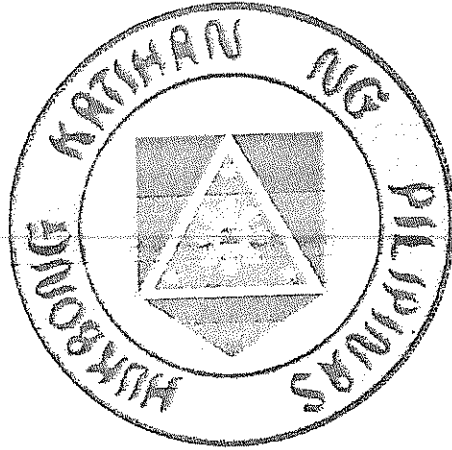


Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride



TEAM ARMY
Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

18 September 2017

Monday

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

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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | SEPTEMBER 18, 2017 | MONDAY

INTERTROPICAL CONVERGENCE ZONE AFFECTING SOUTHERN MINDANAO (As of 4:00 AM - September 17, 2017)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE 6:45 AM	SUNSET 5:55 PM
MOONRISE 3:43 AM	MOONSET 4:35 PM
LAST QUARTER SEP 13 2:25 PM	NEW MOON SEP 20 1:30 PM
LOW TIDE 3:57 PM 0.07 Meter	HIGH TIDE 7:56 AM 1.18 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	SEP 19	SEP 20	SEP 19	SEP 20	SEP 19	SEP 20		
METRO MANILA	26 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	TAGAYTAY	22 - 28 °C	22 - 28 °C	TACLOBAN	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	LEGAZPI	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 - 32 °C	23 - 32 °C
LAOAG	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 24 °C	16 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 31 °C	26 - 31 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 31 °C	25 - 31 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 33 °C	25 - 32 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	 		

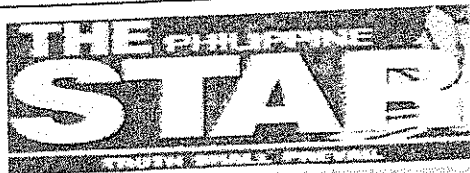
DZRH NEWS TELEVISION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

PILIPINAS ID

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

September 2017



Page: 1

Jinggoy eyed as DAP witness

By EDU PUNAY

Now that he is out on bail, will former senator Jinggoy Estrada spill the beans on an alleged anomaly in the multibillion-peso Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) of the previous administration?

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II hinted at this possibility after Estrada was granted bail by the Sandiganbayan in his plunder case involving the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) scam and released last Saturday after three years in detention.

“(Former) senator Jinggoy can be used as a witness in the investigation and possible

cases on the DAP anomaly,” Aguirre told **The STAR** yesterday.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) chief cited Estrada’s earlier statement that he received P50 million in DAP funds during the administration of former president Benigno Aquino III supposedly for the ouster of the late chief justice

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Even as the authorities have yet to confirm the rescue of Suganob, Catholic bishops in Mindanao welcomed this as an answered prayer.

"We thank the soldiers. This is an answered prayer. We really prayed for this and now that he's free, thanks be to God," Iligan Bishop Elenido Galido said.

Ozamiz Archbishop Martin Jumoad also believed Suganob's rescue was a result of the Filipino people's faith and prayers.

"So many are praying for his freedom. So many masses are celebrated for that intention. The power of prayer is once again shown as a witness of our solid faith in God. Thanks be to God," he added.

Suganob was among those taken hostage by the Maute group when fighting broke out in Marawi City on May 23.

Closing in

The news of Suganob's freedom suggested that the militants could be fleeing the battlefield to escape the punishing ground and air assault.

The military said last Saturday's assault was a strategic breakthrough in resolving the Marawi crisis with the recapture of Bato mosque and the JIMF.

But it did not mention the rescue of the two hostages during the assault.

"This enormous gain further weakened the terrorist group by denying them their erstwhile command and control hub," AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año said.

"As follow-up and clearing operations continue, we expect the enemy to yield more previously occupied positions, but not without a fight. We are ready for that," he said.

Col. Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of the task force battling the militants, said the

military had encountered some of the heaviest resistance in recovering the mosque.

Its capture may be a sign that the prolonged fighting with the Maute group, whose leaders have pledged allegiance to Islamic State, may be nearing conclusion, he said.

"We believe we are close to the end. The area where the Maute terrorist group can move is shrinking. We noticed that their resistance is weakening," Brawner said.

"They are retreating while we are assaulting but in the process of doing so, we are encountering many improvised explosive devices so we cannot just advance. We have to be very careful," he said.

Brawner said one soldier was killed and seven others were wounded in the battle.

He said they had hoped to rescue numerous civilian hostages when they captured the mosque but they found none.

The military said 666 terrorists, at least 147 government troops and 47 civilians have since been killed in the battle, which has forced thousands to flee their homes.

The military estimates that 40 to 60 militants are still fighting. There had been no word on the fate of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, the anointed emir of the IS in Southeast Asia, or of the brothers Omarkhayam and Abdullah Maute, leaders of the group.

Brawner said the ringleaders of the siege are still believed to be inside Marawi, adding that the military was determined to hunt them down.

"We do not want this to happen again in any other city in the Philippines," he said.

– With Roel Pareño, John Unson, Alexis Romero, Michael Punongbayan, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Edu Punay, AFP, New York Times News Service

Renato Corona during impeachment trial in 2012.

He explained that Estrada's testimony could be necessary to prove the alleged anomaly and misuse of DAP funds.

Aguirre noted that Estrada, as a beneficiary or proponent of DAP, cannot be held liable per ruling of the Supreme Court which only pointed the possible culpability to "authors" of the program.

Estrada reportedly bared that when Corona was ousted after impeachment trial in 2012, he and other senators who voted for the guilty verdict were each given P50 million in DAP funds.

Aguirre also confirmed that his office has received official documents and records involving the P144-billion DAP funds, which were meant to boost government spending during the term of Aquino.

The DOJ would conduct a fact-finding investigation to determine the anomalies in the DAP and who could be held

criminally liable.

Among the documents is a 2014 report of the Commission on Audit (COA) showing that at least 46 lawmakers received DAP funds worth P229.6 million for a milk feeding program just days after Corona was impeached by the House of Representatives in December 2011.

The COA report showed that the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issued special allotment release orders and notice of cash allocations for members of the House of Representatives on Dec. 22, 2011, or 10 days after the House of Representatives impeached Corona.

The DAP allocation was supposed to fund a milk feeding program that did not actually accelerate government spending, contrary to the purpose of the program.

The COA held that the project "may not have fully contributed in the attainment of the DAP objective of accelerating government spending"

because "from the time the funds of P167.44 million or 72.9 percent were released in September 2012, only 87 percent or P145.694 million was obligated, and out of which, a total of P87.002 million or 59.7 percent was disbursed for 33 projects."

The report has recommended that the unutilized funds be returned to the Bureau of Treasury after the SC struck down the DAP for being unconstitutional in a ruling in July 2014.

Earlier this month, a coalition of anti-pork barrel groups called on the DOJ to investigate the alleged anomalies in use of DAP funds.

The group led by former Manila councilor Greco Belgica also submitted to the DOJ the records of the DBM on the DAP expenditures during the previous administration.

Belgica asked the DOJ to conduct a fact-finding investigation on the submitted records, which showed a discrepancy of P2.6 billion from the DAP spending, and pursue cases of malversation of public funds with aggra-

vating circumstances against Aquino, former DBM secretary Florencio Abad and former DBM undersecretary Mario Relampagos.

The documents also showed that P6.5 billion from the P144-billion DAP funds of the previous administration was allocated to various local projects that were not itemized in the budget.

The former councilor also claimed that the anomalies include ghost projects funded by DAP, citing projects involving lampposts and bridges that were given DAP funds but were found to be not actually built upon verification.

Jinggoy to move for junking plunder

As to the plunder and graft charges filed against him, Estrada will move for the dismissal of the cases as soon as the prosecutors of the Office of the Ombudsman finish their presentation of alleged evidence against him.

Like in the plunder case of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo involving the alleged misuse of Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office

(PCSO) funds, Estrada will have his lawyers file a demurrer to evidence, which will challenge the evidence that Ombudsman prosecutors have.

Such pleading is filed by an accused in a criminal case when the accused thinks that the prosecution's case is weak that the accused does not even have to present defense evidence to have the charges dismissed.

Arroyo, now a congresswoman of Pampanga, used the same strategy, which led to the dismissal of the PCSO plunder case against her in July 2016.

The Sandiganbayan initially junked Arroyo's demurrer to evidence but the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the anti-graft court, which cleared and freed the former president on grounds of insufficiency of evidence.

Estrada was released from detention on Saturday after the Sandiganbayan granted his petition for bail. He said he will attend the first day of the trial today and will try his best to attend all future trial dates.

Estrada was among three senators who were first to be

indicted for alleged involvement in the misuse of PDAF in connivance with alleged scam mastermind, businesswoman Janet Lim Napoles.

Estrada and former senators Juan Ponce Enrile and Ramon Revilla Jr. were charged for allegedly receiving kickbacks or commissions from bogus non-government organizations that implemented ghost projects using their PDAF.

The Supreme Court has earlier released Enrile on bail for humanitarian reasons, while Revilla is still detained at the Philippine National Police custodial center in Camp Crame.


Estrada yesterday visited Revilla and brought him food. The PNP said Estrada arrived at 2 p.m. and left at 3:35 p.m.

Visitors need to pass through three metal gates to reach the complex of the senators' detention cell, which reportedly resembles a condominium unit with multipurpose area.

But as to the bed, Estrada said: "*ang tigas ng higaan ko doon sa Crame* (my bed in Crame was uncomfortable).

- With Michael Punongbayan, Cecille Suerte Felipe

18 September 2017


MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

Key victory in Marawi

2 Maute strongholds captured by soldiers

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The military scored a key victory in the battle against the Maute Group over the weekend, capturing the command center of the Islamic State (IS)-influenced fighters who have besieged Marawi City for nearly four months.

Backed by airstrikes, military ground forces reclaimed from the hands of the Maute fighters two of their

strongholds – the Bato Mosque and Amaiul Islamiya Marawi Foundation (JIMF) – last Saturday.

Marine Colonel Edgand Arevalo, Armed Forces of the Philippines-Public Affairs Office (AFP-PAO) chief, said the major victory of security forces came at 5 p.m. of the 117th day of the military operations to liberate Marawi.

General Eduardo Año, Armed Forces Chief of Staff, relayed his commendation to the of- ▶4

Officers and men under Joint Task Force Marawi under Brig. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista for successfully retaking the vital structures.

Año said the battle was fiercely fought for five hours until soldiers subdued the terrorists who were strategically located in the buildings in the periphery of the mosque and the JIMF.

"This enormous AFP gain further weakened the terrorist group by denying them their erstwhile command and control hub," Año said.

"As follow up and clearing operations continue, we expect the enemy to yield more previously occupied positions, but not without a fight. We are ready for that," he added.

Año assured that government troops will press on relentlessly until it concluded its mission of liberating the city from the hands of the terrorists.

"We urge the remaining terrorists, especially former hostages turned fighters, to endeavor to communicate with the military surrender while they still have time," Año said.

Retirement vow?

Año, at the same time, expressed belief that the liberation of the city will be done before he retires from the military service this October at the age of 56.

"I believe so. With all the latest developments there like the recent capture the Grand Islamic mosque, the CNB landbank building and with the decimation or reduction of the strength of the enemy kayang kaya natin yan (we can do it)," he said.

Government troops are currently in a tight battle against members of the terrorist group in war-torn Marawi City, after they occupied the place in May 23 of this year.

Palace keeps mum

Meanwhile, Malacañang said it will not be making any comments just yet on the most recent developments of the military operations in Marawi.

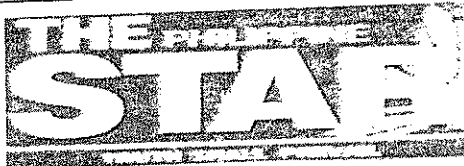
Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said the Palace was advised to refrain from making any comments to not jeopardize ongoing military operations.

"As per guidance from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), we refrain from making comments on the latest developments in the main battle area of Marawi at this time; as ongoing operations may be jeopardized, as well as the lives of the remaining hostages, or soldiers in the frontlines," Abella said.

"We will provide information and other pertinent details as soon as conditions on the ground allow us. Thank you for your understanding," he added.

"We covet your unceasing intercession for the safety of all, and lasting peace in Marawi," he said. (With reports from Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos and AFP)

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Priest rescued as Army captures Maute base

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – A Catholic priest held hostage for months by the Maute group was rescued by government troops on Saturday as they moved closer in rooting out the terrorists in Marawi City.

Troops captured the com-

mand center of the Maute terrorists and rescued two hostages, including Fr. Teresito "Chito" Suganob, the priest who had been held captive for nearly four months since the conflict began on May 23.

The rescue came a few minutes after the troops overran

Turn to Page 14

Bato Mosque, the second grand mosque in Marawi City used by the terrorists as their command center.

Troops also recaptured the Amaitul Islamiya Marawi Foundation (JIMF) on Saturday.

"It was a fiercely fought five hours before government security forces subdued the terrorists who were strategically located in the buildings in the periphery of the mosque and the JIMF," said Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the Public Affairs Office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

The military though has yet to confirm if Suganob was among the hostages rescued during the assault. The other hostage was identified as Lordvin Ocopio, a teacher of Dansalan College in Marawi.

President Duterte hailed the troops as he was immediately informed of the rescue of the two hostages on Saturday night.

The President did not announce Suganob's rescue while he was giving a short talk at the Matina Enclaves Residences where he met with the police officer freed by communist rebels last Friday.

Duterte was further briefed on the situation in Marawi later that night.

Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza announced the rescue of Suganob in his Facebook post yesterday.

He quoted his staff Franklin Quijano in Marawi as saying Suganob and another hostage were rescued by the military during an assault at the Bato Mosque on Saturday.

When asked to confirm, Dureza told ABS-CBN to wait for the official announcement from the military and Malaca-

ñang, saying it might compromise the military operation in Marawi.

The military in the region led by Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez refused to confirm the rescue.

"Sorry, we cannot reveal further information. It might put the lives of the remaining hostages at risk. The rescue operations are still ongoing," he said.

Malacañang also refused to comment on the rescue.

"As per guidance from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, we refrain from making comments on the latest developments in the main battle area of Marawi at this time; as ongoing operations may be jeopardized, as well as the lives of the remaining hostages, or soldiers in the frontlines," presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said.

"We will provide information and other pertinent details as soon as conditions on the ground allow us. Thank you for your understanding," he added.

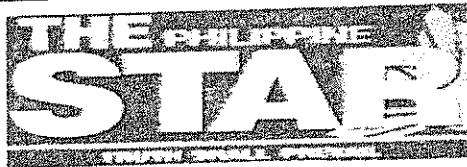
Abella clarified the government is not imposing a news blackout on the Marawi crisis.

"(There is) no such thing. Malacañang will not provide comments on recent developments like the rescue of hostages so as not to complicate matters on the ground," he said.

Assemblyman Zia Alonto Adiong of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said they received reports Suganob was rescued late Saturday.

"But we don't have official confirmation yet from the Task Force Marawi and the Westmincom," said Adiong, spokesman for the Lanao del Sur provincial crisis management committee.

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2 Army units get new chiefs

The Philippine Army recently announced the designation of new chiefs for two of its key units.

Col. Rogelio Ulanday was appointed head of the Army Chief Ordnance and Chemical Service, replacing Col. Theodore Dizon who retired from the military service on Sept. 3.

Col. Emmanuel Anthony Ramos was named chief of the Army Real Estate Office.

Army chief of staff Maj. Gen. Robert Arevalo led the turnover ceremony at the Philippine Army headquarters last week.

Prior to his post, Ulanday served as commanding officer of the Explosives Ordnance Disposal Battalion and Army Support Command.

He also served as operations officer of the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and head of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Munition Control Center.

Ramos was former deputy of the 51st Engineer Brigade and head of the 1st Platoon Headquarters Company of the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion. He replaced Col. Ramon Evan Ruiz, who was named acting commander of the 53rd Engineer Brigade on Aug. 23.

– Michael Punongbayan

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INQUIRER

Page: A18

Army whistle-blower now in hiding

Corporal had written letter to President Duterte alleging fund anomalies in 7th Infantry Division

ZAMBOANGA CITY—An Army corporal said he continued to fear for his safety and that of his family after he came out in the open with allegations of corruption against his mother unit.

Cpl. Melvin Alfonso, who has two children, said he and his family were in hiding now.

In May 2017, Alfonso started exposing the alleged irregularities at the Nueva Ecija-based 7th Infantry Division of the Army by sending a letter to then newly elected President Duterte.

Alfonso claimed he knew about the irregularities involving funds labeled as return to sender (RTS) because he was assigned to the Army division's Management and Fiscal Office (MFO).

He said when he became part of the staff of the MFO in 2014, he moved to Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija, where his exposure to corruption allegedly involving senior

officers started.

He said the 7th ID had three brigades—701st, 702nd and 703rd—and six battalions (3rd, 24th, 48th, 56th, 69th, 71st, 81st, 84th, Civil and Military Battalion, Headquarters Service Battalion and Service Support Battalion).

Shock

Alfonso said that during his first few months at the MFO, he was shocked at how funds were misused.

"(For) example, (out of) a P10 million budget for the division, only P2 million was actually used and the P8 million was labeled as [RTS]. The money (RTS) was withdrawn from government banks and delivered to (senior officials)," he said.

"My senior officers told me not to ask (questions) anymore because it was part of the Army tradition," he added.

For every RTS, Alfonso said

superior officers would hand rank-and-file soldiers amounts ranging from P5,000-P10,000.

He said he once delivered millions of pesos in cash to the MFO of the Army's general headquarters in Fort Bonifacio in Taguig.

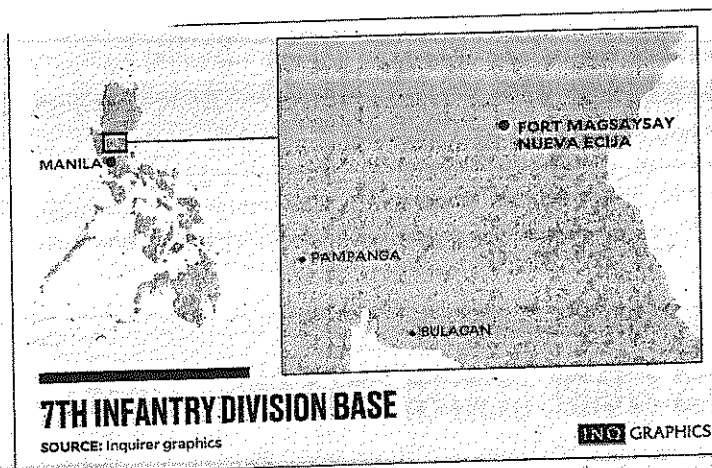
In 2016, Alfonso said he became a signatory to the conversion of funds into RTS.

"It came to a point that I was directed to make vouchers, check dispositions, recording process of the budget, or convert an ASA (Advise for Sub-alotment) e-mail from the MFO GHQ to funds and we have personnel tasked to produce fake receipts," he said.

No audit?

Alfonso said all the disbursements and transactions passed through the Commission on Audit without scrutiny.

When he could not stand it anymore, he said he went in-



Daryl Ritchie Vallez, Rosbert Serona and Monica Calimbasilizaso. These lawyers, he said, were part of the Presidential Action Center.

Passed on to DND

"They told me the President was very busy and they handed over my case to the Department of Defense (DND)," Alfonso said.

"Since then, the threats and harassment have become intense and I kept on asking Duterte's lawyers to take fast action on my complaints," Alfonso said.

He said later, he learned that the DND referred back his case to the Armed Forces and subsequently to the Philippine Army.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, the military spokesperson, said he still had not seen Alfonso's actual expose.

"But I will also pass this on to people I can trust," Padilla added. —JULIE ALIPALA INQ

to vacation.

His furlough expired on June 31, 2016 and he had since been considered on Awol, or absent without leave, for not reporting back for duty.

But Alfonso said he got scared about being harmed, especially since many of his colleagues knew he was not ready to connive with those committing the irregularity.

Instead of returning to work, he decided to hide, along with his wife and two children.

After he informed Mr. Duterte of what he had discovered, Alfonso said he was finally invited to the Presidential Guest House in Malacañang on June 7.

There, he met with lawyers

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The Manila Times

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'Stray' NPA bullet kills student in Masbate

BY DEMPSEY REYES

A BULLET reportedly fired by suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) killed a 15-year-old student in Barangay Libertad, Cawayan town in Masbate on Saturday.

The Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion identified the victim as Vincent Pekiro, a resident of the village.

No further details were mentioned in the report.

Earlier reports showed that the NPA rebels were positioned about 200 meters away from a daycare center in Barangay

Libertad where troops from the 1st Platoon, Alpha Company of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, were conducting a clean-up drive.

It said a gunshot was heard, directed to the location of the Army troops at the daycare center.

Authorities are conducting an investigation and pursuing the group of communist rebels to hold

them accountable for the crime.

The Army's 9th Infantry Division said the recent acts of the NPA only showed that the rebels "do not give importance to the lives" of civilians.

Meanwhile, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año said the military has yet to receive the final advice and order on the re-arrest of National Democratic Front (NDF) consultants, who were released to participate in the peace talks.

Since the peace panel was dissolved following the attacks against state forces in the countryside, Año said the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) awaits formal

notification of the official cancellation of the peace talks from the proper office.

Año explained that it would take about a month before NDF consultants can be re-arrested except for those who posted bail, such as Benito and Wilma Tiamzon.

The Tiamzon couple was arrested in Carcar City, Cebu in 2014 during Año's stint as chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The AFP chief said the case of the Tiamzons is different from that of the other political prisoners released since the couple was freed on bail for their participation in the peace talks.

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Malaya
THE NATION'S NEWSPAPER

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'Miron' killed in NPA attack in Masbate

A 15-year-old student was killed in an attack staged by New People's Army rebels on government soldiers involved in community works in Cawayan town in Masbate on Saturday afternoon.

Capt. Joash Pramis, spokesperson of the Army's 9th Infantry Division based in Camarines Sur, said the fatality, Vincent Pekiro, along with other civilians, was hit by enemy fire.

Pramis said troops from the Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion were doing repair and clean-up drive at a daycare center in Barangay Libertad when they were fired upon by the rebels around 4:30 p.m.

Pramis said the undetermined number of rebels positioned themselves about 200 meters away from the troops, fired around five shots and withdrew.

"According to the troops, they heard five shots and the first one hit the boy. He was watching what the soldiers were doing at that time," Pramis said of Pekiro, a resident of the barangay.

"Our troops did not retaliate to spare from harm the civilians in the area... They (rebels) withdrew and until now, we are going after them to hold them accountable for what they did," added Pramis.

"This is another proof that they do not give importance to the safety of the people," Pramis added.

Pramis said the military's community works, in collaboration with local officials, in the barangay will continue despite the rebel attack. He said the endeavor is part of the 9th ID's Community Support Program.
- *Victor Reyes*

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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Soldier killed in ambush

NORTH COTABATO – An Army soldier was killed in an ambush by suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas in Matalam town here on Saturday.

Pfc. Jimmy Marcelo of the Army's 39th Infantry Battalion was on a motorcycle when the rebels waylaid him in Barangay Kidama.

Marcelo died at the scene from several gunshot wounds, according to Superintendent Romeo Galgo Jr., spokesman for the Police Regional Office 12.

Responding police officers and soldiers found at the ambush scene several bullet shells and Marcelo's motorcycle.

– John Unson

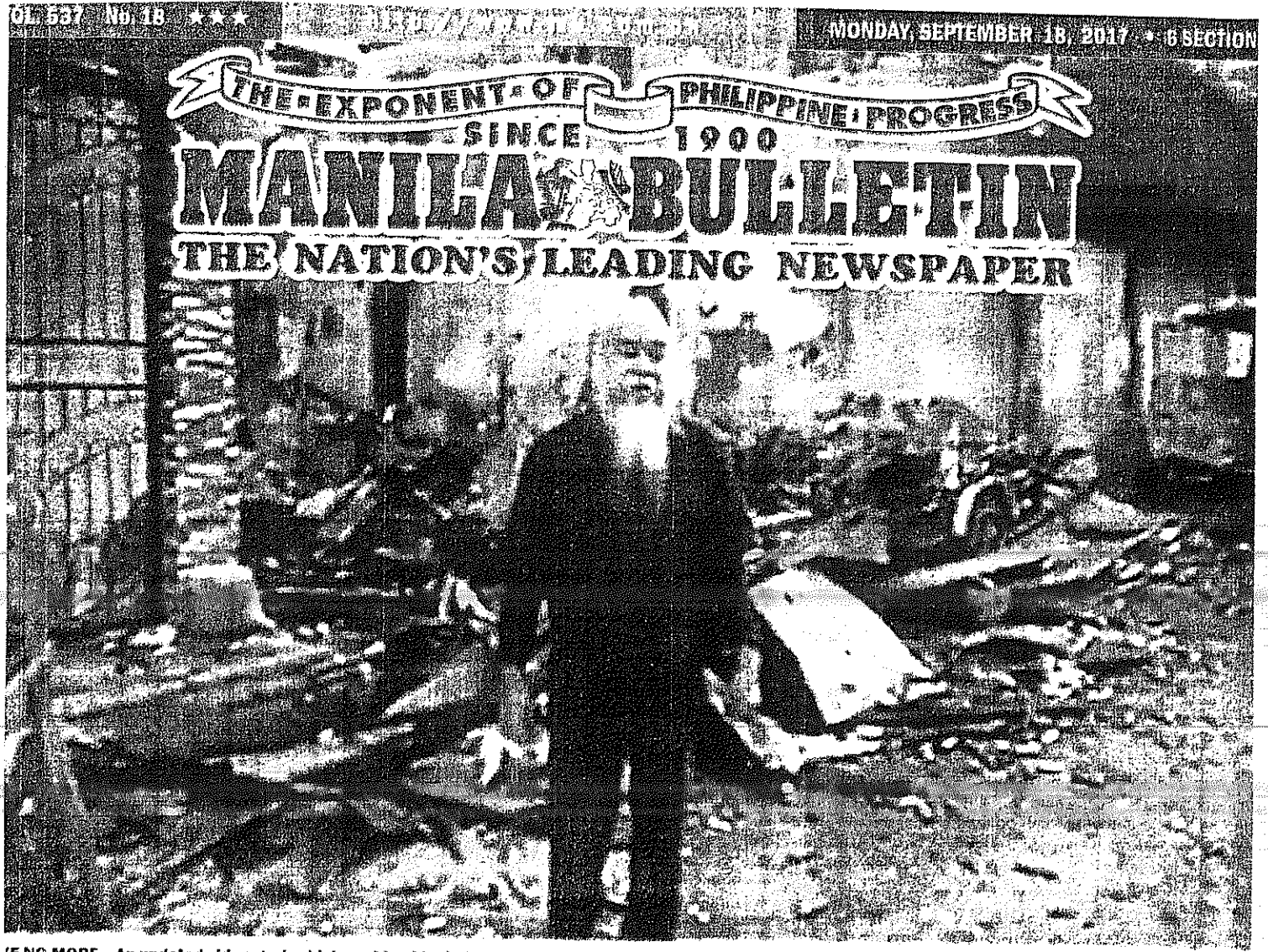
Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride

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NO MORE – An undated video grab which could not be independently verified shows Fr. Teresito 'Chito' Suganob while still being a captive of Maute terrorists in Marawi City. The Office of Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and the Bishop of Marawi welcomed the rescue of Father Suganob. (Militant video via AP)

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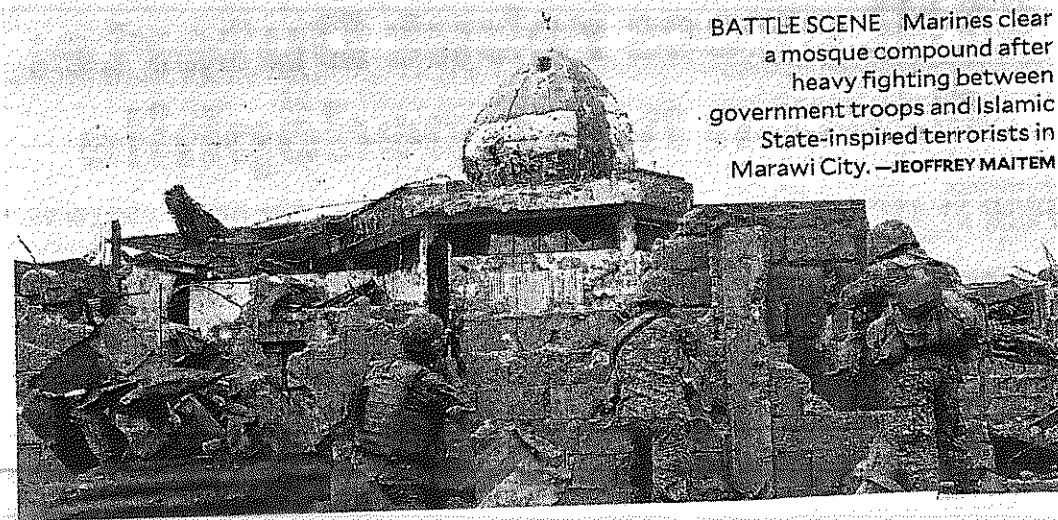
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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PHILIPPINE ARMY INQUIRER

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BATTLE SCENE Marines clear a mosque compound after heavy fighting between government troops and Islamic State-inspired terrorists in Marawi City. —JEFFREY MAITEM

18 September 2017

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Maute terror base overrun; priest rescued

By Julie S. Alipala,
Jeffrey Maitem,
Nikko Dizon
and Philip C. Tubeza
@Team_Inquirer

MARAWI CITY—The vicar general of Marawi City, Fr. Teresito “Chito” Soganub, and another hostage were rescued from Islamic State-inspired terrorists during a battle with government forces on Saturday night, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza said on Sunday.

Soganub and Lordvin Acopio, a teacher at Dansalan College, were rescued at around 11 p.m. on Saturday, Dureza, quoting former Iligan City Mayor Franklin Quijano, said in a post on Facebook.

“It’s confirmed we got him already,” Dureza told the Inquirer by phone, though he did not have details of the rescue.

Rear Adm. Rene Medina, commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao (Navforwem), said he had received confirmation of the rescue from his “ground operators” in Marawi.

Quoting the information he had received, Medina said Soganub and Acopio managed to escape from their captors during fighting in the vicinity of Bato Ali mosque in Marawi.

Enemy hub captured

Bato Ali mosque is the command center of the Islamic State (IS)-inspired Maute and Abu Sayyaf terrorists who have been battling government forces for control of Marawi since late May.

The military said it captured the terrorists’ command center in a deadly operation that began on Saturday.

It said nothing about the rescue of Soganub, whom the terrorists seized with dozens of other civilians as they rampaged across Marawi on May 23. But military press officers said there

was an “ongoing rescue operation in the main battle area.”

“We cannot give you details as of now lest we imperil the lives not only of our soldiers but more so that of the hostages,” said Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the public affairs office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr. would not confirm the reported rescue of Soganub and Acopio.

Malacanang asked the public to pray for the safe rescue of the remaining hostages, although it declined to comment on the report about the rescue of Soganub and Acopio.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said the military had advised the Palace not to comment on the developments in Marawi, including the reported rescue of the two hostages.

But relatives of Soganub in Iloilo City rejoiced at the news of his rescue and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines’ news service carried reports of it.

Medina said Soganub and Acopio had told troops who rescued them that they escaped while their captors were engaged in heavy fighting with government forces in the Bato Ali mosque area.

“And in the course of fleeing, they were identified by the military and they were brought to a safe place,” Medina said.

A source told the Inquirer that Soganub and Acopio were found in front of Building Zulu 17 in Sangcay village around

11:40 p.m. on Saturday.

They were recovered by troops from the 6th Special Forces Company and the 3rd Scout Rangers, the source said.

Government troops also captured the Jamaitul Islamia Marawi Foundation (JIMF) building during the operation.

“It was a fiercely fought five hours before government security forces subdued the terrorists who were strategically located in the buildings in the periphery of the mosque and JIMF,” Gen. Eduardo Año, AFP chief of staff, said in a statement sent to reporters on Sunday.

“This enormous [military] gain further weakened the terrorist group by denying them their erstwhile command and control hub,” Año said.

“As follow-up and clearing operations continue, we expect the enemy to yield more previously occupied positions, but not without a fight,” he said. “We are ready for that.”

Heaviest resistance

Col. Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of the task force battling the terrorists, said the military had encountered some of heaviest resistance in recovering the mosque.

Its capture may be a sign that the prolonged fighting with the terrorists whose leaders had pledged allegiance to IS, may be nearing a conclusion, Brawner said.

“We believe we are close to the end. The area where the Maute terrorist group can move is shrinking. We noticed that their resistance is weakening,” he said.

“They are retreating while we are assaulting but in the process of doing so, we are encountering many improvised explosive devices so we cannot just advance. We have to be very careful,” he said. —WITH REPORTS FROM JEROME ANING, NESTOR P. BURGOS AND AFP INQ

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Fr. Suganob, another hostage rescued by troops – OPAPP

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD
and SAMUEL P. MEDENILA

Catholic priest Father Teresito “Chito” Suganob, vicar general of Marawi City, and another hostage taken by the Maute Group have been rescued by government troops in the middle of a fierce gun battle with the Islamic State-influenced fighters on Saturday.

Although the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has not put out a statement confirming the priest's rescue as of press time yesterday afternoon, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) and the Bishop of Iligan already lauded the safe rescue Fr. Suganob.

Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman, said he cannot provide any details on the rescue because it would jeopardize the lives of the soldiers and other hostages in the Main Battle Area.

“We have ongoing rescue. ▶4

operations at the Main Battle Area. (But) we cannot give you details as of now lest we imperil the lives not only of our soldiers but more so that of the hostages,” Arevalo said.

“We urge you to wait for the Official Statement on the matter to be issued by higher authorities,” he added.

Iligan Bishop Elenito Galido already released a statement to media, lauding the government for the safe rescue of Fr. Suganob.

Suganob together with Lordvin Ocopio, a teacher of the Dansalan College, were reported to have escaped the Maute group on Saturday, when their captors were engaged in a firefight with

military forces in Marawi City.

Suganob was among the 20 people abducted by Maute group at the St. Mary's Cathedral on May 23, 2017.

“We are thankful for our soldier for rescuing Fr. Chito and a teacher of Dansalan. This is answered prayer. We have been praying for this continuously. Now that they are free, thanks be to God,” Galido said.

Galido said they are still waiting for more information on the current status of Sugaanob.

“We have not seen him yet and don't know where he is for now and if he will be brought to Marawi or Manila,” Galido said.

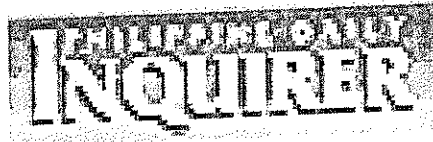
He said they will inform the Bishops of Mindanao about the “good news” once they return from their trip abroad.

Meanwhile, OPAPP Secretary Jesus “Jess” Dureza announced in his Facebook account that based on information provided by Franklin M. Quijano, Father Sugaanob together with another hostage was rescued by troops near Bato Mosque at 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

However, Dureza said no other information has been provided regarding the rescue.

“To those who would wish to get more details, please wait for the official announcement coming from the AFP and or the Palace in order not to jeopardize the ongoing military operations,” Dureza said.

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PEACE TALKS

**DU30 TO CONSULT
SECURITY EXECs
BEFORE TALKS
WITH REDS**

By Philip C. Tubeza
@pctubezaINQ

President Duterte will have to consult first his Cabinet security-cluster before peace talks with communist rebels can resume, Malacañang said yesterday.

Presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said the President wanted "lasting peace" for the country but he would also have to consult other branches of government about the peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (CPP-NPA-NDFP).

"To resume talks necessitates President Duterte to consult first with the members of his security cluster, considering the many lives lost, civilian and government property destroyed before returning to the negotiating table with the CPP-NPA-NDFP," Abella said in a statement.

"The President likewise has to confer with the other branches of government regarding matters [that] require their consent/approval," he said without elaborating.

Abella said the President wanted the nation protected from terrorism and that his "lasting goal is sustainable and lasting peace."

"In spite of PRRD's firm position to protect the nation from violence and terrorism, his fundamental goal is sustainable and lasting peace, which in this case begins with addressing the social injustice as the historical root of conflict," he added.

Abella issued the statement after the President on Saturday said he was "not averse to the idea" of resuming the peace talks.

"If you want to resume the talks, I am not averse to the idea, but let me sort out first the other branches of government," Mr. Duterte said after the NPA freed a captive policeman in Davao.

"I share power with Congress and the Supreme Court, and so, don't ask something in a hurry and for those [things] that are not really acceptable to the other branches of the government. We need to talk sincere," he said.

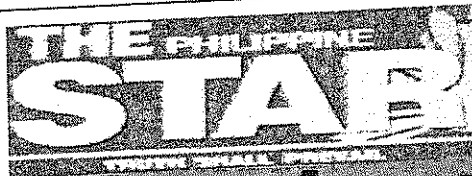
"Don't be in a hurry because we have been fighting for 50 years, and I have to consider the position of military and the police who invested lives [in this war]," he added.

Formal peace talks between the government and the CPP were supposed to resume last month but the President got angry after the NPA ambushed a convoy of the Presidential Security Group in Arakan, North Cotabato in July.

He insisted that there should be a ceasefire first before peace talks could proceed.

"You cannot ambush me and then ask me to talk to you. If I'm dead, whom will you talk to? Crazy guys," Mr. Duterte said. INQ

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Duterte open to resuming talks with Reds

By ALEXIS ROMERO

For the nth time, President Duterte has changed his tune and expressed readiness to resume peace negotiations with the communist rebels

following the release of a policeman who was kidnapped by the guerrillas three months ago.

Duterte had said "there will be no talks for the next five years" as Jose Maria Sison, founding chair of the

Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), was reportedly hesitant to return to the peace negotiating table.

But on Saturday, Duterte said there is a need to have serious talks with the rebels, who have been waging an armed struggle against the government for 50 years.

"If you (communists) want to resume the talks, I am not averse to the idea, but let me sort out first the other branches of government," the President said during his meeting with Senior Police Officer 2 George Rupinta, who was freed by the rebels in Compostela Valley on Saturday.

Rupinta was seized by the New People's Army (NPA),

the armed wing of the communist rebels, in Davao Oriental last June to probe his supposed involvement in "anti-people activities."

Despite his issues with the communists, Duterte thanked the rebels for releasing Rupinta, whom he said is suffering from a heart condition.

"I should share that I see to it that all prisoners of war have been treated well in accordance with the conventions of Geneva. And for that, I also would like to acknowledge their respect for the law," the President said.

"It's good that you released him. If he dies in your hands, my friends, we would have a problem, at least with the police," he added.

Duterte said he could not immediately grant some demands of the rebels because they require the approval

of other branches of government.

"I share power with Congress and the Supreme Court. So do not ask for something in a hurry and for those which are not really acceptable to the other branches of government. *Mahirap 'yan* (It will be difficult)," Duterte said.

"*Pag-usapan natin 'yan ng masinsinan* (Let's talk about it seriously). Do not be in a hurry because we have been fighting for the last 50 years. And you just cannot ignore that period of violence and killing on both sides. You have to consider also the position of the military... and the police, who invested lives there," he added.

Duterte said he has to consider the sentiments and concerns of all sides as President.

"The fact alone that I cannot operate by myself would indicate that there is something more to be done... there is more than what meets the eye," Duterte said.

"There are things to be done. We have to clear with the Speaker periodically and the Senate President. So that is how it operates here," he added.

Duterte scrapped the peace talks last July after the communist leadership ordered the NPA to launch offensives against government troops to resist Duterte's imposition of martial law in Mindanao.

The President declared martial law in the island after Islamic State-inspired terrorists laid siege to Marawi City and held dozens of people hostage.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said Duterte would consult with members of the security cluster before returning to the negotiating table with the communists.

"The President likewise has to confer with the other branches of government regarding matters that require their consent and approval," Abella said in a statement yesterday.

"In spite of (the President's) firm position to protect the nation from violence and terrorism, his fundamental goal is sustainable and lasting peace; which in this case begins with addressing the social injustice as the

historical root of conflict," he added.

Duterte took exception to claims that he "torpedoed" his alliance with the political left.

"It's not right I torpedoed (the alliance). If I really torpedoed it, why would I go into a rigmarole of appointing you every time they are rejected or bypassed by Congress?" the President said.

He was referring to former social welfare and development secretary Judy Taguinaldo and former agrarian reform secretary Rafael Mariano whom he appointed upon the recommendation of the National Democratic Front but were rejected by the Commission on Appointments.

"I want to place them there because I have to hear both sides. The problem is, while we are talking, there's full of threats about countryside positioning, deployment of New People's Army soldiers, and that," Duterte said.

He reminded the rebels that harsh words would not bring the peace process forward.

"With regard to your message to me for the resumption of the talks, let me say this very carefully. Sa inyo 'yan eh. Sa inyo 'yan (it's up to you). Because when I became mayor, there were so many demands, and I conceded, and

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even appointing people from the left to join the government," the President said.

"And every time that I break bread with you, I am so courteous. . . *tapos, hirit kaagad. Hindi ito madadala ng hirit, ng init ng ulo* (and then you immediately criticize. This cannot be solved by hotheads). It cannot be solved by harsh language," Duterte added.

"P***. *Eh ano kung ayaw mo? Pasupladuhan 'to eh. So, huwag kayong pumatol ng kasupladuhan ng - o 'yung sa akin, kung palakihin ninyo, talagang walang mangyari* (B**** So what if you don't want it? It's a contest of tough talk. Do not make a big deal of it. If you do, nothing will happen). Might as well forget about the talks," he further said.

Duterte also lamented the rebels have not apologized to him for attacking a convoy of the Presidential Security Group in Cotabato last July. A militiaman and five presidential guards were hurt during the ambush.

"*Eh ako, kung matapakan ko 'yung sapatos niyo, nag-so-sorry ako eh. In-ambush ninyo 'yung presidential convoy na kung saan ako mag-landing sana... hindi man lang kayo nag-sorry* (Whenever I step on your toes,

I apologize to you. You ambushed the presidential convoy in an area where I was supposed to land but you did not say sorry)," the President said.

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Priest rescued from Maute

Premature disclosure endangered remaining hostages?

BY VICTOR REYES
AND JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

GOVERNMENT forces rescued Fr. Chito "Chito" Suganob and a companion from remnants of the Maute Group in Marawi City on Saturday night, hours after retaking two major positions from the terrorist group.

The rescue was disclosed yesterday by Secretary Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, but the Armed Forces declined to comment, only saying rescue operations were ongoing.

Dureza declined to elaborate.

Security officials have reportedly chastised Dureza for prematurely disclosing the rescue, saying this has placed in danger the lives of remaining hostages and of the operating troops.

"We wanted to keep it secret temporarily be-

cause we're still trying to rescue other hostages... He may have put in danger the safety of the hostages and the soldiers," one of the officials, who asked not to be named, said.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, at around noon yesterday, said the Armed Forces has advised Malacañang to "refrain from making comments on the latest developments in the main battle area of Marawi at this time, as ongoing operations may be jeopardized, as well as the lives of the remaining hostages, or soldiers in the frontlines."

Col. Romeo Brawner, deputy commander of the AFP Joint Task Force Lanao, held a press conference in Marawi City at around 5 p.m. yesterday but declined to confirm the rescue. He discussed the recovery of the Bato Mosque and the Jamaitul Islamiya Marawi Foundation building.

Marawi Bishop Edwin dela Peña said: "I am

happy receiving messages about Fr. Chito's rescue no matter how hazy they are."

Dureza, in a Facebook post at around 8 a.m., quoted former Iligan City mayor Franklin Quijano as saying Suganob and his companion were rescued around 11 p.m. on Saturday near the Bato Mosque. He declined to give other details, referring questions to the AFP.

"Got this just now from Franklin M. Quijano: For info sir father Chito Suganob together with one other was rescued by troops near Bato mosque at ooa 162300hsept2017. This is the 2nd grand mosque in Marawi that has been taken over by our troops. To those who would wish to get more details, pls wait for the official announcement coming from the AFP and or the Palace in order not to jeopardize the ongoing mil operations," Du-

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PREMATURE

reza said on Facebook.

Quijano was appointed by President Duterte in July this year as administrator and chief executive officer of the Philippine Veterans Investment Development Corporation-Industrial Authority and as member of the board of directors of the same institution.

Suganob is the vicar general of the prelate of St. Mary's Cathedral in Marawi City, which has been desecrated by the Maute.

AFP spokesman Maj. Gen. Restituto Padilla and AFP public affairs chief Col. Edgard Arevalo also refused to confirm the rescue.

"We cannot yet release any statement because the rescue operation is still ongoing," said Padilla. Padilla said the military will issue a statement as soon as the operations are completed.

For his part, Arevalo said: "We have an ongoing rescue operation at the main battle area. We cannot give you details as of now lest we imperil the lives not only of our soldiers but more so that of the hostages."

Suganob, in a video released a week after the Maute attacked Marawi on May 23, appealed to President Duterte

to stop operations against the Maute. He has also said there were 240 hostages.

Recently, military estimates placed the number of the Maute hostages at around 30.

Zia Alonto Adiong, spokesman of the Lanao del Sur crisis committee, disclosed only the re-capture of the Bato Mosque, and foundation building, and Madaris schools.

He said on his Twitter page at 7:55 a.m.: "Bato Ali Mosque has been recovered by the military. This mosque was used to house hostages including Father Chito."

One netizen asked about Suganob's condition but Adiong did not respond.

'FIERCE FIREFIGHT'

The rescue of Suganob and his unnamed companion came six hours after soldiers gained control of the Bato Mosque and the office of the Jamaitul Islamiya Marawi Foundation (JIMF), which were previously occupied by Maute members.

Arevalo said the two structures were retaken at around 5 p.m. Saturday following a "fierce firefight." He said there were casualties on the enemy side but could not immediately give figures.

Arevalo said the mosque and the JIMF structures were "command and control positions" of the Maute Group. "It's a battle position, with machine gun and sniper nest, so those are very important structures to them," he said.

Arevalo would not say the number of structures which the troops are trying to clear of Maute members and improvised bombs. About a week ago, the military said the Maute remnants are confined in a 500-square meter area with about 300 structures.

Arevalo said last Saturday's fighting was part of the major operations the military is launching to end the conflict.

"We're nearing the conclusion, just a little patience more... We're recovering their positions and their strength is waning," said Arevalo.

Brawner said Maute leaders Omar and Abdullah Maute and Abu Sayyaf senior leader Isnilon Hapilon are still inside the main battle area.

"It's important to get their leaders to prevent a repeat of Marawi... That's why our security forces are exerting efforts to arrest or kill the leaders... We are trying our best to contain this crisis and to capture their leaders," he said. - With Gerard Naval

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3 nominated to AFP top post

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Eduardo Ano said he will submit to Malacañang the names of three possible successors upon his retirement from the military service next month.

Ano said all three officials have a rank of lieutenant general and are all fit and qualified to lead the 125,000-strong military.

Ano is set to retire from the military at the age of 56 on October 26, 2017.

“Well I will recommend at the minimum three names and then isusubmit ko yan kay Presidente. So nasa discretion ng ating Presidente kung sino pipiliin niya doon sa tatlong names na isusubmit ko (I will recommend a minimum three and submit their names to the President, who has the discretion to pick any of the nominees).” Ano said.

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Duterte weighing options on peace talks

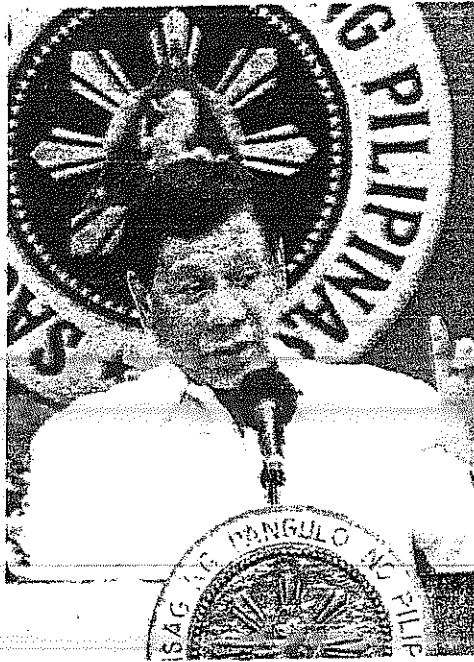
By **GENALYN D. KABILING**

President Duterte is planning to consult his security cluster and other branches of government before making a decision on the revival of the peace talks with the communist rebel group.

The President said he is 'not averse' to a possible resumption of the talks but could not make the decision alone, especially amid the spate of rebel attacks against state forces and properties.

"If you want to resume the talks, I am not averse to the idea, but let me sort out first the other branches of government," the President said in his remarks in Davao City last Saturday.

"There are things which I cannot concede alone be-



PRESIDENT DUTERTE

cause I am not the only one in control of this government. I share power with Congress and the Supreme Court," he added.

Dismayed by the recent rebel attacks, the President earlier said there would be 'no more talks' with group for the next five years.

He said if Jose Maria Sison, founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), refuses to hold peace talks, he was also hesitant to resume the negotiations, too.

But last Saturday, the President raised hopes for a possible revival of the talks depending on the consultation with fellow government leaders as well as the position of the communist group.

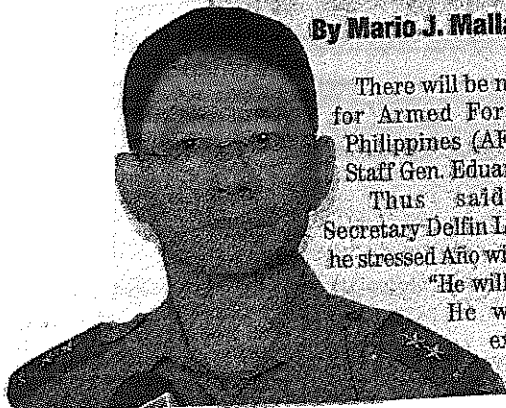
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Año exiting AFP next month, says Defense chief

By Mario J. Mallari



There will be no extension for Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año.

Thus said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana as he stressed Año will be retiring.

“He will be retiring. He will not be extended,” he added.

Año is reaching the mandatory retirement of 56 on October 26.

“But for the replacement...the President will choose from among the three-star generals,” Lorenzana said.

Pressed if President Rodrigo Duterte already chosen the next AFP chief, Lorenzana replied “if there is, I will not be authorized to announce yet.”

This as two senior three-star generals are also retiring in the coming weeks, namely, Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Edgar

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Fallorina and Army chief Lt. Gen. Glorioso Miranda.

Año, Fallorina and Miranda are members of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) “Matikas” Class of 1983.

Informed sources said two senior Army officials are among the strong contenders to succeed Año as AFP chief, namely, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), and Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal, Southern Luzon Command (Solcom)

chief.

Año is the second AFP chief appointed by the Commander-in-Chief since he assumed office in June 2016 – serving for only 10 months.

Mr. Duterte’s first military chief, retired Gen. Ricardo Visaya, served for only five months from July to December 2016. Visaya was subsequently appointed as National Irrigation Administration chief.

Año is also expected to continue serving the Duterte administration as the President has previously expressed his intent to

appoint Año as secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

In fact, the President already announced last May that he wanted Año to take the DILG post in June but the Marawi City siege launched by Islamic State-terrorists erupted.

Recently, a prohibition on the appointment of newly-retired police and military general as DILG chief was floated – thus lessening the chances of Año’s immediate takeover as Interior secretary.

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Rody open to resuming talks with communists

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte is open to resuming peace negotiations with communist National Democratic Front of the Philippines but said any decision about the next step in the peace efforts would have to be made in consultation with the legislative and judicial branches of government, and his security and defense advisers.

The President made the statement on Saturday night in Davao City during the turnover of SP02 George Canete Rupinta who was abducted by the communist group's armed wing, the New People's Army, on June 9 and released last Friday.

Duterte acknowledged the "message for the resumption of talks" that he said was sent out by the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"Let me say this very carefully... There are things which I cannot concede alone because I am not the only one in control of this government. I share power with Congress and the Supreme Court.

So do not ask for something in a hurry and for those which are not really acceptable to the other branches of government. Mahirap iyan (It's difficult)... And you have to consider also the position of the military who invested, and the police, who invested lives there," Duterte said.

"If you want to resume the talks, I am not averse to the idea, but let me sort out first the other branches of government," he added.

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza said no date has been set for a meeting between the President and the security cluster and the other branches of government.

He also said despite the suspension of talks, the government panel maintained communications with the NDFP.

A fifth round of formal peace talks had been scheduled for May

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RODY

27 to June 1 but it was cancelled by the government panel after the Communist Party of the Philippines ordered the NPA to intensify attacks on government forces, because of Duterte's declaration of martial law in Mindanao.

The cancellation was followed by

Duterte's order for the government peace panel not to resume formal peace talks unless the NPA stops its attacks and extortion activities.

Duterte in July announced the cancellation of the talks, or almost a year after formal peace negotiations resumed in July 2016. The talks had been on an impasse since February 2013.

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Duterte asks Misuari for help

By John Paolo Bencito

THE government has requested the Moro National Liberation Front to help it deal with the extremist elements in Mindanao, a senior Cabinet official said Saturday night.

This was after President Rodrigo Duterte again met privately with MNLF founding chairman Nur Misuari, who is facing arrest for the

to sponsor the BBL. Before the meeting, Duterte had presented a “game plan” to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front on how to ensure that the Bangsamoro Basic Law would pass in Congress, Dureza said.

“It’s really how to make sure that it will really pass because if you let it go, if you certify it just like that, when it gets to Congress there might be questions from the members of Congress because

alleged P115.2-million textbook scam in 2000 and 2001 at Davao City,” Peace Process Secretary Jesus Dureza told the **Manila Standard**

there are still many constitutional issues,” Dureza told reporters in Malacafang on Thursday.

Asked if a possible sponsor for the proposed BBL in Congress was discussed during the meeting, Dureza skirted the question.

“As I said, we would craft a way forward on how to husband it, so to speak,” he said in a mix of English and Filipino.

Dureza said Misuari “had

in a text message.

“I talked about closer coordination with the MNLF on the ground, especially on our common effort to deal with violent extremism,” Dureza said.

He said Duterte and Misuari “mainly discussed the government’s plan on the proposed Bangsamoro region and the country’s shift to federalism” following concerns on how to move forward as no lawmaker had volunteered

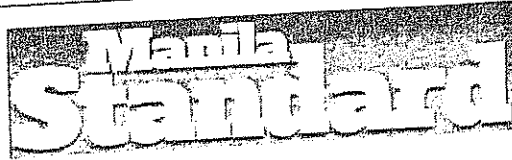
some concerns” brought up to Duterte” that “he requested to be confidential.”

Asked on the possible arrest raps against Misuari, Dureza said it was Misuari’s lawyers who should explain his legal woes.

In a resolution, the Sandiganbayan’s Third Division had found probable cause to hold Misuari and his co-respondents on trial and his co-accused over the so-called textbook scam.

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'Marawi needs more than P50 b'

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte said P50 billion will not be enough to rebuild the southern city of Marawi, citing massive damage caused by the conflict between government troops and Islamic State-linked militants that's been running for almost four months.

In a Saturday night speech after presenting a police officer released by communist rebels to the media, Duterte also said he wants the budget that was slashed from the Commission on Human Rights to be spent instead on police equipment. He had accused the human rights chief of being a spokesman of his political opponents, who he alleged want him ousted as President.

Duterte said his drug war will continue and that

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big-time personalities will be hunted down even as the campaign has led to killings of teenagers, inflaming public indignation.

"There are some people who died, even teenagers, it doesn't mean to say that you have to stop. We cannot stop," he said.

Duterte said he's still considering if he will resume peace talks with communists after they released the police officer taken as hostage. He said he will take into account the views of the police and the military.

On Friday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said foreign donations for the rehabilitation and repair of Marawi continued to pour in.

In a Palace news briefing, Lorenzana said that more than P2.1 billion has been pledged by foreign governments for the war-torn city, while more than P50 billion would be needed for the city's complete rehabilitation.

The United States has announced P730 million in humanitarian assistance, while Japan and Thailand both donated P100 million. **Bloomberg**

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Negros NPA rejects Duterte offer of jobs and housing

By MARK L. GARCIA

A local unit of the New People's Army (NPA) in Negros has rejected President Duterte's offer of jobs and housing if they lay down their arms.

In a statement, Ka JB Regalado, Leonardo Panaligan Command (LPC) spokesperson, dismissed the offer of the President as "plain and simple deception."

LPC is one of the local rebel groups operating in central Negros.

During his visit to the wake of policemen killed in an ambush in Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental, last July, Duterte promised jobs and a house to NPA guerrillas who will surrender.

The rebels can also keep their guns as souvenirs, he said.

Regalado maintained that the NPA will not surrender.

He also slammed the "bounty hunting" and the Comprehensive Local Integration Program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Negros, spearheaded by Maj. Gen. Jon Aying, 3rd Infantry Division commander, and supported by Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr.

Regalado accused the military, police and the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade of being behind the series of killings of civilians in Guihulngan.

The killings followed the ambush of six policemen alarmed progressive organizations in the Diocese of San Carlos, who are now calling for an in-depth investigation of the incident.

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PH, US set 'Tempest Wind' joint counter-terrorism drills

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD
and FREDDIE G. LAZARO

The Philippine and the United States (US) forces will hold a bilateral, counter-terrorism drills dubbed "Tempest Wind,"

next week here and in Hawaii.

Director Arsenio Andolong, chief of the Department of National Defense (DND) Public Affairs Service, said various government agencies involved in crisis management, ▶4

counter-terrorism, and security operations in both countries will participate in Tempest Wind.

It is a program approved by the Mutual Defense Board and Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB) of the two countries in November, 2016.

A press statement from the US embassy said the whole-of-government drill will be augmented by additional military assessments, national level engagement, and subject matter expert exchanges. These are designed to create a realistic environment to exercise counterterrorism strategy, including senior decision-making and tactical responses while deepening the bilateral partnership.

Meanwhile, joint forces from the US Marines and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the renovation of

several schools and a daycare center in Casiguran, Aurora province.

The construction work is a joint civic assistance activity, which forms part of the upcoming bilateral military exercise Kamandag, an acronym for "Kaagapay ng mga Mandirigma ng Dagat" (Cooperation of Warriors of the Sea).

Renovations were made on the C. J. Torre Elementary School, the Esperanza Elementary School, and the Esperanza Daycare Center to give the children a more spacious and comfortable environment in which to learn and play. The project includes building new classrooms and canteens and updating electrical wiring.

US military medical teams also taught basic lifesaving skills, disease prevention, and dental hygiene to a group of almost 600 Girl Scouts while in Casiguran.

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No coup threat vs Du30 – DND, AFP; police asked to explain news 'blackout'



By FRED N. LOBO

TOP defense and military officials have denied reports and speculations on a brewing coup attempt against President Duterte.

No coup attempt yet against The Punisher, they said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Gen. Eduardo Año, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), issued the denial before the Senate Finance Sub-committee chaired by Sen. Panfilo Lacson during the hearing on the defense department's proposed 2018 P195.476-billion budget.

A coup vs President Duterte is "very remote. There is nothing to worry about," Lorenzana assured.

Sen. Antonio F. Trillanes IV leaked the alleged plot by asking whether the AFP has heard or monitored reports that retired General Joselito Kakilala is claiming that a popular politician is recruiting members of Philippine Military (PMA) class 2006 to oust Duterte from office.

"We have not heard of a coup attempt being hatched. Wala kaming kilalang coup plotters," he said.

Año, asked during the budget hearing by Trillanes, said that such a report has to be validated.

The AFP has not monitored any destabilization effort by a politician or any other personality, he said.

Año added that there is no dissatisfaction in the AFP against Duterte to trigger any coup attempt because the AFP is professional enough.

"We have not monitored that Senator Trillanes is recruiting," Año added.

Trillanes, a staunch critic of President Duterte, denied that he is the "popular politician" alluded to by General Joselito Kakilala, his PMA upper classman.

"I didn't feel alluded. I am not popular," Trillanes stressed.

Trillanes, who led a mutiny in 2003 against then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, dismissed speculations.

"There is no recruitment. We are not even going close to the gates of military camps," he said.

Asked whether it is ripe to stage a coup even as the President who regularly visits military camps, Trillanes said "there is no justification for a military intervention."

"We are exhausting all remedies to rectify an anomaly," he said.

Trillanes had earlier accused DU30 of engaging in a bloody anti-illegal drugs war and of having bank several accounts, adding that Duterte's son, Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo Duterte also has a secret bank account, being a tattooed member of a "triad."

Triad or "sayad"? Charge it to politics, Malacañang said.

Meanwhile, senators asked the PNP why it has stopped media access to police' spot reports.

"Are you hiding something? Explain," the solons said.

(CHR).

The Commission has no right (CHR) to a budget, being anti-Duterte, congressmen said.

President Duterte has called on Filipino athletes to win more gold for the country at the Southeast Asian Games.

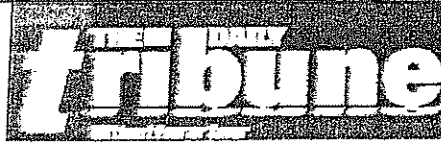
Bring us honor! We badly need it, the President asked PH players.

OFFIC

The House and the Senate are headed for a collision over the blockade by the Lower House of the proposed budget for the Commission on Human Rights



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EDITORIAL

Reds turn at bat

The mere use of the word martial law creates a lot of frenzy among the anti-Duterte forces that even the “thinking out loud” habit of Rody won’t escape their spins.

The worst spin was among the foreign news agencies which screamed that Philippine’s Duterte may declare martial law next week.

The report which stated a plan to impose nationwide martial law from the current military rule in Mindanao was triggered by a statement of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana of a meeting among security officials with Rody in which the possibility of leftist protests becoming rowdy during the September 21 celebration of the martial law of the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

It appeared that as is his wont, Rody made another off the cuff remark regarding the plans for September 21 where his main concern was for disorderly and violent protest, which rowdy protest marked the making of the military rule imposition way back in 1972.

The actual discussion during the meeting was Rody’s suggestion to suspend government work and classes in Metro Manila next week as several groups plan to hold massive protests in the days leading to September 21.

“This early, I am announcing that I am ordering a holiday to prevent anybody from getting hurt,” he said.

During a Malacañang media briefing, Lorenzana was asked to expound on Rody’s plans that brought out the mention of martial law “if things get out of hand.”

Most of the reports, of course, highlighted the part of the possibility of imposing a nationwide martial law while stating in an obscure portion that had Lorenzana also saying that such an “eventuality is very remote.”

Lorenzana even indicated that the leftists are not capable of mounting a huge mobilization that would affect the government or people’s daily routine.

The first group to seize on the apparent Lorenzana miscue was the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) which would be the first beneficiary of mayhem on the streets.

The CPP said Duterte was becoming “increasingly desperate amid broad rising calls for his ouster” and “seeks to prop himself up as a fascist dictator in his despair to cling to power” which is notably a template of statements dusted off from its anti-Marcos campaign.

The CPP said Rody “deserves the strongest condemnation for threatening to make full use of the military and police to carry out armed repression against mass demonstrations by conjuring up a scenario of ‘rebels taking to the streets’ and ‘fighting on the streets.’”

The CPP ascribed moves in Congress to Rody’s efforts to clamp down on the opposition saying that his allies in the legislature have “railroaded” the National ID system, canceled the scheduled barangay elections to enable him to “supplant tens of thousands of village officials with his loyalists” and “acted swiftly to impeach the chief justice as an overt threat to make the Supreme Court and judiciary bow to Malacañang’s whims.”

The CPP added “Duterte is presently carrying out a mind-conditioning campaign to justify his plan to impose martial law.”

Apparently, the CPP is trying to create a situation in which protests similar to those prior to the declaration of Marcos martial law will be rekindled.

Thus far, the protest actions against Rody spearheaded by yellow and red groups and of course Catholic bishops who want an ouster of Rody. But they can muster at most only a thousand or two, and if weather permits merely a hundred rallyists which is a far cry to the massive movements against Marcos.

The CPP riding shotgun with the anti-Duterte forces is another proof of its insincerity in the botched peace process and at the same time its part in the ongoing scheme led by the yellow mob for his ouster.

The CPP, similar to the yellow mob, is highly skilled in the use of propaganda to advance its sinister agenda.

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P1.6B allocated for Pag-asa Island beaching ramp, runway, facilities

From Update Philippines (Sep 16): P1.6B allocated for Pag-asa Island beaching ramp, runway, facilities

National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said contracts for the upgrade and repair of facilities in Pag-asa Island were already signed two months ago. He said PHP1.6 billion was allocated.

"Hopefully, they have already started because the contracts have been finalized, I think two months ago. And the funds are already available. But it will be done in stages." Secretary Lorenzana said during the Mindanao Hour Press Briefing on September 15.

He said the first stage is to construct a beaching ramp for ships to dock "so that we can bring in construction materials and heavy equipment."

"After that is finished, after that, they will bring in the construction materials. Then they will repair the runway," he added.

"They will repair first the runway before — make it useable on all weather. It would be cemented," he added. "And then later on, they will extend for another 500 meters to make it viable for bigger aircraft."

He said works are expected to be completed in 18 months. "We have allocated P1.6 billion there for the repair of Pag-asa," he said.

"We should have started early this year, when the water still, medyo calm. Kalma pa 'yung tubig," he said. "Now, rough weather starts July. So it is now doubtful if the contractor can still go there with their ships ano. So medyo tuma-timing sila ngayon kung anong magandang panahon para magdala ng mga equipment."

<https://www.update.ph/2017/09/p1-6b-allocated-for-pag-asa-island-beaching-ramp-runway-facilities/20862>

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New PH patrol vessels built by Japan spotted

From Update Philippines (Sep 17): **New PH patrol vessels built by Japan spotted**



The Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) sixth and seventh 44-meter Parola-class Multi-role Response Vessels (MRRV) surfaced online through photo and a video. These vessels are being named after primary lighthouses in the country to denote their significance as one of the navigational aids in the maritime industry.

The sixth vessel, BRP Sindangan (MRRV-4407) was shown in a video suggesting the vessel is conducting sea trials. While probably the seventh (MRRV-4408), named BRP Cape San Agustin was shown docked in a photo.

These vessels are part of the 10-order deal with Japan Marine United Corporation (JMUC) under PCG's Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project (MSCIP) Phase I.

These vessels are part of the 10-order deal with Japan Marine United Corporation (JMUC) under PCG's Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project (MSCIP) Phase I.

The fifth vessel, BRP Suluan (MRRV-4406) was received August 7. Deliveries are expected every quarter from the first delivery conducted August 2016.

According to MSCIP, these vessels will act as (1) "primary rescue vessels within the PCG District's areas of responsibility (AOR) when the extent of the disaster is beyond the capability of floating assets deployed within the area."

The MRRVs will also (2) assist in controlling oil pollution and protection of the marine environment. (3) These vessels will also enforce applicable maritime laws within the designated AOR, particularly relating to illegal fishing and sea patrol. The vessels will provide (4) service as platform for rapid response during relief operations in the area, and (5) transport of personnel and logistical support.

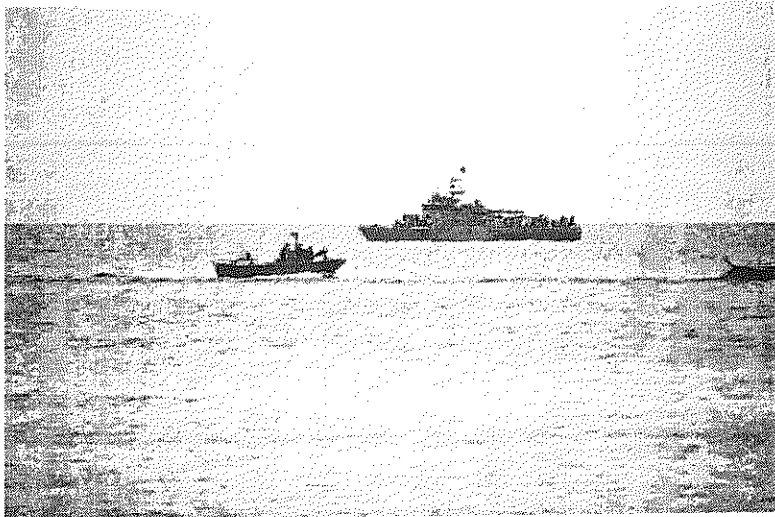
<https://www.update.ph/2017/09/new-ph-patrol-vessels-built-by-japan-spotted/20866>

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Government forces demonstrate capability in Boracay

From Update Philippines (Sep 17): **Government forces demonstrate capability in Boracay**



NAVFORCEN photo

Government forces under Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)-Central Command (CENTCOM) and Visayas police conducted a capability demonstration in Boracay Island on September 12.

The demonstration was spearheaded by Visayas Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Council (VJPSCC) co-Chairmen CENTCOM commanding general Lieutenant General Oscar T. Lactao and Directorate for Integrated Police Operations (DIPO) Visayas chief Police Director Moro Virgilio M. Lazo.

Philippine Navy's Naval Forces Central (NAVFORCEN) participated in the said capability demonstration through the Maritime Joint Task Group (MJTG) "Protect".

NAVFORCEN the participation was "to assess the operational readiness in the conduct of their mandated tasks especially in Maritime Security Operations."

"MJTG "Protect" is a subgroup of MJTG "Area Shield" established under the command of NAVFORCEN commander Commodore Loumer P. Bernabe.

"On orders, MJTG "Protect" in coordination with other law enforcement agencies, aims to conduct anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism, anti-kidnapping, anti-illegal drugs operations and support to Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HADR) operations within the Central Command Area of Operation," NAVFORCEN said.

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NAVFORCEN photo

"After the Capability Demonstration, a Stakeholders's Dialogue was conducted, headed by the top Commanders and leaders of the local government and stakeholders," it added.

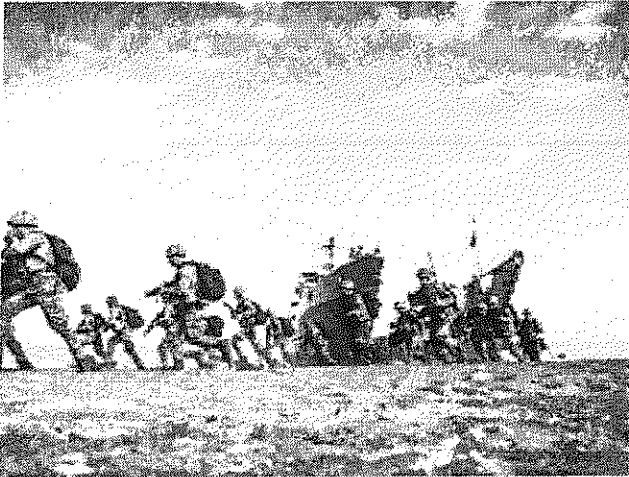
<https://www.update.ph/2017/09/government-forces-demonstrate-capability-in-boracay/20872>

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US, PH naval warriors holding inaugural military exercise

From Update Philippines (Sep 17): **US, PH naval warriors holding inaugural military exercise**



The United States and Philippines naval warriors will be conducting the inaugural US-PH bilateral military exercise KAMANDAG on October 2 to 11. KAMANDAG stands for "Kaagapay Ng Mga Mandirigma Ng Dagat" or "Cooperation/Alongside of Warriors of the Sea".

KAMANDAG was created after President Rodrigo Duterte said last year that US-PH Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX) 2016 will be the last. PHIBLEX 2016 was conducted October 4 to 12, 2016.

PHIBLEX focused on amphibious capabilities and live-fire training with humanitarian civic assistance efforts.

KAMANDAG will focus on enhancing counter-terrorism and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief capabilities; and conduct humanitarian and civic assistance projects.

KAMANDAG also aims to increase overall US and Philippine readiness, improve combined responsiveness to crises in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, and further reinforce our decades-long partnership.

"The purpose of this Philippines-led military exercise is to conduct bilateral exchanges between Philippine and US forces. Exercise training will enhance cooperation and interoperability between the Philippines and the US, consistent with the Mutual Defense Treaty and Visiting Forces Agreement," the US military said.

<https://www.update.ph/2017/09/us-ph-naval-warriors-holding-inaugural-military-exercise/20879>

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Lorenzana wants Año's AFP service extended

From the Philippine Daily Inquirer (Sep 17): Lorenzana wants Año's AFP service extended

But Duterte has other plans for retiring AFP chief



Presidential Photo

Forty days before reaching the mandatory retirement age, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Año made a fresh pitch for fixed terms for top military officers.

Año stressed he was not seeking an extension of his military service since President Rodrigo Duterte had already announced he would be named interior secretary upon his retirement.

Rising through ranks

"I think that is only appropriate to enable junior officers to rise [through] the ranks," Año said at a ceremony of the AFP Educational Benefit System Office on Friday.

Año said the Constitution required military personnel to retire at age 56 and that he had to abide by the requirement.

He suggested, however, that Congress pass a law fixing a term for the AFP chief of staff, major service commanders and unified area commanders.

He explained that the retirement age of 56 deprived the country of the experience and maturity of ranking military officials.

"It's such a waste. They're younger compared to (military officers in) other countries who [remain] in the service until they are 60 or 65 years old," the AFP chief of staff pointed out.

He nevertheless expressed confidence that his successor would continue his plans and programs, including the transformation roadmap.

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3 vying for AFP chief

Año will recommend to Mr. Duterte at least three names of three-star generals, among whom the President will choose the next AFP chief of staff.

A member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1983, Año's military service spans 34 years, highlighted by the arrest of Communist Party of the Philippines chair Benito Tiamson and his wife Wilma in 2014, and the 2015 killing of New People's Army leader Leoncio Pitao, better known as Commander Parago.

He was also commander of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines when fugitive general Jovito Palparan was arrested in 2014.

'Very good officer'

"He is a very good officer," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said of Año during a graduation ceremony of the National Defense College, also on Friday.

"He is very good, very professional. He knows what he is doing. He is very firm, broad-minded and a profound thinker. He is the example of a general," said Lorenzana, himself a retired major general.

"If I had my way, I would extend him in the military. But the President said he [needed] him (Año) for another job." Lorenzana added.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/931156/eduardo-ano-afp-rodrico-duterte-dilg-delfin-lorenzana>