, 2017.

A ceremony was tendered to the returning troops from Marawi City and awarding of Bronze Cross Medal and Ribbon to this unit for a gallant service, and also a warm handshake from the Commander, family and friends.

"God Bless Us All" CMOU-WM/MCAG www.dwdd.com



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