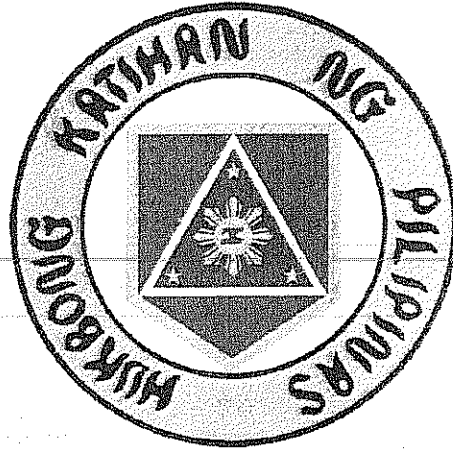


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# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**31 August 2018**

**Friday**



*Honor. Patriotism. Duty*

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# DENR TO OPEN MORE AREAS TO MINING

STORY BY MELVIN GASCON AND KARL R. OCAMPO

An environment undersecretary says declaring new mineral areas is meant to generate more revenue. The move comes after the economy grew below expectations partly due to the lackluster performance of the mining sector.

FROM A1

By Melvin Gascon  
and Karl R. Ocampo  
@Team\_Inquirer

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to declare more mineral reservation areas across the country in an effort to generate additional nontax revenue for the government, an environment undersecretary said on Thursday.

The move came after the Philippine economy grew below expectations at 6 percent in the second quarter, partly due to the lackluster performance of the mining and quarrying sector as a result of the closure of some mining pits and imposition of excise on minerals.

Analiza Rebueta-Teh, undersecretary for climate change and mining concerns, said the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) had begun identifying "mineralized areas" and "high-mineral potential areas," including existing mines in operation, for declaration as mineral reservations.

A number of sites are ready for endorsement to President Duterte for declaration as mineral reservations, pursuant to Republic Act No. 7942, or the

Philippine Mining Act.

"The law provides that when the national interest so requires, such as when there is a need to preserve strategic raw materials for industries critical to national development, or certain minerals for scientific, cultural or ecological value, the President may establish mineral reservations," Teh said in a statement.

Once an area is declared a mineral reservation, jurisdiction over it shall be transferred to Philippine Mining Development Corp. (PMDC) to make it revenue-generating.

PMDC currently handles two mineral reservation projects—the Diwalwai gold mine in Compostela Valley province and the Dinagat Chromite-Nickel mining projects in the Caraga region.

Other government-declared mineral reservation areas are located in Zambales, Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur.

## Uncollected revenue

The DENR is looking at declaring more mineral reservations in response to recent audit findings that found that the government did not collect P2.7 billion from mining activities.

Teh said the DENR hoped to solve the problem of uncollected mining revenue by declaring more areas as mineral reserva-

tions, which would give the MGB mandate to collect royalties.

The present mining law requires operators to pay royalty only in areas that were declared mineral reservations.

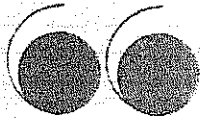
The fees represent about 5 percent of the market value of the minerals produced by mining firms in the reservation area.

Of the fees, 54 percent are given to the national government and 36 percent to the local government. The remaining 10 percent goes to the MGB.

## COA finding

In its 2017 report on the MGB, the Commission on Audit (COA) questioned the agency's failure to collect a total of P2.7

# DENR to open more mining areas



We understand [the] government's desire to derive more revenue from the mining industry. We are studying the impact of the proposal and hope our inputs would be considered during deliberations

**Rocky Dimaculangan**

Chamber of Mines of the Philippines VP for communications



Analiza Rebueta-Teh

billion in royalties from five mining companies in the Caraga region between 2012 and 2016.

Mr. Duterte himself has repeatedly expressed exasperation that while mining companies continue to rake in profits, their activities have taken a heavy toll on the environment.

In his State of the Nation Address on July 23, the President vowed to prioritize the protection of the environment, warning mining companies against shortchanging the people in the exploitation of the country's mineral resources.

"Do not just give me taxes. I can get it from other sources. Give me what needs to be given to my countrymen," he said.

In a speech during the 31st anniversary of the DENR on July 4,

Mr. Duterte said he was considering stopping mining operations in the country as he expressed concern over the negative impact of these activities on the environment.

"I told Roy (Cimatu), Roy, there has to be a time that we have to decide just to tell them (the mining companies) frankly. Anyway, we're getting something like P70 billion (from the) mining industry. We can get that from other sources," he said.

## TRAIN 2

According to Teh, the DENR has also proposed to the Department of Finance to include the imposition of royalty on mining firms operating outside mineral reservations in the second package of the Tax Reform

for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act.

"Should an amendatory law be passed, the imposition of royalties on mining operations outside mineral reservations will be applied prospectively," she said.

Rocky Dimaculangan, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines vice president for communications, said the group would have to review the impact of the agency's latest move first.

"We understand [the] government's desire to derive more revenue from the mining industry. We are studying the impact of the proposal and hope our inputs would be considered during deliberations," he said.

Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM), an anti-mining group, has reservations.

"We can understand if the government would like to declare existing mining operations as mineral reservations but we still oppose the move... even in the argument that we can expect more revenue," ATM spokesperson Jaybee Garganera said.

He said the declaration of new mineral reservation areas would enable the government to convert land areas and waive permits, such as local government endorsements and environment impact assessments. INQ

# DA chief not resigning

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol brushed aside yesterday calls for his resignation, saying he should not be blamed for the failures of others, particularly over rice shortages in some regions and the soaring prices of the staple.

Piñol said he would resign only if ordered by President Duterte, stressing that he served at the pleasure of the appointing power.

Malacañang said that despite an unfolding food security crisis highlighted by the rice shortage in parts of Mindanao, Piñol still enjoyed the trust and confidence of Duterte and is unlikely to leave his post "unless fired."

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. made this clear when sought for comment on calls from some lawmakers, including House Minority Leader Danilo Suarez and Deputy Minority Leader Lito Atienza for Piñol to resign due to incompetence.

"It's like asking me to answer for the sins of my neighbor," Piñol told "The Chiefs" last night on Signal TV's *One News* channel. "The President appointed me to this position. If he thinks I'm incompetent, I'm ready to go. I'm ready to go home to my farm."

Also asked to resign were National Food Authority chief

Turn to Page 8

## DA chief From Page 1

Jason Aquino and members of the interagency NFA Council.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) has also asked Piñol to step down for his "absurd and unacceptable arguments" to justify the importation of rice and fish.

Piñol stressed that the NFA is not under his department. Asked if he supported the NFA's abolition, he initially did not reply, but later said it should remain as a regulatory body and should perform its original mandate that covers other basic food commodities.

Roque said the administration expects the situation to normalize at the onset of the next main harvest next month.

On reports that Piñol was in favor of legalizing opium smuggling in Zamboanga, Roque said the agriculture chief was misquoted.

Piñol stressed he would only resign if ordered by President Duterte.

"I serve at the pleasure of the President. If the President says he is not happy with my performance, I would gladly

pack up my bags and go home to my farm," he said. "My only consolation would be that I am not facing issues of corruption."

He told **The STAR** that rice prices began rising as NFA stocks were depleted because of a five-month delay in importing buffer stocks. The delay, he said, was due to the bickering between the NFA and the NFA Council, both of which are not under his department.

The agriculture chief said some legislators do not understand that the issue of rice shortage – along with the importation of *bukbok* (weevil)-infested rice – is not for the Department of Agriculture (DA) to address.

"The reason why I figured prominently in the raging rice supply and price issue was because I volunteered to help resolve the problem since nobody in government was on top of the situation," he pointed out.

"I am already helping even if it is not part of my job. Why

blame me for the rice *bukbok* issue? The DA has nothing to do with rice importation. The DA is only involved in production," he added.

On the issue of importation of *galunggong* (round scad), Piñol said he hopes he would be given the opportunity to further explain his position – that such importation is needed to stabilize the supply of the fish in the market.

"I take full responsibility because BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources) is under the DA. Given a chance to explain, I believe legislators will understand the program," he said.

He added even Senate agriculture committee chair Cynthia Villar had apologized for wrongly blaming the DA for the rice shortage, thinking it had officially reassumed jurisdiction over the NFA. "She advised me to make a statement so that people would know that NFA is not under me. I told her that I understood the confusion caused by the public announcement of the NFA's return to the DA," he said.

"I told Senator Villar that when the Zamboanga rice crisis broke out, I called up Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea to volunteer to help resolve the issue. While the lack of NFA rice in the region is mainly the concern of NFA, somebody in the administration had to step in and take control of the situation," Piñol said.

Last April, Malacañang announced the return of the NFA and two other agriculture-related agencies to the DA. The President, however, has yet to issue an executive order on the matter to make the arrangement official.



"At the end of the day, when people are unhappy, they will not just differentiate the DA from the NFA or the local governments from Malacañang and will just blame the whole government," he added.

### No more crisis

Piñol reiterated that the Zamboanga rice crisis is considered over with the allocation of about 2.6 million bags of commercial rice, enough to satisfy the market in the next six months.

His declaration, however, that *bukbok*-infested rice is safe to eat has invited criticism from Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian who maintained that Filipinos, even the poor, should not settle for low quality rice.

Gatchalian said it is the job of the NFA to ensure that rice imports are up to standards and that the necessary protocols are followed.

"Secretary Piñol should see to it that those who failed to do their jobs are held accountable," Gatchalian said, apparently unaware that the NFA is not under the DA.

In an interview with reporters, Gatchalian reiterated his call for the abolition of the NFA, citing its failure to fulfill its mandate of ensuring a stable supply of affordable rice in the country.

Gatchalian said the NFA has been receiving close to P7 billion in subsidies from the government annually and yet it has not stabilized rice supply.

Sen. Nancy Binay, for her part, urged Malacañang to step into the conflict between the NFA and the NFA Council.

"I hope the Palace can do something about the fit of misunderstandings between the Council and NFA. The NFA and the NFA Council have been engaged in a blame game for

over a year already. It is sad that the row between the two offices has already reached a deadlock placing the entire country in an episodic and often cyclical food insecurity status," Binay said.

### Abolish NFA

In a related development, economic experts belonging to the Foundation for Economic Freedom Inc. (FEFI) have expressed support for the call of Villar and Gatchalian to abolish the NFA.

The FEFI has for its board of advisers former prime minister Cesar Virata, former socio-economic planning secretary Gerardo Sicat, National Scientist Dr. Raul Fabella and former World Bank resident representative Thomas Allen.

"The NFA has only caused and aggravated inflation and rice shortage in several regions, compounded the debt and losses of the national government and provided opportunities for graft and corruption for its officers and employees, from the purchase of imported rice to the distribution and transportation of subsidized rice," FEFI said in a statement.

"We urge the Senate and the House of Representatives to immediately pass the rice tariffication bill. We support a version of the bill that will abolish the National Food Authority and its powers, including imposing import quotas on the private sector in the importation of rice and to license traders and importers," the foundation said.

The group also supported plans to set tariff as low as possible to make rice more affordable to more than 100 million rice-consuming Filipinos.

FEFI said "the private sector should be free to import rice from any source in whatever quantities the market needs. This is the only solution to the current rice shortage crisis and to the pervasive malnutrition caused by high food prices."

"To maintain and manage buffer stocks, a new and much smaller agency can be created," the foundation also said.

NFA, for its part, denied that

it is selling *bukbok*-infested rice in the market amid the continuous fumigation of imported rice.

NFA's Aquino said the more than 200,000 sacks of rice affected with weevils last week are not yet owned by the grains agency and these grains are not being sold to the public.

Aquino said the supplier will shoulder the cost of fumigation of the infested stocks, which will still be subject to standard inspection and evaluation by NFA's technical experts before these are finally accepted, based on the quality specifications stipulated in the contract.

The infested portions of imported deliveries constitute only 0.02 percent of the total volume of NFA imported rice.

Meanwhile, the NFA said it has beefed up its food security stocks for the Zamboanga peninsula, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi (Zambasulta) area to 2,000 bags a day or about half of the region's 5,340 bags daily rice requirement.

On the other hand, NFA said it continues to intensify rice distribution activities nationwide to make its low-priced rice more accessible and available to more consumers.

Some 15,892 accredited rice retail outlets are currently selling NFA rice all over the country as it currently distributes an average of 58,000 bags of rice a day.

### Price control

Meanwhile, rice watchdog Bantay Bigas is urging the Duterte administration to immediately impose price control on rice to make it affordable and accessible to Filipino consumers.

"We are asking President Duterte to immediately issue an Executive Order that would determine the price of rice or set price control. Based on the research conducted by the group, it is right to sell rice at P34 to P38 per kilo. At present, the price of rice in Zamboanga City would reach as high as P70 up to P80 per kilo. Meanwhile, in Nueva Ecija, it is P43 up to P56 a kilo," said Cathy Estavillo, Bantay Bigas spokesperson. - With Louise Maureen Simeon, Marvin Sy, Ding Cervantes, Rhodina Villanueva.

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# China, Russia to hold landmark war games

As the West obsesses over Donald Trump's legal and political challenges, Brexit and a host of other domestic crises, Chinese troops will join their Russian counterparts for Moscow's largest military exercises in more than three decades.

Coming six months after Beijing's biggest ever offshore naval drills, the joint war games are another reminder of how central military posturing now is to the world's two most powerful authoritarian states.

While neither likely desires or expects war with the United States or its allies, both Beijing and Moscow want to give every impression they are increasingly ready—and are relying on that message to dominate their neighborhoods and intimidate less powerful nearby nations.

### Much wider picture

Both countries also have an unambiguous message for the Pentagon—that if war should come in Eastern Europe or the South China Sea, the United States would risk serious losses if it tried to intervene.

These landmark military exercises are part of a much wider picture of investment, develop-

ment and weapons trials—even if the outcome has sometimes been mixed.

According to reports, Russian forces are still attempting to recover a nuclear-powered cruise missile that failed on a test flight somewhere in the Arctic last year.

China, meanwhile, is reported to have suffered its own significant increase in military aircraft crashes over the last two years, particularly in the South China Sea.

It's a stark sign of how much risk these countries are willing to take on in their quest for military power—arguably significantly more than the United States or any of its European and Asian allies.

Russia's September "Vostok" drills will involve up to 300,000 troops, just as Moscow deploys its largest naval formation in several years to the Mediterranean.

As well as a naked warning to the United States not to intervene with any further Russian action in Syria, they also likely act as domestic political messaging.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's poll numbers have been waning as of late, and military

posturing could help his popularity.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has also increasingly embraced militaristic nationalism as he entrenches his power.

### Different confrontations

But if war should actually come, both countries see themselves in rather different confrontations.

Russia sees future wars most likely taking place on land, a repeat of scaled-up versions of 2008 and post-2014 conflicts with neighbors Georgia and Ukraine, in which victory depends on deploying overwhelming military force within a few kilometers of Russian territory while keeping the United States and other powerful Western states from intervening.

China, meanwhile, sees its most likely wars taking place offshore, either over disputed territories in the South China Sea or Taiwan, which Beijing considers a rogue province and which has long feared mainland China might intervene to snuff out its hopes for independence.

As with any territorial ambitions Moscow might have in Europe, however, victory would

again depend on keeping US and other allied forces back and out of theater as much as possible for the duration of the war.

Much of the new technology both Moscow and Beijing are developing is designed with this goal in mind, particularly China's missiles and submarines built explicitly for sinking US aircraft carriers.

But new military purchases and deployments are also part of a much wider diplomatic and propaganda strategy.

Russia has lobbied furiously against Georgia and Ukraine joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato), while those who watch Moscow's social media and television feeds closely say it has also been attempting to undermine support for the Baltic states, Nato's most Eastern members.

China has launched a savage diplomatic campaign this year to further isolate Taiwan, encouraging airlines and foreign governments to view it once again as part of mainland China.

#### Limited success

In these attempts both countries have had very limited success, but many believe they

will continue to intensify their efforts in the months and years to come.

The United States' response, unsurprisingly, has been to do very much the same.

In Europe, that has meant a dramatically stepped-up involvement in Nato exercises, particularly in countries that are most vulnerable to Russia, such as the Baltic states, Norway and Poland.

US and allied warships and aircraft have continued to aggressively control disputed areas of the South China Sea, even as Beijing has dramatically increased its military presence in the area.

Clearly, that's something that infuriates both Moscow and Beijing.

#### Global distrust

China has tried to exclude the United States from regional military exercises it wants to organize with other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), while Russian media has repeatedly complained that Nato forces in Eastern Europe are themselves provocative and a threat to nearby Russian troops and territory.

All these feed into a rising tide of global distrust. This year, the United States disinvented China from taking part in its annual Rimpac Pacific naval drills, in part due to espionage fears but also in protest against China's growing South China Sea bellicosity.

For all their increasingly allied interest against America, there are no signs Russia and China particularly trust each other, either.

Moscow has long feared Beijing might try to grab territory in its sparsely populated center, while Beijing has had its own worries about how Russia might use its military against it.

Indeed, some observers suspect one of the principal reasons Moscow invited Beijing to take part in next month's exercises is to keep Beijing from worrying they may be a precursor to actual military action.

Where the truth lies is inevitably hard to know. But the more energy and focus the world's great powers put into extravagant war games, the greater the likelihood that they may find themselves in a real and perhaps uncontrollable conflict. —PETER APPS, REUTERS



# Phl to China: Cooperation, not confrontation

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

The Philippines has raised with China the need for cooperation rather than confrontation in the West Philippine Sea.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said the other day that he brought up with Beijing President Duterte's concern about the Chinese Navy's warning to a Philippine military aircraft while it was patrolling the West Philippine Sea last Aug. 10.

The BBC reported that the Chinese military threatened the Philippine aircraft flying over the disputed South China Sea and

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## Phl From Page 1

warned the plane would "bear the responsibility for all the consequences" if it did not leave the area.

He said while the situation is now better in the West Philippine Sea, there is much more potential for cooperation which includes fisheries, environment and (oil) exploration and development.

He said during a recent meeting with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other Chinese officials the urgency of completing projects in the West Philippine Sea during President Duterte's six-year

term.

"The joint (gas and oil) exploration can be done quite quickly in a year or less than a year," he said.

"We talked about some of the details (of the projects). We agreed not to have a deadline but we agreed to work on it with an ASAP (as soon as possible) mentality so that we can get it done," Cayetano told reporters.

He expressed optimism that a framework for the joint sea exploration would be signed in Beijing next month.

Meanwhile, Cayetano said he would resign as the country's top diplomat if it is proven that the 50 to 100 diplomatic protests filed against

China under the Duterte administration were only a "figment of his imagination."

Irked by doubts and questions on the diplomatic protests Manila has filed against China, he dared Sen. Risa Hontiveros to resign if the number of protests he stated is proven accurate.

Critics of the Duterte administration, he said, were "burned" from wrong information in the past, pointing to Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano, claiming that patrols in the West Philippine Sea had ceased.

As his word war with Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Alejano heated up in June, Cayetano said he wished

lightning would strike the one among them peddling lies about developments in the West Philippine Sea.

In another development, China lauded Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III for his positive remark that the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative is a powerful idea which could be an engine for global growth.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that the Philippines is China's "friendly close neighbor and an important partner for the building of the Belt and Road."

Dominguez headed the Cabinet economic team that visited China the other week.

# Legal battle looms over sea exploration

FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Alan Cayetano on Thursday said the Duterte administration's plan for a joint exploration and development deal with China over South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) resources would face tough legal challenges over a constitutional restriction, among others.

Under the deal, the Philippines will get 60 percent of the benefits against China's 40-percent share.

► Exploration A2

## EXPLORATION FROM A1

### Legal battle

The 1987 Constitution, however, provides that the exploration, development and utilization of natural resources should be under the full control and supervision of the Philippine government.

It allows the Philippine government to enter into a co-production, joint venture or production-sharing agreements, but only with private companies 60-percent owned by Filipino citizens.

"Exploration is easy because it is just like having an X-ray. We will be able to see what is in there. It

can happen in six months to one year. But joint development, that's the hard part, since it will take four to six years. China will have to accept it [joint agreement] within their laws, Filipinos have to accept it within our laws," Cayetano said in a news conference.

On top of possible constitutional breach, the Philippine Supreme Court (SC) is yet to rule on the legality of a similar venture in the past — the Joint Marine Seismic Undertaking (JMSU) deal with China and Vietnam which covered islands located 142,886 square kilometers west of Palawan.

Those islands are located within the Philippines' 200 nautical miles

off the shore exclusive economic zone (EEZ) based on United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas.

The JMSU went on from 2005 to 2008, but it was not renewed since critics of the Arroyo administration questioned its legality before the SC.

"Those [legal questions] are part of discussions. We have to take them into consideration. That is what makes it tricky. That is why I said we will have a legal framework if both sides will propose provisions that, in effect, will set aside the issue of our claims, so that it will not damage the negotiation. Rest assured that we are working

on a legal framework where both countries will be agreeable and would pass the Supreme Court with flying colors," Cayetano said.

In 2016, the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration junked China's nine-dash line claim to the entire South China Sea and declared that the Spratly Islands, as well as the Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Recto (Reed) Bank are within the EEZ of the Philippines.

Cayetano maintained that the joint exploration and development deal with China is for the best interest of the country, considering that various research findings show that the West Philippine Sea sits atop vast

natural oil and gas deposits.

"We don't get the oil and gas in exchange for our sovereignty. We are only discussing economic rights here," he pointed out.

Cayetano noted that the Malampaya natural gas project in Palawan, which supplies 30 to 40 percent of Luzon's power supply, could be over by 2028.

"It is a great opportunity to lift Filipinos out of poverty. We should do this before Malampaya runs out of gas. We can look at it this way: It's like neighbors at odds over a mango tree which one side is more fruitful than the other. Do we take mangoes and throw them at each other? No. We can make it

60-40," he said.

"Besides, China knows that part of being a good neighbor is understanding our economic situation. No doubt, both countries want it and need it. The question is, 'Who needs it more?' It is us. If we are going to be an oil producer [as a result of the joint agreement], it will immensely help our people," Cayetano added.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier said he expects China's incursions and reclamation activities in the West Philippine Sea to stop once the Philippines and China sign a joint exploration agreement on oil and natural gas there.

LLANESCA T. PANTI

# DFA chief: Hontiveros quit if complaint proven

By Mario J. Mallari

Now, our fishermen can venture into Scarborough and the environment is being protected

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peier Cayetano challenged Sen. Risa Hontiveros to resign if he can prove the existence of diplomatic protests the government filed against China in connection with the disputed West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Conversely, Cayetano said he will step down if he can't show proof that the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) issued protest correspondences against China.

were "total fakery, non-existent and a figment of imagination."

Cayetano said the supporters of former President Benigno Aquino should reflect on the previous diplomatic approach with China.

Cayetano made the challenge in reaction to Hontiveros' accusation that the "50 to 100" diplomatic actions taken by the Duterte administration against China

"The Philippines lost Panatag Shoal (Scarborough) in 2012 - apparently due to the failed

Turn to page 2



# DFA chief: Hontiveros quit if complaint proven

"This is my challenge - if it's figment of my imagination, I'll resign. If it's not, will you (Hontiveros) resign?" Cayetano asked.

### Ask your scriptwriter

"Because me, I am sure of what I am saying, I am not reading from script. So you asked her if her scriptwriter is wrong," Cayetano said.

Cayetano added he already promised to submit to the Senate all documents pertaining to the diplomatic actions taken by the Duterte administration against China since July 2016.

Cayetano noted that opposition politicians have been spreading false information regarding the government's efforts in the WPS, citing previous claims by Magdalo Partylist Rep. Gary Alejano that all patrols were stopped in the WPS.

Recently, Alejano said Mr. Duterte's upcoming trip to Israel has something to do with his health. It turned out, however, that the trip is an official visit full of scheduled meetings.

### False news purveyors

"How many times have these critics revealed false information?" Cayetano asked.

Cayetano turned the tables on Hontiveros and Alejano, who are known allies of Aquino, stressing that the previous administration

## Why did the Aquino administration not file a single protest against Malaysia and Vietnam?

From page 1

policy and poor handling of the Aquino administration," he said.

China did not leave Panatag Shoal after a two-month tense standoff between Philippine and Chinese ships in June 2012 when Aquino ordered the pullout of Philippine vessels from the area.

"As a matter of strategy, your (previous administration) strategy resulted in the loss of Scarborough, tourism slowed down, weakened agriculture sector. We had so many problems," Cayetano said.

"The strategy of President Duterte is the opposite. Now, our fishermen can venture into Scarborough, we have co-control of Scarborough, the environment is being protected," he added.

did not file any protest against Malaysia and Vietnam despite their activities in the disputed WPS.

"Some critics say that 'if you don't protest, it's giving it up.' Why was she not able to answer me when I asked why the Aquino administration did not file a single protest against Malaysia and Vietnam despite the presence of features inside?" Cayetano asked.

"But now, with our good relations with Malaysia and Vietnam, I have and am discussing it with them but our relations are good," Cayetano added.

"Their thinking is that when you have a dispute, you are enemies, you burn bridges. That's not diplomacy. Diplomacy is you use all and every resource available to find solutions," Cayetano added.

#### Friends to all

The country's role as coordinator for China in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will not soften its claims to the WPS as

Cayetano reiterated the Duterte administration's foreign affairs strategy is bearing fruit.

In fact, Cayetano said that as country coordinator for China, the Philippines will be in a better position to ensure that the Filipino interest is protected in all negotiations.

"We wear two hats—one as country coordinator, we are bridging ASEAN and China... (and) we're also (a) claimant state. You cannot sacrifice your own claims for the chance to be the bridge or the coordinator," Cayetano said.

"It will be challenging but it will be good for us because at least we are sure that in all of the negotiations, our claims are protected," he added.

Cayetano maintained that the Duterte administration's foreign policy of "friends to all, enemies to none" has benefited the country.

At the same time, Cayetano said the most significant development in diplomacy between both countries is the discussion for the planned joint exploration in the disputed area.

A top level working group has been created by Mr. Duterte, upon the recommendation of Cayetano, to draft a framework that would serve as guide in the planned joint exploration with China.

**The most significant development in diplomacy between both countries is the discussion for the planned joint exploration.**

"With your strategy, we did not have any chance to harness oil and gas there," Cayetano said.

The 10 ASEAN member

states take turns in serving as a country coordinator for the bloc's numerous dialogue partners. In August 2018, the Philippines was assigned to the ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations.

#### Defusing tension eyed

Currently, the two parties are working towards the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (CoC), which is aimed at defusing tensions in the strategic waterway, where China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have overlapping territorial claims.

On the draft CoC, China has reportedly proposed the conduct of regular joint military exercises in the South China Sea, excluding countries outside the region "unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection."

Cayetano did not give any detail on the proposed provision in the draft but relayed Beijing is interested in a document that dispels "misunderstanding" and "dispute" in the region.

"There's an agreement among the ASEAN member states (and China) not to disclose what is found in the single draft, precisely because the negotiation starts getting complicated when we discuss it in public," he said.

"I was told that China, of course, is sincere and interested in a CoC and in all and any ways to transform the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea from an area of dispute and misunderstanding to a zone of peace, cooperation and development," he added.

Walter Douglas, deputy assistant secretary at the State Department, said US will maintain its presence in the South China Sea in accordance with international law.



# As Asean-China coordinator, PH interest in SCS protected

**By CRISTINA LEE-RISCO**

**THE Philippines assured that its interest in the South China Sea (SCS) will be protected with its role as a coordinator between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)**

and China. "It will be challenging, but it will be good for us kasi at least sure tayo na sa all of the negotiations, protected ang ating claims," Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said. Manila will play a constructive role in promoting good ties between the Asean

and China upon assumption of the role of a coordinator between the two parties. "As far as our being a country coordinator, very, very clear naman 'yung kumunika natin na we wear two hats: one as country coordinator tayo ang taga-bridge ng Asean at

tsaka ng China. And when you say 'bridge', two ways yan: kung anong gustong sabihin ng ibang Asean member, states at kung anong gustong sabihin ng China," he said.

The 10 Asean member states take turns in serving as a country coordinator for the bloc's numerous dialogue relationships.

Currently, the two parties are working towards the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct (CoC) that will govern the conduct of parties in the South China Sea. China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have overlapping territorial claims in the area.

On the draft CoC, China has reportedly proposed the conduct of regular joint-military exercises in the South China Sea, excluding countries outside the region "unless the parties concerned are notified beforehand and express no objection."



CAMPUS PROTEST

UP PRESIDENT APOLOGIZES FOR KB REUNION

By Jodee A. Agoncillo @jagoncilloINQ

Saying he was only human, the president of the University of the Philippines (UP) has apologized for attending last week's Kabataang Barangay (KB) reunion at the university's alumni center with the defunct group's former head, Imee Marcos, the eldest daughter of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

But UP professors,



FROM A1

students, workers and alumni, who called the KB reunion on campus an "insult" to UP's activist history and a blatant disregard of martial law's effects on the state university, on Thursday rejected UP president Danilo Concepcion's apology.

Instead, they challenged him to join them in a protest against the dictatorship on the 46th anniversary of the declaration of martial law on Sept. 21.

In his statement on Wednesday, Concepcion said he attend-

ed the reunion at the Bahay ng Alumni in his "desire" to see "old-time friends."

"I deeply regret the pain my appearance at the Kabataang Barangay reunion in UP Diliman last Aug. 25 caused the UP community. I intended no offense, most especially to the UP community that I serve," he said.

"My desire to be with old-time friends I had not seen for decades, no matter how briefly, made me overlook its effect on the sentiments of the UP community. *Tao lang po!* (I'm only human!)" Concepcion said.

Concepcion, who was president of KB in Metro Manila from

1976 to 1978, assured the UP community that on his watch the university "will never forget the dark period of our country during the martial law years and will continuously hold in high esteem the university's best and brightest who made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for freedom and democracy."

UP was closed for about one month after Marcos declared martial law on Sept. 21, 1972, outlawed activist organizations and shut down the student council and the student paper, the Philippine Collegian.

Hundreds of students from UP and other schools were in-

carcerated, many tortured, for defying martial law.

Campus alliance

Representatives of No Erasures, No Revisions, a broad alliance of UP staff and students, gathered on Thursday at the student center, Vinzons Hall, to condemn the KB reunion on campus. About 300 people, including nonmembers of the alliance, attended the assembly.

Former Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo said the KB reunion was a "perversion" and an "insult" to the activist history of UP during martial law.

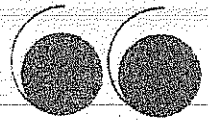
"The various attempt to justi-

fy the Imee Marcos-led event last Saturday will never fly with any Filipino who experienced martial law, or those who have heard the stories of torture and read the accounts of families who, up to now, have no closure because their loved ones were disappeared by the fascist police and military forces of the Marcos dictatorship," Taguiwalo said.

Stand UP's Aimira Abril, a mass communication student, said the Marcoses were "monsters" who "never acknowledged the human rights of Filipinos."

"We are not moving on. We are moving forward," she said.

INQ



My desire to be with old-time friends... made me overlook its effect on the sentiments of the UP community

Danilo Concepcion UP president



17TH SOUTHEAST ASIA COOPERATION AND TRAINING EXERCISES

# PH NAVY SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUP TO JOIN US, OTHERS

## IN MARITIME DRILLS

By Jeannette I. Andrade  
@jiandradeINQ

The Philippine Navy has deployed its special operations group to take part in annual maritime exercises with the United States and other Southeast Asian countries aimed at building maritime domain awareness in the region.

The Philippines, according to Cmdr. Jonathan Zata, the Navy spokesperson, is participating in the 17th Southeast Asia

Cooperation and Training (Seacat) exercises, which started on Monday.

"We have earmarked one patrol ship and a fast frigate plus aircraft and teams from our naval special operations group, all currently deployed at the area of responsibility of Naval Forces West based in Puerto Princesa City," Zata said on Thursday.

### Exercises

"There will be maritime air

surveillance and maritime interdiction exercises," he said, adding that a ship of "notional critical contact of interest" would be tracked, identified and stopped.

"A visit, board, search and seizure exercise will be performed by one of our Navy ships," Zata said.

In a teleconference on Thursday morning, Rear Adm. Murray Joey Tynch III, commander of the logistics group Western Pacific, Task Force 73.

said that Seacat is basically intended to build greater maritime domain awareness among participating countries.

"Seacat confirms our commitment to rules-based order because to have rules-based order you have to have maritime domain awareness," Tynch said, speaking from Singapore's information fusion center.

"Because if you don't know what's going on, you don't know if the rules are being followed and you have to have that for

security, stability and prosperity in these countries," he said, referring to the participants in the exercises—Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

### Broader scope

"The nature of the exercise reflects the nature of these relationships we have built as they evolve and grow stronger," he said.

Seacat, Tynch said, evolved

from a counterterrorism exercise to encompass a broader scope of common global security concerns where information sharing is the key point through maritime operations centers set up in the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei and Thailand. *19*

Taking part in Seacat, which began in 2002 as the Southeast Asia Cooperation Against Terrorism, are maritime domain representatives and 100 sailors on 13 vessels from the nine participating countries. *INQ*

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# INQUIRER

IN FAVOR OF URGENT EQUIPMENT

## ACQUISITION OF FIGHTER JETS MAY BE MOVED TO 2023—LORENZANA

By Jeannette I. Andrade  
@jiandradeINQ

The Department of National Defense is considering deferring the acquisition of multi-role fighter (MRF) jets to give way to the procurement of urgent military equipment under the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines modernization program (RAFPMP).

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana raised the possibility of moving the MRF acquisition from the second horizon, which covers the years 2018-2022, to the third horizon (2023-2028) of the RAFPMP.

"We are closely looking if we can move it (MRF acquisition) to the third (horizon) in favor of other more pressing capabilities," he said in a message to reporters.

### Heavy-lift aircraft

Lorenzana clarified that the plan was not intended to pave the way for the acquisition of other more expensive items but for the procurement of more medium- or heavy-lift aircraft and naval vessels.

On Monday, he said President Duterte had declined Lockheed Martin F-16 fighter jets being offered by the Unit-

ed States because "we have no enemies here."

The military, he said, needs aircraft which can be used for both combat operations, as well as humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

### Submarine procurement

Meanwhile, Lorenzana said the acquisition of submarines might be undertaken through government-to-government procurement.

"The submarines, if we finally decide to buy them, will be on a government-to-government procurement and under a loan so that we do not need a large upfront capital outlay," he said.

Russia has offered a soft loan package to the Philippines for Kilo-class submarines, which costs from \$300 million to \$350 million each, excluding expenses for the fitting of armaments and the construction of infrastructure.

Apart from Russia, the defense department is also looking at South Korea, France and Germany as possible sources of submarines.

The Kilo-class is a diesel-electric fast-attack submarine, said to be the quietest of its kind in the world. INQ

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# Senators doubt ML brings peace to Mindanao

By Leila B. Salaverria  
and Jerome Aning  
@Team\_Inquirer

Senators on Thursday raised doubts that extending martial law in Mindanao would bring peace to the island.

For Sen. Panfilo Lacson, it is not martial law that would ensure peace in Mindanao, but a better inclusive security plan that includes talking to all disgruntled groups on the island.

Not even the new Bangsamoro Organic Law, the product of a peace deal between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), would be sufficient, Lacson said.

Lacson spoke after a bomb exploded in Isulan town, Sultan Kudarat, on Tuesday night, killing three people and wound-

ing 36 others.

The military is blaming the blast on the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea floated the idea of extending martial law in Mindanao—in effect since May 2017 and would lapse on Dec. 31—after the bombing.

## President's call

Commenting on Medialdea's idea, House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya on Thursday said the House leadership would support an extension of martial law in Mindanao if President Duterte asked for it.

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo told reporters she would back a request for extension from Mr. Duterte.

"I'll support what the Presi-



Panfilo Lacson

dent does because I've been President and I believe that he does not need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do," Arroyo told reporters in Floridablanca, Pampanga, on Thursday.

But Lacson suggested that the National Security Council and the security forces "take a hard look at their security plans

and strategy, especially in the south, and try to avert the vicious cycle of talking peace with one tribal group while alienating the others."

Lacson noted that the MILF had become a dominant force in Mindanao after the government forged peace with the Moro National Liberation Front.

"As it may be shaping now, as we make peace with the MILF, a breakaway group is sowing terror," he said.

## Good police work

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said he saw no reason to extend martial law.

"The existing martial law proclamation failed to prevent the bombing, so why would an extension prevent a future bombing?" Pangilinan said.

Good police work is needed to catch the perpetrators, he said.

If necessary, the armed forces could also be called out without declaring martial law, he said.

"Up until now, the region is stricken by hunger due to the rice crisis and high prices of commodities. This requires immediate action, and martial law extension is definitely not [part of it]," Pangilinan added.

## Defense officials' briefing

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III, who is from Mindanao, said he wanted first to hear an explanation justifying any proposal to extend martial law.

Pimentel said he also wanted to know how effective the current martial law declaration had been in keeping peace and order on the island.

"[Defense officials] must give a briefing. What's happening? What have they done? How come, in spite of martial law being imposed in Mindanao, such an explosion in Sultan Kudarat happened?" Pimentel said.

Human rights group Karapatan slammed Malacañang's statement and Arroyo's support for an extension of martial law in the aftermath of the Isulan blast.

"While the bombing ... is a deplorable act, it is equally appalling that Duterte and his minions are now using the situation to justify the intensification of military attacks on communities in Mindanao through the extension of the martial law declaration," said Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay.

—WITH A REPORT FROM MELVIN GASCON INQ

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## 'Martial law, BOL don't guarantee peace in Mindanao'

By MARVIN SY

The bombing incident in Sultan Kudarat suggests that neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law could guarantee peace in Mindanao, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said yesterday.

Lacson urged the National Security Council and the troops on the ground to "take a hard look at their security plans and strategy, especially in the South, and try to avert the vicious cycle of talking peace with one tribal group while alienating the others."

"The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) came into being and developed themselves into the dominant armed force in Mindanao after we dealt peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)," Lacson said.

"As it may be shaping now, as we make peace with the MILF, a breakaway group is sowing terror," he added.

Lacson urged his colleagues in the Senate to take up his Senate Bill 1956, or the proposed anti-terrorism act of 2018, because the existing Human Security Act of 2007 "has not been proving itself effective in addressing terrorism in our country."

Senate Bill 1956 seeks to amend the Human Security Act by adding provisions pertaining to foreign terrorists and additional predicate crimes.

Lacson said there are gaps in the Human Security Act that have prevented authorities from implementing the law properly. He cited the case of the Marawi siege in 2017, which bared the "many loopholes of the current anti-terrorism law."

"While an anti-terror law in

itself cannot solve the problem of terrorism, an intensified one can, however, give the government and the law enforcement agencies the much-needed tool in dealing with the emerging threats of terrorism," Lacson said.

Under the bill, the term terrorist acts would replace the term terrorism in order to remove the requirement of the acts being perpetrated for the purpose of coercing the government to give in to a specific demand.

"This has the effect of punishing the act of committing crimes that sow widespread extraordinary fear and panic, and not the purpose behind the commission of such acts," Lacson said.

The bill also penalizes foreign terrorists, including those who travel to a state other than their state of residence, for committing or organizing terrorist acts, and those residing abroad who come to the Philippines in transit to commit or take part in terrorist acts to target other countries. The bill clarifies that terrorist acts shall exclude legitimate exercises of the freedom of expression and right to peaceably assemble "where a person does not have the intention to use or urge the use of force or violence or cause harm to others."

Under the bill, law enforcement or military personnel may conduct surveillance on suspected terrorists upon written authorization of the Anti-Terrorism Commission (ATC) and upon granting of a judicial authorization by the Court of Appeals (CA) and the Regional Trial Court (RTC) that has territorial jurisdiction over the area where the suspected persons are located.

# GMA, Kudarat execs back martial law extension

By EDU PUNAY

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday supported the proposed third extension of martial law in Mindanao floated by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea after Tuesday's deadly Sultan Kudarat blast, whose death toll rose to three people dead and several others wounded.

"I support martial law in Mindanao. I support what President does because I've been president and I believe that he does not need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do," she told reporters in Pampanga, where she attended the blessing of a newly renovated hospital.

Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. said there is no question that Congress would extend martial law if President Duterte asks for it.

"The declaration of martial law is the call of the executive. The President de-

clares or extends, Congress concurs. If the President will ask for it, then it shall be given," he said.

However, Andaya suggested that Malacañang call a meeting of the National Security Council or the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council so that the progress of the rehabilitation of Marawi City and the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law could also be tackled.

"What are the financing bottlenecks for example? Bottom line is the people of Mindanao should be consulted. In the House, the inputs and views of members from Mindanao are important. Those in or around Ground Zero should be consulted. Civilian views should be part of the

discussion," he said.

On Wednesday, just hours after the Sultan Kudarat explosion on Tuesday night, Medialdea said extending martial law in Mindanao "is an option" to quell continuing violence in the island.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque agreed with Medialdea, saying extending martial law in Mindanao is an option because of last Tuesday's bombing attack.

Local executives in Sultan Kudarat said they would not oppose an extension of the martial law.

Maguindanao Gov. Esmael Mangudadatu also said he and the local officials in the province are not against any extension of martial law.

However, Vice President Leni Robredo led other officials in opposing the further extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Robredo said that martial law in the region has failed to suppress lawlessness and maintain peace and order.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said it would be "too early" to recommend the extension of martial law following last Tuesday's bombing.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said he was "not even thinking about martial law."

Senate President Vicente Sotto III said it was premature to be talking about a possible extension of martial law in Mindanao beyond the end of this year.

"I do not see the need for

a martial law extension," Sen. Francis Pangilinan added.

In May last year, President Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao and suspended the writ of habeas corpus to allow government forces to wipe out the Maute group of terrorists who had seized Marawi City.

The declaration was supposed to be good for 60 days under the Constitution. Before it expired in July, the President asked Congress to extend it up to the end of December 2017.

Before the December extension ended, Duterte again requested his congressional allies to lengthen it up to the end of this year.

Despite the imposition of martial law in Mindanao, a bomb exploded in Isulan, Sultan Kudat

at late Tuesday.

Last month, a bomb-laden van exploded in a powerful blast in Lamitan, Basilan that killed 11 people, including the suspected foreign militant who drove the vehicle.

### **P1-M reward**

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde revealed yesterday investigators have obtained leads on the man who could be responsible for the blast.

He said witnesses saw the suspect place a bag containing the bomb under a motorcycle

owned by a militiaman moments before the blast.

"They chased this person but he had a companion who was driving a motorcycle," Albayalde told reporters in Camp Crame after he returned from Isulan yesterday.

Meanwhile, authorities are offering a P1-million reward for any information that would identify the culprits behind last Tuesday's bomb attack in Isulan.

This developed as another victim died at the hospital, officials said, adding to the two people who were killed in the blast with more than 50 others injured.

Wellmark John Lapiades, a 21-year-old student, succumbed to multiple injuries while being treated at a local hospital.

The first two fatalities in the attack, Leny Dohina Ombrog, 51, and seven-year-old Devy Shane Alayon, were declared dead on arrival in a hospital.

Local officials led by Gov. Pax Mangudadatu said they are willing to give P1 million to any informant who can help the police identify the bombers.

Albayalde visited the victims at the hospital.

"Your police officials are doing their utmost to secure justice for the victims and put the culprits behind bars," Albayalde told the blast victims confined at the Sultan Kudarat provincial hospital.

— With John Unson, Marvin Sy, Roel Pareño, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Rhodina Villanueva, Evelyn Macairan, Jaime Laude



## SGMA backs extended ML in Mindanao

By RYAN PONCE-PACPAGO

**SPEAKER** Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo vowed yesterday to push for another possible extension of martial law and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao following the bombing incident in a town at Sultan Kudarat last Tuesday night.

Being a former President, Arroyo said she knows what the country needs to address the continued terrorism in Mindanao and would back martial law extension if President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte would ask for it.

"I support martial law in Mindanao. I'll support what the President does because I've been President and I believe that he does not need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do," Arroyo told reporters in an ambush interview after attending the blessing of the Romana Pangasinan District Hospital in

Floridablanca, Pampanga.

During Wednesday's budget hearing at the House of Representatives, Executive Sec. Salvador Medialdea bared that martial law extension remains an option by the government.

"It's an option," Medialdea told reporters in an ambush interview after defending the proposed 2019 P8.773 billion budget of the Office of the President (OP) before the House committee on appropriations chaired by Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles.

Congress, in a joint session last year, granted President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte's request to extend the martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018.

A total of 240 Congress members voted in favor of the martial law extension, while 27 rejected it. The Senate's voting was 14-4, while House of Representatives voted 226-23.

# GMA for Mindanao martial law extension

By Jester P. Manalastas

**SPEAKER** Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she favors the extension of martial law in Mindanao.

In an ambush interview, Arroyo said being a former president she is supporting President Duterte's leadership and policies.

"I support martial law in Mindanao. I'll support what the President does because I've been president and I believe that he does not need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do," Arroyo said, shortly after attending the blessing of the Romana Pangan District Hospital in Floridablanca, Pampanga.

Following the bombing in Sultan Kudarat that killed three persons, there's talk that Malacañang may extend martial law in Mindanao when it ends in December this year.

Earlier, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said extending martial rule in the south is an "option" in the wake of an explosion in Sultan Kudarat.

Reports said that a man left an improvised bomb in a bag near a grocery store in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat as crowds gathered to celebrate the town's founding anniversary.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said it believes that members of the terrorist group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom

Fighters, a splinter group of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, was behind the attack.

In addition, the military found two more unexploded bombs near the municipal hall.

For his part, Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. proposed that Malacañang should call for a National Security Council meeting or the convening of the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) to discuss martial law.

Andaya said while the declaration of martial law is the call of the president, members of Congress being representatives of the people, should be consulted on the matter.

"If the President will ask for it, then it shall be given. I would suggest though, that Malacañang call a meeting of the NSC or even LEDAC, para mapag-usapan ang progressing Marawi rehabilitation and the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law," Andaya said.

President Duterte declared martial law last year amid the attack of the Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Marawi City.

Congress granted the extension of martial rule in Mindanao until the end of 2018.

**SENATORS ON ML**  
Senator Panfilo "Ping"

Lacson is convinced that neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law can guarantee peace in Mindanao.

Lacson, a former head of the Philippine National Police, said that a review of the security strategy of the military and police should be prioritized after the Sultan Kudarat bombing.

"Instead, it is my view that the National Security Council and our ground security forces should take a hard look at their security plans and strategy, especially in the South," Lacson said.

The senator mentioned what he called the "vicious cycle" of the government talking peace with one tribal group while alienating others who in turn will rebel and attack government troops or worse, civilians.

"The Moro Islamic Liberation Front came into being and developed themselves into the dominant armed force in Mindanao after we dealt peace with the Moro National Liberation Front. As it may be shaping now, as we make peace with the MILF, a breakaway group is sowing terror," Lacson explained.

Senate President Vice-nte "Tito" Sotto III on the other hand said worse things could happen if there is no martial rule in Mindanao.

**With Marlon Purificacion**

# House backs extension of Mindanao martial law

BY GLEE JALEA

■ MARTIAL LAW FROM A1

**T**HE House leadership on Thursday backed a Malacañang proposal to extend martial law in Mindanao, following a blast in Sultan Kudarat that left two people dead.

House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said President Rodrigo Duterte

■ Martial law A8

## House

“does not need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do.”

“I support martial law in Mindanao. I support what [the President] does because I've been president,” she told reporters in Pampanga.

On Wednesday, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said martial law extension “remains an option” in Mindanao.

Medialdea, however, said Tuesday’s blast did not necessarily mean martial law, imposed in

Mindanao on May 23, 2017 following the Marawi City attack and extended twice, would be immediately extended for a third time.

Two people were killed and 37 others were wounded when an improvised bomb exploded in Barangay Kalawag 3, Isulan August 28.

Duterte’s martial law order, under Proclamation 216, was approved by Congress on May 31, 2017, and on July 23, 2017 was extended to December 31, 2017.

On December 13, 2017, Congress extended martial law in Mindanao to December 31, 2018 upon President’s written request.

The Supreme Court upheld the legality of martial law in Mindanao on December 5, 2017.

Under the Constitution, the President can declare martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus (allowing warrantless arrests) in cases of invasion or rebellion, or when the public safety requires it.

### ‘Consult people, convene NSC, Ledac’

Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. of Camarines Sur echoed Arroyo and said the House was willing to extend the implementation of martial law in Mindanao if President Duterte wanted it.

“The declaration of martial law is the call of the executive. The President declares or extends [it], [and] Congress concurs. If the President will ask for it, then it will be given,” Andaya said.

Andaya, however, said the Palace should convene the National Security Council (NSC) or the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council to discuss the progress of the Marawi City rehabilitation efforts and consult stakeholders on whether the

implementation of martial law should be extended or not.

“Bottomline, the people of Mindanao should be consulted,” Andaya said.

The Maute group’s siege of Marawi City lasted more than five months and left over a hundred soldiers, at least 47 civilians, about 800 terrorists dead and 500,000 people displaced. Based on the post-conflict needs assessment conducted by the government, the Marawi rehabilitation would cost at least P49.81 billion.

Earlier, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the implementation of martial law in Mindanao was effective, even after the bombing in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat on Tuesday night.

Lorenzana made the statement during the presentation of the Department of Defense’s proposed P185.4-billion budget for 2019 before the House Appropriations panel on Wednesday night.

“Martial law is working in Mindanao. There are pockets of Maute, BIFF (Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces), Abu Sayyaf, but we are able to stave them off. The feedback of the citizenry is also good. *Sabi nga nila, kung pwede, tuloy-tuloy* (Some even said if they had it their way, martial law would go on). But we are not sure if we will recommend the extension of martial law. It will depend on the next couple of months,” Lorenzana said.

“But so far we have achieved our objectives,” Lorenzana added.

Lorenzana noted that martial law enabled the military to install mobile check points.

“These happened because of martial law. We are still battling insurgency in Eastern Mind-

anao, but we are getting there,” Lorenzana said.

### Senators balk at proposal

Sen. Panfilo Lacson however said the bombing incident in Sultan Kudarat was an indication that neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) could guarantee peace in Mindanao.

The senator instead called for the passage of his Senate Bill 1956 or the “Anti-Terrorism Act of 2018,” which aims to enhance the Human Security Act of 2007 or Republic Act 9372 with provisions on foreign terrorists and additional predicate crimes.

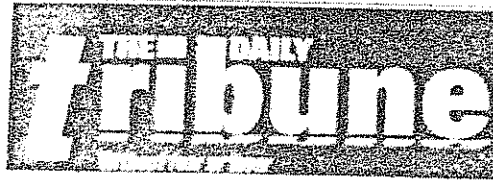
Sen. Francis Pangilinan said that while the bombing was deplorable and the perpetrators should be apprehended and brought to justice, he did not see the need for a martial law extension.

“The existing martial law proclamation failed to prevent the bombing so why would an extension prevent a future bombing? What is needed is no-nonsense police work to punish the guilty and if necessary the calling out of the armed forces to address these lawless elements without need for a martial law declaration,” Pangilinan said.

Lacson’s bill uses the term “terrorism: acts” instead of “terrorism,” to remove the requirement of the acts being perpetrated for the purpose of coercing the government to give in to a specific demand.

“This has the effect of punishing the act of committing crimes that sow widespread extraordinary fear and panic, and not the purpose behind the commission of such acts,” he said.

WITH LLANESCA T. PANTI AND BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



# Longer martial law favored

## *Peanut gallery not needed*

Members of the  
Bangsamoro Islamic  
Freedom Fighters were  
behind the attack

By **Elmer N. Wartusel**  
and **Manuel Bordey**

The House of Representatives will take guidance from President Rodrigo Duterte regarding the proposal to extend martial law as

a response to the Sultan Kudarat bombing that killed three people as the chamber's leadership said the President will just have to make a request and it will be immediately granted.

"If the President will ask for

it, then it shall be given," House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. said.

Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo also expressed her support to any decision of Mr. Duterte regarding martial law.

Arroyo, who also declared martial law in Maguindanao in 2009 when she was still President following the massacre of 58 people by men linked to the powerful Anipatuan family, said she will give her all-out support to

a martial law extension.

"I support martial law in Mindanao. I support what the President does because I've been President and I believe that he doesn't need a peanut gallery to tell him what to do," Arroyo said.

*Turn to page 2*

## Declaration of martial law is the call of the Executive

From page 1

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said on Wednesday extending martial rule in Mindanao is an "option" in the wake of the Sultan Kudarat incident.

"The declaration of martial law is the call of the Executive. The President declares or extends, Congress concurs," Andaya said.

Andaya, however, said Malacañang should call a meeting of the National Security Council, or even the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council to discuss the progress of the Marawi rehabilitation and the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

"What are the financing bottlenecks, for example," Andaya said about the possible agenda for such a meeting.

"The people of Mindanao should be consulted. In the House, the inputs and views of the Mindanao bloc are important. Civilian views should be part of the discussion," he said.

**Try to avert talking peace with one tribal group while alienating the others.**

**Call premature**  
Senators, including Senate President Vicente Sotto III said discussing a martial law extension will be premature.

"There is no need for it now, even after Medialdea hinted that martial law extension is an option," Sotto said.

"Maybe within a month or two what happened there can be resolved. It is not time yet to think or talk about it," Sotto told reporters.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who is a former Philippine National Police chief, said the incident only suggested that neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law can guarantee peace in Mindanao.

Lacson advised the National Security Council and the security agencies to take a hard look at their security plans and strategy,

especially in the South.

"They should try to avert the vicious cycle of talking peace with one tribal group while alienating the others," he said.

Both Sotto and Lacson said it is now time to strengthen the Human Security Act.

Lacson said he already filed a Senate bill to enhance the Human Security Act of 2007 "which has not been proving itself effective in addressing terrorism in our country."

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said it is too early to make a recommendation on whether or not to extend martial law in Mindanao.

"Of course, it is an option,"

including shrapnel wounds to the head at the hospital.

The military said it believes that members of the terrorist group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a splinter group of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, was behind the attack.

Two more unexploded bombs were found near the municipal hall following the explosion. Authorities are still trying to determine the make of the bomb to help them identify the group behind the incident.

Lawmakers late last year extended martial rule in Mindanao until the end of 2018.

Mr. Duterte first declared

31 December of this year.

Twice, both houses of Congress jointly extended the martial law.

**GMA retires 2019**

Arroyo also confirmed her retirement from politics next year after the blessing of the Romana Pangan District Hospital in Floridablanca, Pampanga.

"We all have to move on. People do reach retirement age," she said.

Arroyo also said that it is a blessing to work with young congressmen and she sees that they will do good in doing their jobs.

"I was also saying that one of



**Dengvaxia misdeal** Civic group members seek justice for victims of the anomalous Dengvaxia immunization program initiated by the previous Aquino administration while seeking accountability from involved officials and multi-national pharmaceutical firm Sanofi Pasteur.

AL PADILLA

he said in a message to reporters Wednesday. "Bit too early in the day to make (any) recommendation. We'll see what happens in the next several months," he added.

**BIFF tagged**

On Wednesday, a man left an improvised bomb in a bag near a grocery store in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat as crowds gathered to celebrate the town's founding anniversary and the blast had left three dead as the latest victim succumbed to injuries,

martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in 23 May 2017 after the Islamic State-inspired Maute group laid siege to Marawi City.

**Sotto and Lacson said it is now time to strengthen the Human Security Act.**

He later cited a lingering terror threat in Mindanao as well as the armed insurgency of the communist New People's Army as reason for seeking an extension of martial law until

the blessings of being a Speaker now at this time is that I've come to work with the younger congressmen and seeing how they work, seeing how good they are I'm very confident that the new generation will be very good in taking over the reins of government," she said.

Sen. Ralph Recto, for his part, said they will need to have a hearing on a proposal to extend martial law.

"For now there is no proposal," he said in a separate text message.

# Martial Law extension 'di solusyon

Hindi solusyon sa karahasan sa Mindanao ang napaulat na posibleng extension ng Martial Law sa nasabing rehiyon.

Ipinunto ni dating solicitor general Floren Hilbay na nangyari ang pinakahuling pambopomba sa Isulan Sultan Kudarat kahit pa may umiral na Martial Law.

"Patuloy pa rin ang karahasan at patayan kahit umiral ang Martial Law sa Mindanao. Malapit na magkasikat ng araw na hindi Martial Law ang solusyon sa mga

## NI MALOU ESCUDERO

problemang nareranasan sa nasabing rehiyon," sabi ni Hilbay.

Bukod anyo sa tumaas ang presyo ng bilihan ay naantala pa ang rehabilitasyon sa Marawi kahit pa may ipinatutupad na Martial Law.

"Tumaas ang presyo ng bilihan sa Mindanao. Naantala pa ang rehabilitasyon sa Marawi. Kaya wala nang dahilan upang palawigin pa ng pamamahalaan ang Martial Law sa Mindanao," dagdag ni Hilbay.

Kinuwestiyon din nito kung naubusan na ng magandang idea at solusyon ang mga matatalinong opisyal ng gobyerno.

"Wala na bang maisip na ibang solusyon ang 'best and brightest' na mga miyembro ng pa-

mahalasang Duterte?" ani Hilbay.

Maging ang iyang senador ay naniniwala na walang dahilan para palawigin ang Martial Law sa Mindanao.

Ayon kay Senate President Tito Sotto na posibleng sa susunod na isa o dalawang buwan ay mareresolba na ang nangyaring pambopomba.

Sabi naman ni Sen Panfilo Lacson hindi ni garantiya na manatig ang karahasan sa Mindao sa pagpapalawig sa Martial Law.

Ayon kay Lacson, chairman ng Senate Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs, ang nakaraang pambopomba sa Isulan, Sultan Kudarat ay nagpapatunay na maari pa ring magkaroon ng karahasan sa Mindanao

kahit may Martial Law.

Naniniwala si Lacson na ang mas pinatinding pangangailap ng importasyon at intelihensiya ang kailangang gawin ng mga otoridad upang mabantayan at mapigilan ang mga galaw ng mga masasamang-loob sa rehiyon.

Matatandaan na isang improvised na bomba ang sumabog sa harap ng Jant H Marketing sa Barangay Kalawag, Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, nakong alas-8:30 ng gabí noong Martes kung saan nasa 25 katao ang narulat na nasugatan at umabot na sa 3 ang namatay.

Ang insidente ang nagbunsod kay Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea na lidad ang posibilidad na i-extend ang Martial Law na pinaboran naman ng Malacañang.

# No direct threat to Duterte's life—Palace

By Christine O. Avendaño  
@roavendanoinq

Malacañang on Thursday conceded that there was no direct threat against President Duterte, but the authorities were constantly ensuring his total security given that he had made

powerful enemies.

"As we all know, the President has made a lot of powerful enemies with his political will and decisive leadership in fighting drugs, criminality and corruption," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement.

The Palace was reacting to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's dismissal on Wednesday of the President's claim that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was plotting to assassinate him.

The President might have based his "fears" on the books

he had read, Lorenzana said.

"Although there is no direct threat to his life, as Secretary Lorenzana (had) mentioned, the defense and security sectors, including the Presidential Security Group, take all threats to the life of the President seriously," Roque said.

In a television interview on Wednesday, Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albayalde also said they had no information on the supposed CIA plot, but that the police was prepared to protect Mr. Duterte from any impending danger. INQ A7



## 'Threats' to Rody taken seriously, says Palace

THE Palace said Thursday it was taking seriously the threats to the life of President Rodrigo Duterte following the remarks of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana that Duterte's fears of an alleged US Central Intelligence Agency assassination plot against him might just be based on books.

"As we all know, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has made a lot of powerful enemies with his political will and decisive leadership in fighting drugs, criminality and corruption," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said in a statement.

"Although there is no direct threat to his life, as Secretary Lorenzana mentioned, the defense and security sectors, including the Presidential Security Group take all threats to the life of the President seriously."

During a budget deliberation for his department at the House of Representatives, Bayan Muna Party-list Rep. Carlos Zarate asked Lorenzana if the Defense department had knowledge of the alleged assassination plot of the CIA on Duterte.

"We are in direct contact with the embassy here and they have an assurance that there is no such thing. According to them, it's not part of activities anymore," Lorenzana said.

"I think it's because the President loves to read books. He reads a lot of books. In fact, whenever he has a book that is new and good, he gives us copies of the book. Maybe he has read it.

"So maybe he's just basing his fears on those past activities of the CIA." **K1**

Duterte has previously claimed that the CIA plans to assassinate him as he believes the security agency could be listening to his phone conversations. **Manila Star**

## G-2-G procurement eyed for PH submarine program

Should the Philippine Navy (PN) submarine acquisition pushes through, it will be a government-to-government (G-2-G) procurement. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Thursday.

"The submarine, if we finally decide to buy them, will be on a government-to-government procurement and under a loan so that we do not need a large up-front capital outlay," he told Philippine News Agency when asked for updates on the project.

The defense chief earlier said the DND is looking at proposals of Russia, South Korea, Germany and France for the Philippine Navy's submarine program.

Of the said countries, only Russia has offered its Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines to the Philippines via "soft loan".

Lorenzana said the multi-role fighter (MRF) project, which is scheduled in the latter part ▶6

## G-2-G procurement eyed... ◀1

of Horizon Two of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program, is not being moved to Horizon Three.

"No it is not being moved to the 3rd Horizon (Horizon). The senior leaders (military) will soon table for decision the planned MRF acquisition," he added.

The MRFs are fighter aircraft capable of performing air-superiority, ground-attack, recon and other missions - aside from being agile and ca-

pable of attaining supersonic speeds. Among examples of the aircraft include the American-made F-16 and F-18 jets.

Horizon Two is scheduled for 2018 to 2022 while Horizon Three is slated for 2023 to 2028.

Horizon One lasted from 2013 to 2017 and resulted in the acquisition of the three Del Pilar-class frigates, 12 FA-50PH light-lift interim fighters, two strategic sealift vessels, to name a few. (PNA)

## Govt-to-govt eyed in PH sub purchase

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# Duterte leaves Sunday for 'milestone' visits

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte will embark on a two-country weeklong official visit to Israel and Jordan on Sept. 2-8, the first visit of a Philippine president to the two nations.

Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ernesto Abella said the "historical milestone" visits are expected to boost in the Philippines' ties with

Israel and Jordan.

Abella said the visit is also in line with the Philippines' "friends to all, enemies to none foreign policy" and its vow to share in promoting peace and stability in the region.

"Strengthening ties with these nations will promote economic growth, create new employment opportunities and enhance security. A closer relationship with these

nations means more opportunities to share expertise with each other in the fields of science, agriculture, industry and counter-terrorism," he added.

Duterte will be in Israel from September 2 to 5, where he is expected to have a bilateral meeting with Israeli Prime Minister

See DUTERTE > Page B6

## DUTERTE

Benjamin Netanyahu and witness the signing of a labor agreement on the employment of Filipino caregivers, a scientific cooperation, and an understanding between the Board of Investments and Invest in Israel.

The three agreements are expected to improve the deployment procedures and eliminate the excessive placement fees imposed on Filipino workers bound for Israel, improve cooperation in the areas of science and agriculture, and enhance the two-way trade and investments between the two countries, respectively.

On a possible acquisition by the Philippines of more armaments from Israel, Abella said the issue is not among the "official list of subjects that will be discussed" but he defers to the Department of Defense about the issue.

The President is also expected to have a meeting with some Israeli business executives and with the Filipino community there. There are at least 28,300 Filipinos, mostly working as caregivers, now in Israel.

The visit is done on the heels of the two country's commemoration of the 61st anniversary of the formal establishment of relations with Israel.

From Israel, Duterte will proceed to Jordan for his Sept. 5-8 official visit where he would meet with King Abdullah II and witness the signing of a labor cooperation covering the employment of domestic workers and a labor agreement on the improvement of working conditions of Filipino domestic workers bound for Jordan. There are about 40,000

Filipinos in Jordan.

Also to be signed are: the memorandum of understanding on defense cooperation that would support and upgrade the Philippines' defense capabilities; a foreign affairs agreement; a trade and investment agreement with the Jordan Investment Commission aimed at enhancing trade relations between the two countries; and cooperation mutually recognizing the Standard of Training and Certification of Watchkeepers for Seafarers.

Duterte's visit to Jordan will "finally" reciprocate the visit of the late King Hussein to the Philippines on March 1, 1976, which also marked the formal establishment of diplomatic relations with Jordan.

Abella said Duterte is also expected to visit some "significant spots" in the two countries but details are still being finalized.

The list of the members of official delegation of the President is still being finalized.

Duterte last week said he is planning to bring several military and police officials, including those who are about to retire soon, to thank and reward them for their services.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the military and police officials who would join the trip are officers who are still "active" in the service and have specific military and security-related engagements and agenda to attend during the visit.

Abella expressed confidence that Duterte's forthcoming trip, especially to Israel, would not affect the Philippines' ties with other Arab countries which are hostile to the Jewish nation.

He said the country is aware that there

"certain sensitivities" and the Philippines recognize this.

He is also confident that Duterte's controversial remark two years ago - that he would be happy to slaughter three million drug addicts like what Nazi leader Adolf Hitler did to the Jews - has not soured the Philippines' ties with Israel. The President had already apologized for his remarks.

Asked about the President's earlier statement that the country is considering the transfer of the Philippine embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, Abella said it is not included in the agenda of the Israel visit.

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## Duterte titingin ng hi-tech military equipment sa Israel

Inasahang mapapabilang sa itinerary ni Pangulong Duterte sa biyaha nito sa Israel sa Sept. 2-5 ang pagtingin ng mga military equipment.

Ita ang sinabi ni Special Assistant to the President Secretary Bong Go kaugnay ng nakatakdang official visit ng Presidente.

Avon kay SAP Go, hindi malayong tutingin ng kagamitan ang Pangulo para sa PNP at AFP lalo't kilala anyà ang Israel sa mga sopistikado at hi-tech military equipment.

Advanced din, ani Go, ang teknolohiya ng Israel kung pag-uusapan ay patungkol sa intelligence at anti-terrorism na kabilang sa interes ng Chief Executive. *(Fudy Andaj)*

**Rebs fire at civilians; 1 hurt**

ILOILO CITY—A woman was wounded when suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels fired at a group of private company employees in Igararas, Iloilo on Wednesday.

Shella Mae Estevez, 28, safety officer of Century Peak Energy Corp. (CPEK), was hit in her right leg and was taken to the Pedro Trono Memorial Hospital in Guimbal town for treatment.

Estevez and four other CPEK employees were on their way to their office after inspecting a hydro-electric power project when the rebels opened fire.

— Jennifer Rendon

# Kadamay storms NHA project in Bacolod

By GILBERT BAYORAN

**BACOLOD CITY** – Around 1,000 informal settlers tried to occupy a housing project intended for soldiers and police officers in Barangay Felisa in this city yesterday.

Led by the militant Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay), the informal settlers brought some of their personal belongings and their children. They said they would leave only if officials of the National Housing Authority (NHA) would meet with them.

The P162-million housing project, lies on a 10-hectare lot. Kadamay said only eight units have so far been occupied.

Ireneo Longinos, Kadamay secretary-general, claimed a joint resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives which

President Duterte signed, authorized the NHA to award unoccupied housing units to qualified beneficiaries.

Longinos said the NHA did not update them on the status of their petition to move into idle housing units.

"This housing project has not been used since six years ago... It should be given to qualified beneficiaries," he said.

In an interview over *Radio Bombo*, Alejandro Ongsuco, NHA-Bacolod head, said he was surprised by Kadamay's move, noting that the NHA set a

meeting with Kadamay leaders, representatives of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines next month.

Ongsuco said the housing units that Kadamay is targeting have been awarded to uniformed personnel. He said many units remain unoccupied due to lack of electricity.

The Bacolod police deployed its Civil Disturbance Management unit as well as Station 7 and 10 personnel to maintain peace and order in the area.

The President said he would not allow another takeover of housing units by Kadamay.

Some 6,000 families were awarded housing units in Pandi, Bulacan, which they occupied in March last year.



## Kadamay strikes again, takes over cops' housing site

NEARLY 1,000 members of the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap or Kadamay began a camp-out at a housing site for the military and police personnel in Bacolod Thursday morning, the group said in its Facebook post.

*Next page*

## Kadamay...

*From A1*

The homeless families, along with their children and belongings, asked the government to give them the unoccupied houses in Barangay Felisa, saying they would not leave the site project until the authorities gave in to their demand.

The group said the 1,500 housing units were unoccupied since 2013, adding they had been asking the National Housing Authority to award them the houses.

The housing site was supposedly made for the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

Kadamay Negros secretary general Berlita Ante argued that long-unoccupied housing units should be awarded to the homeless.

Ante said the homeless people would not enter the houses until there had been a dialogue between them and the authorities.

She said they would not leave the area to make sure the dialogue push through.

Meanwhile, Bacolod NHA project manager Alejandro Ongsuco said they were looking into the request of Kadamay. **Mat Mariano**

## Power plant sinalakay ng NPA

ILOILO CITY - Sinalakay ng rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) ang isang lugar na pagtatayuan ng mini-hydro power plant sa Igharas, Iloilo, nitong Miyerkules.

Sa ulat na natanggap ng Police Regional Office (PRO-6), nilosob ng hindi madeterminang dami ng mga rebelde ang power plant ng Century Peak Energy Corporation sa Barangay Icabugao, kamakalawa ng hapon.

Nang makarating sa militar ang insidente, agad na rumesponde ang mga tauhan ng 61st Infantry Battalion (61 IB) ng Philippine Army (PA), na nagresulta sa 10 minutong sagupaan.

Sugatan sa insidente ang empleyadong si Sheila Mae Esteves at isinugod sa ospital dahil sa lama ng bala sa piigi.

Habang isinusulat ang balitang ito, nagsasagawa ng hot pursuit operation ang militar laban sa mga rebelde.

**Tara Yap**

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### Tserman tumba sa NPA

Dead-on-the-spot ang isang kapitan ng barangay matapos na pagbabarilin ng mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA) sa harap mismo ng kanyang tahanan sa isang tibil na lugar sa Brgy. Panciao, Maniuyod, Negros Oriental nitong Huwebes ng tanghali.

Kinilala ng mga otoridad ang napaslang na biktima na si Brgy. Panciao Chairman Mario Gonzalez, nasa hustong gulang.

Bandiag alas-11:45 ng tanghali kahapon habang nasa harapan ng kanyang bahay si Gonzalez nang bigla na lang sumulpot ang tatlong armadong rebelde at saka niratrat hanggang sa duguang bumulagta.

Sa tala, si Gonzalez ay maraming beses nang naging biktima ng pananakot, pangigkil at paganakaw ng CPP-NPA terrorists kung saan noong Pebrero ng taong ito ay niransak at pinagnakawan ng sumalakay na mga rebelde ang barangay hall. (Joy Santos)

DEADLY FESTIVAL

CRIME STUDE  
3RD FATALITY  
IN S. KUDARAT  
BOMBING

By Jeffrey Maitem  
and Edwin Fernandez  
@Team\_Inquirer

ISULAN, SULTAN KU-  
DARAT—President Duterte  
vowed justice for the families  
of victims of a bomb attack  
that claimed the lives of  
three people here.

Presidential Special As-  
sistant Christopher "Bong"  
Go relayed this message to a  
radio station in Koronadal  
town as local officials on  
Thursday expected the Presi-  
dent to visit survivors of  
Tuesday's powerful bomb,  
which went off near a row of  
roadside stores during a fes-  
tival at Kaliwag's village.

Go said President Duterte  
was closely monitoring the  
progress of the investigation  
and would make sure that  
those responsible for the blast  
would be held accountable.

Isulan Mayor Marites Pal-  
lasigue said a man who was  
critically wounded died from  
shrapnel wounds in the head  
and body in General Santos  
City, making him the third fa-  
tality.

Welmark John Lapidez,  
25, a resident of nearby  
Bagumbayan town, and a  
criminology student at Sul-  
tan Kudarat State University,  
died at 8 p.m. on Wednesday,  
Pallasigue said.

36 others wounded

The two other fatalities  
were Davy Shane Alayon, 7,  
who died in a hospital, and  
Lenie Umbrod, 52, who died  
at the blast site. Thirty-six  
others were wounded.

Pallasigue apologized for  
the cancellation of all activi-  
ties related to the town's  
104th foundation day cele-  
bration and the seventh  
Hamungaya festival.

A Mass for those who  
died and those who are still  
in hospitals was offered at 2  
p.m. at the town hall  
grounds.

Supt. Aldrin Gonzales, re-  
gional police public informa-  
tion officer, said a task force  
had been formed to handle  
the blast investigation.

The blast, which occurred  
days after Mr. Duterte or-  
dered the military to intensify  
their offensive against Islam-  
ic State-linked Abu Sayyaf  
Group, was the second to hit  
Mindanao in a month.

The explosive, placed in-  
side a motorbike, went off  
around 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday,  
police said. A3

On July 31, 11 people were  
killed and several others  
wounded when a van carry-  
ing explosives exploded out-  
side a checkpoint in Lamitan  
City, Basilan province. INQ

# Security beefed up as Cotabato celebrates Kalivungan Festival

By MALU CADELINA MANAR

**K**IDAPAWAN CITY - Authorities here have tightened security to ensure the safety of local tourists, visitors, and residents while they watch and participate in any activity during the Cotabato province's Kalivungan Festival.

Senior Superintendent Maximo Layugan, provincial director of the Cotabato Police Provincial Office (CPPO), said additional troops from Police Regional Office (PRO) General Santos City and elements of the Philippine Army, including force multipliers were deployed inside and outside the province's capitol compound at Barangay Amas, here, where most of the activities are being held.

During the 104th Cotabato's founding celebrations and the 2018 Kalivungan Festival culmination on September 1, Layugan said the CPPO and other law enforcement units will double their security

efforts since two of the country's most powerful women - Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte of the Hugpong ng Pagbabago and Ilocos Sur Governor Imee Marcos, are expected to grace the event.

Layugan said they will not allow criminal elements to enter the province during these times of jubilation, excitement, and thanksgiving.

The powerful improvised explosive device (IED) planted in a parked motorcycle along the national highway in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat on Tuesday killed three individuals, including a 7-year-old girl, and wounded 36 others.

The blast happened two days before the town culminates its weeklong founding celebrations.

Sultan Kudarat Governor Datu Pax Mangudadatu has announced on Wednesday that he is shelling out from his intelligence funds ₱1-million reward money to those that could disclose to authorities the mastermind and his cohorts behind the deadly blast.

## Isulan bombers will be arrested, punished – Go

SPECIAL Assistant to the President (SAP) Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go said President Rodrigo Duterte would make sure those behind Tuesday's deadly bombing in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, will be arrested and brought to justice.

*"Kinokondena po namin 'yung ganitong pangyayari. Makakaasa po kayo na tutukan ng gobyerno ang maagang paglutas ng insidenteng ito. Ang mga perpetrators, mga terorista, will be punished (We con-*

demn this incident. You can be sure that government will focus on quickly solving this. The perpetrators, the terrorists, will be punished)," according to Go.

The government will help the victims recover from the attack, he said in a recent interview.

Three civilians were killed and 37 others wounded when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded in Barangay Kalawag 3, Isulan, while the town was celebrating the 7th Hamungaya Festival, an annual thanks-

giving rite for a good harvest.

Go had been invited to be a guest of honor and speaker for the August 30 festivities but had to decline because of prior commitments as the President's top aide.

Meanwhile, he said the authorities are looking into possible suspects but cannot name them yet.

*"Mayroon na po mga possible na suspects pero hindi pa po pwedeng sabihin. Hayaan na po natin ang pulis at ang militar tungkol*

*dito. Part pa rin ito ng terorismo... iba't ibang anggulo pa ang tinitingnan ng militar at kapulisan (There are possible suspects but we cannot reveal them yet. Let the police and the military do it. This is an act of terrorism and the military and the police are looking at all possible angles)," Go added.*

He cautioned the public against spreading rumors and unverified information that could aggravate the security situation in Isulan while investigation is ongoing. A7

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## 3rd S. Kudarat blast victim dies; military on heightened alert

BY RAYMOND AFRICA AND VICTOR REYES

THE death toll in Tuesday night's bombing in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat rose to three yesterday, after a man who was among at least 50 injured died Wednesday night.

The military has gone on heightened alert as the terror group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, which is suspected to be behind

the explosion, is reported to be planning more bombings. Also suspected is the Abu Sayyaf group.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, yesterday said the BIFF, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State like the Abu Sayyaf, wants to engage in "sensational incidents" so it could attract attention "not only from among the locals but also the

international audience."

Sobejana said the BIFF is targeting "urban centers, crowded places because that is their current thrust - to gain or get support from the international terrorist organization."

Capt. Arvin Encinas, 6th ID spokesman, said while the BIFF has been weakened by recent military

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### 3RD

operations, the group is still capable of carrying out bombings because many of them are trained in the manufacture of improvised bombs.

The BIFF, composed of around 300 men who are formerly members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Supt. Aldrin Gonzales, spokesman of the Central Mindanao

Police, identified the third fatality as Wellmark John Lapidez, 23, who died at the Isulan provincial hospital before 9 p.m. Wednesday from blast injuries.

The two other fatalities were earlier identified as seven-year-old Devey Shane Alayon and Leni Ombrog, 52.

The three were among 39 casualties from the blast which happened along the national highway near used clothing stalls in Barangay Kalawag 3.

A bag containing the improvised explosive device was reportedly left by two men.

The town was celebrating its 61st founding anniversary and Hamungaya Festival, a thanksgiving feast for a good year of harvest.

PNP chief Oscar Albayalde hinted that the group Abu Turaijie, reportedly a new ISIS-inspired group, is also being eyed as responsible for the blast.

Sobejana on Wednesday mentioned the "Toraype Group" of the

BIFF as among suspects.

Reports said Abu Turaijie or Commander Turaijie is the successor of Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon who was killed in a military operation during the Marawi City siege last year.

Turaijie was mentioned by President Duterte last year in a letter to Congress seeking an extension of his martial law declaration in Mindanao. He said Turaijie alias Esmail Sheikh Abdulmalik, described as a leader of a BIFF faction, was an emerging threat in Mindanao and capable of establishing an Islamic caliphate.

Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao after the Maute group attacked Marawi City in May last year. The extended declaration is up to December 31 this year.

Albayalde flew to the headquarters of the Central Mindanao Police Regional Office in General Santos City Wednesday afternoon where he was briefed by ranking officials. Yesterday, he visited the wounded civilians confined in the hospital.

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## Sultan Kudarat blast death toll climbs to 3

COTABATO CITY – The death toll in the improvised bomb explosion that hit Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last Tuesday night climbed to three as another victim died while undergoing treatment in a hospital in General Santos City.

Welmark John Lapidez, 25, a criminology student of the Sultan

Kudarat State University and a resident of Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat, succumbed to multiple shrapnel injuries in the head and body at 8:55 p.m. Wednesday at the General Santos Doctors Hospital, Isulan Mayor Marites Pallasigue said.

The mayor has cancelled all activities related to the town's 104th Foundation Day and 7th Hamungaya Festival.

"For the safety of everyone, the crisis management committee decided to cancel the activities. Please understand," Pallasigue said.

A special mass for those who perished and remain in the hospital will be offered at 2 p.m. at the town hall grounds. President Duterte was expected to arrive yesterday afternoon in Isulan to visit the wounded victims and receive security briefing from military and police officials.  
(PNA)





## Albayalde visits S. Kudarat victims

### *Blast death toll rise to 3*

By ALFRED DALIZON & ZAIDA DELOS REYES

PHILIPPINE National Police chief, Director General Oscar D. Albayalde yesterday visited the blast site in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat and the bombing survivors assuring them that all police efforts are underway to give them justice.

Joined by Police Regional Office 12 director, Chief Superintendent Ehsao T. Rasco, the PNP chief also met officers and men of the Central Mindanao police regional office during a surprise visit at the PRO12 headquarters in General Santos City.

On board a chopper, he and Rasco proceeded to Isulan, Sultan Kudarat to conduct an ocular inspection of the site of the explosion that killed two people and injured 36 others.

He and Rasco, joined by local government officials then motored to hospitals where the blast victims were confined. The PNP chief assured the blast survivors and their families that the PNP is doing its utmost to bring the perpetrators of the terror act to justice.

Gen. Albayalde later attended a conference attended by Central Mindanao LGU officials and PNP and Armed Forces officials

to discuss matters underlying the explosion. He and Rasco urged the people of Isulan and the entire Central Mindanao region to remain calm and be vigilant in reporting presence of suspicious-looking persons and unattended packages, bags and other materials in their areas to the local police and military.

"I have directed all police regional directors in Mindanao to declare a full alert in the aftermath of the bombing. The National Capital Region Police Office meanwhile has been placed on heightened alert status," the PNP chief said.

Meanwhile, the death toll on the Isulan blast rose to three following the death of a victim who was earlier reported in critical condition.

Isulan Police Chief Celestino Daniel Jr. identified the third victim as Weimar John Lapedez.

Lapedez fell into a coma due to shrapnel wounds in the head.

It can be recalled that unidentified suspect left the improvised bomb in a bag near a grocery store as crowds gathered to celebrate the town's founding anniversary on Tuesday evening.

The deadly blast injured 37 others. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) claimed the attack.

# Sultan Kudarat blast death toll rises to 3

By Alfred Dalizon

THE death toll in the Tuesday night bomb explosion in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat rose to three after another victim died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in General Santos City.

Isulan police chief Celestino Daniel Jr. identified the third fatality as Welmark John Lapides, 25, a criminology student of the Sultan Kudarat State University and a resident of Bagumbayan, Sultan Kudarat.

The other fatalities were a 52-year-old woman and a 7-year-old child.

Lapidez fell into a coma due to shrapnel wounds in the head and died at 8:55 p.m. Wednesday at the General Santos Doctors Hospital.

An unidentified suspect left the improvised bomb in a bag he placed near a grocery store as crowds gathered to celebrate the town's founding anniversary on Tuesday night.

Police are looking at the involvement of one group, the ISIS-inspired Abu Turaifie group, in the terror attack. The suspects were reportedly led by Esmail Sheikh Abdulmalik alias "Abu Turaifie."

The suspects claimed they are affiliated with the ISIS and with the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, which has been previously blamed for a number of deadly bombings in Mindanao.

**ALBAYALDE VISITS EXPLOSION SITE**  
PHILIPPINE National Police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde yesterday visited the blast site



ALBAYALDE VISITS SULTAN KUDARAT BLAST VICTIMS. PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde confers with a victim of the deadly explosion in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat while assuring him that all police efforts are underway to give them justice.

in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat and the bombing survivors and assured them that all police efforts are underway to give them justice.

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Albayalde later attended a conference attended by Central Mindanao LGU

officials and PNP and Armed Forces officials to discuss matters underlying the explosion. He and Rasco urged the people of Isulan and the entire Central Mindanao region to remain calm and be vigilant in reporting to the local police and military the presence of suspicious-looking persons and unattended packages, bags and other materials in their areas.

Around 8:34 p.m. last Tuesday, a powerful improvised explosive device went off in a crowded place in Isulan, killing two persons, one of them identified as Lenci Ombrog, and injuring at least 36 others, including Army sergeants Melchor Capiitan and Trimsar Hambali, and militiaman Nikki John Peranil. The incident prompted Albayalde to put all police forces in Mindanao on full alert.

The ISIS reportedly claimed involvement in the bombing although police and the military said they are investigating the attack.

police regional directors in Mindanao to declare a full alert in the aftermath of the bombing. The National Capital Region Police Office, meanwhile, has been placed on heightened alert status," the PNP chief said.

The bomb exploded in front of the J & H Marketing on the national highway in Kalawag 3, Isulan town. The area is crowded with people looking for goods being sold in a local "ukay-ukay" store and attending the local Hamungaya festival.

The IED was believed to have been concealed in a motorbike that was parked by the suspects in front of the business establishment near the town's ukay-ukay area. Post-blast investigators recovered parts of a "Jetmatic" pump, fragments of a 9-volts battery as well as the IED's clot cover and plastic container, which disintegrated as a result of the explosion.

"I have directed all

With Zaldia de los Reyes

**Artist sketch ng suspek inilabas**

**Patay sa Isulan bombing, 3 na**

Tumeas na sa tatlong katao ang bilang ng nasawi sa pambobomba sa Isulan. Sultan Kudarat nitong Martes ng gabi na ikinasugat din ng mahigit 30 katao.

Ayon sa Isulan Municipal Police, binawian na rin ng buhay ang isa pang biktima na si Welmark John Lapidez na kabilang sa dalawa kataong nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Una nang nasawi ang dalawa katao na kapwa dead-on-the-spot sa insidente, isa rito ang pitong taong gulang na bata na si Devey Shayne Alayon.

Si Lapidez, 21-anyos ay binawian ng buhay habang isinasalba sa pagamutan matapos na magtamo ng matinding pinsala sa katawan nang tamaan ng shrapnel mula sa sumabog na bomba.

Samantalang bukod sa Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) ay kabilang din ang Abu Toraffe group na pinamumunuan ni Esmail Sheik Abdulmalik alyas 'Abu Toraffe', isang ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) ang suspek sa pambobomba at maging ang mga lokal na teroristang Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

Samantala, inilabas na ng PNP at AFP sa Central Mindanao ang artist sketch ng isa sa mga bomber.

Base sa deskripsyon tinatayang nasa 5'6 hanggang 5'7 ang taas at katamtaman ang pangangatawan. Ito sa pagtaya ay tinatayang nasa 20-25 anyos. (Joy Canios at Rhoderick Beñez)

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### Patay sa Kudarat bombing, 3 na!

Iatong ang nasaw sa pamot bomba sa Isulan, Sultan Kudarat, kasakalian ito ay matapos na bawian ng buhay sa Wei Mark John Lapidez, na nauina nang idinekiarang comatose dahil sa tinamong sugat sa ulo.

Ayon kay Supt. Celestino Daniel Jr., hepe ng Isulan Municipal Police Station (MPS), umabot muna ng isang ang pag-aratay nito sa ospital bagu binawian ng buhay.

Bukod kay Lapidez, nasawi sa insidente sina Dovie Shane Alayon, 7, at Lennie Umbrac, 32.

Fer Taboy

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## No retrenchment for ARMM teachers, health, welfare workers

By ALI G. MACABALANS

COTABATO CITY – Some 40,000 elementary and secondary public schools teachers as well as social welfare and health workers of the current Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will not be retrenched under the proposed Bangsamoro.

“They will remain in office,” Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) First Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar assured.

Jaafar gave the assurance amid lingering anxiety among close to 30,000 primary and secondary public school teachers in ARMM, particularly those assigned in Maguindanao.

Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces and the cities of Marawi and Lamitan.

ARMM Regional Education Secretary Rasol Mitmug Jr. welcomed the MILF assurance saying it will prevent a protracted vacuum in the learning process of students in the 28-year old autonomous region.

“It took us months of screening applicant teachers numbering more or less 3,000 in 2017 and this year. Worse, laying off the teachers will affect the plight of several thousands of public school students,” Mitmug said, adding that the ARMM has been classified to have a high rate of illiteracy. 14

## Military girds for more BIFF terror attacks

By Francisco Tuyay, Macon  
Ramos-Araneta and Maricel  
V. Cruz

SECURITY has been stepped up in densely populated areas in anticipation of more terrorist attacks after a bomb went off in Sultan Kudarat, killing three people and wounding 35 others.

Military officials said Thursday that the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, the group they blamed for the attack, has shifted tactics to gain prominence among international terrorist organizations, and have made urban centers their primary targets.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, said they raised the level of security awareness within his jurisdiction to thwart attacks on urban centers.

"Urban centers are their target—crowded places, because that's their

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## Military...

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thrust to gain support from international terrorists organizations," Sobejana said.

He said this shift was a sign of weakness, as the terrorists are unable to confront ground troops in battle due to depleted armaments.

"The emplacement of IEDs [improvised explosive devices] is a clear manifestation that they are

becoming weak, they have no firepower to fight government forces," he said.

Since January, the BIFF suffered tremendous setbacks in a series of battles with security forces, particularly in Central Mindanao, losing hundreds of fighters to death or capture.

Sobejana said in the Isulan, Sultan Kudarat attack, several leads pointed to the BIFF.

To protect civilian communities, he said troop visibility would be increased, with more checkpoints being set up.

On Thursday, the death toll in the Isulan blast rose to three after a 21-year-old man, Welmark John Lapedes, died after remaining in critical condition in a General Santos City hospital, radio dzBB reported.

The report cited Philippine National Police Region 12 spokesperson Supt. Aldrin Gonzales. Tuesday's blast immediately killed a seven-year-old girl and a 52-year-old woman.

Senator Panfilo Lacson said the recent attack suggested that neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law could guarantee peace in Mindanao.

Lacson said security forces, particularly in Mindanao, should avert the vicious cycle of talking peace with one group while alienating others.

At the same time, an anti-terrorism bill he has proposed may give the government a much-needed boost in its fight against terrorists, since it enhances the Human Security Act of 2007 with provisions on foreign terrorists and additional predicate crimes.

"While an anti-terror law in itself cannot solve the problem of terrorism, an intensified one can however give the government and the law enforcement agencies the much-needed tool in dealing with the emerging threats of terrorism," said Lacson, who headed the Philippine National Police from 1999 to 2001.

While he had a hand in drafting the earlier law, he said gaps in it prevented authorities from implementing it properly.

He said the occupation of Marawi City by the Maute Group in 2017 "revealed the many loopholes of the current anti-terrorism law." He noted the Philippines was ranked the 12th most affected by terrorism

by the Global Terror Index in 2017.

He added that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front came into being and became a dominant armed force in Mindanao after the government came to a peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front.

The bill penalizes foreign terrorists, including those who travel to a state other than their state of residence for committing or organizing terrorist acts; and those residing abroad who come to

the Philippines in transit to commit or take part in terrorist acts to target countries.

Lacson's bill adds three predicate crimes to the 12 in the present law. These are: RA 9208, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, RA 9165, Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 and RA 10175, Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012.

Covered as well are other analogous acts that tend to cause death or serious bodily injury, or intend to cause risk to the health, safety or security of the public; or intend to seriously interfere with, disrupt or destroy critical infrastructure.

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# Phi's hollow victory over China (part 2)

By JOHANNA SON

Below are excerpts from a chat with 'Rock Solid' author Vitug.

Q: What was your biggest 'aha' moment in the book?

MDV: I said, "My God, the Philippines is one of the top 10 countries in the world with the longest coastline. We are number 5! I never realized that until I was doing the book, that we are a maritime nation, but our policies are land-based. How do we secure 36,000 kilometers of coastline? We have a longer coastline than Japan and the US.

## FILIPINO WORLDVIEW



ROBERTO R. ROMULO

He shelved the ruling, saying that the Philippines needs the help of China to grow the economy and to reduce poverty. That means we need more Chinese investments, trade, tourism, and also that was fueled by his dislike of president Obama at that time. But as mayor of Davao (city), he was quite comfortable already with looking towards China as an ally and a friend. So that's why when the ruling came, there was not even time for the Filipinos to talk about it, really discuss it, very few occasions in terms of national conversations.

Q: How do you explain this to the average Filipino? The government presented it as a very simplistic issue, meaning the options were only do Filipinos want to go to war with China, or not.

Q: Philippine governments, since the '60s, have looked at what the country considers Philippine territory and acted accordingly. It bypassed politics. What has happened since the Benigno Aquino government (which filed the lawsuit)?

MDV: When Duterte became president, he chose to be ah, pragmatic.

MDV: Correct, it's a false dilemma. I think that's part of the strategy of the Duterte government, to downplay the victory. But when I was doing the book, I looked at the national surveys (on) how Filipinos perceived China. Of course it was very low. China is one of the least trusted countries. There was an earlier survey about the attitude of Filipinos towards the West Philippine Sea. The finding was majority of respondents wanted the Philippine government, already under Duterte, to assert Philippine sovereignty.

But if you look at the overall survey wherein the polling outfit asks what are your concerns, it's mainly economic - food on the table, jobs, inflation - and then the security issue and West Philippine Sea is down below, out of a top 10 maybe number 8. The challenge is still for the general public to understand what this is all about, because sometimes it can be too technical. That was my challenge (in writing) about ownership, territory, sovereign rights. The biggest gain from the ruling is that it has shrunk the disputed area in the South China Sea.

Q: How do you connect the Spratlys to very daily concerns?

MDV: The closest thing that Filipinos can relate to is the issue with the fishermen. Because it's so clear, there are videos of Chinese harassing fishermen, and there are videos of Chinese fishermen getting our giant claims. So that's the easiest. That's the most visual, and the most direct.

Q: There's an apparent disconnect with the government being not so hot on the US and saying China (instead). Public sentiment is pretty much distrustful of China, much more positive towards the US -

MDV: Yes, and Japan. That's right, and this has become an issue of patriotism. Recently, people were calling Duterte, a few maybe, (saying) 'that's treason'. Following the Putin-Trump incident in Finland, I noticed some in social media and traditional media are saying this can also be treason because while Trump - it was very direct, Russia intererred in their elections - here China has taken over reefs, rocks which are within the Philippines' EEZ. So there's already that discussion.

Q: What lessons are there from the Philippines' story?

MDV: That a court of law is where a small country can fight a hegemon. It's not the battlefield, it's not in the waters of the South China Sea, it's in an international court of law. So the great equalizer, in fact. Then the other lesson, not lesson but maybe benefit, is that now other claimant countries can enter into arrangements with the Philippines, with other claimant countries, to define sea boundaries, with the ruling that the Nine-Dash Line is no longer valid; it was deemed illegal.

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# The new chief justice — more than seniority

**I**N an effort to explain President Duterte's choice of Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro as the new chief justice of the country, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said she was the most senior among those nominated by the Judicial and Bar Council. She is indeed the most senior among the nominees; she will reach the mandated retirement age of 70 on October 8, giving her only 41 days to serve as chief justice.

Seniority is an important criteria in government appointments. There are others. Qualifications for the position are another. In the Supreme Court, these include integrity as indicated by correct filing of a Statement of Assets, Liabilities, and Networth — the key issue on which then Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno was ousted in quo warranto proceedings.

The demands of the situation are also considered in appointments. The appointee should be in the right place at the right time to do well in the position. Time was against so many military officers appointed to be chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, who were not able to carry out changes and reforms they espoused because they had only months to serve before

compulsory retirement at age 56.

And, of course, the assessment of the appointing power is important, considering the needs of his office and his own personal considerations. This is probably the key in many government appointments; to this day, critics of Sereno's appointment link it to her role in the Hacienda Luisita case.

But more important than her seniority is Chief Justice De Castro's "sterling record of service" — in the words of Rep. Rudy Farinas. Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III said she can immediately lay down her ideas on "how to reform, how to expedite cases, how to improve the decisions, and how to insulate justices from corrupt practices." Even with only 41 days as chief justice, she can instigate judicial reforms in the high court, Sen. Francis Escudero said.

We join in wishing Chief Justice De Castro well in her new position at the Supreme Court. On her first day last Tuesday, she vowed to preserve judicial independence, maintain collegiality with fellow justices, and expedite the resolution of cases from the trial courts to the Supreme Court. These, more than her seniority, should be the hallmarks of her stint as chief justice of the country.



## Shouldn't DU30 enjoy a right to good health?

All sorts of rumors are floating around about President Rodrigo Duterte's state of health. This has to be expected. At 73, he has accumulated various medical ailments, of which he openly talks about. He says he's got Buerger's disease, Barrett esophagus, a continuing migraine, and

► TatadA5

in his latest direct quote in one banner headline, he said, "I am in perpetual pain (from a previous motorcycle accident), but not seriously sick." Yet he has not allowed an authoritative medical bulletin to intervene, thereby encouraging the rumor mill to spawn its own "garbage."

Reports about him allegedly coughing blood before and after his last State of the Nation Address (SONA) have not been denied. And the former founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and his quondam political science professor, Jose Maria Sison, recently announced from Utrecht that his former student had gone into "a coma."

This was convincingly denied by Malacañang, after special assistant Christopher "Bong" Go said in Filipino that the former mayor was resting in bed ("*nasa kama*"), instead of being "in a coma." Then the conversation shifted to the unusual darkening of DU30's face as a symptom of an undiagnosed illness.

### A sunburnt face

DU30 explained that he got his face sunburnt from having to climb mountains without the snow caps of Mt. Everest. Many laughed at this, and internet activists quickly offered their own medical diagnoses. They rattled off a number of disorders — "cirrhosis" of the liver; "polycythemia" — a medical condition in which a person is said to produce excessive red blood cells, causing an enlargement of the spleen or the liver, and making his skin "ruddy" in color, and Addison's disease, a medical condition in which the adrenal glands fail to produce enough hormones, and one gets easily fatigued, and so on and so forth.

This has created an unhealthy and ugly situation in which the nation's most important person of interest is reduced into a "non-person" or an "inanimate object" and his physical condition restlessly speculated upon by not nec-

essarily qualified, and not always responsible, analysts. Although B.S. Aquino 3rd used to say the president is the "servant" and therefore "public property" of the people, his basic dignity as a human being remains inviolable, and deserves respect and protection from idle speculation and gossip. The people may want to know the President's real state of health at all times, but they do not deserve to be fed with every kind of garbage.

Under Marcos, rumor-mongering became a punishable offense. I am not sure that prohibition still stands, but I do not believe any law is strong enough, or could be strong enough, to prevent the most salacious political rumor from spreading under any circumstance. The best way for government to stop such rumors from going viral is for the President to be forthright about his actual state of health. Timely and adequate correct information should preempt the fake news.

Section 12, Article VII of the Constitution provides: "In case of serious illness of the President, the public shall be informed of the state of his health. The members of the Cabinet in charge of national security and foreign relations and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, shall not be denied access to the President during such illness." Yet the President does not have to be seriously ill to prompt a regular bulletin on his state of wellness or health. An elevated temperature should be enough.

Let us have those regular medical bulletins on the President's state of wellness then. Instead of letting DU30 talk about his own physical and mental state, let an authorized medical expert do it for him. This is the best way to protect the truth and build public trust and confidence.

### Before and after Marcos

Before Marcos, Filipino presidents did not mind standing naked inside their glass house, as it were, and letting the public know if anything was wrong with them.

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There was little or no effort to fudge the facts. There was no attempt to hide the fact that Manuel L. Quezon was ailing in the US and ultimately died of tuberculosis in Saranac Lake, New York. Subsequent presidents, while living in the Philippines, traveled to the US for regular medical checkups, and had themselves examined at the Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, D.C. with no attempt at cover-up.

This policy and practice vanished under Ferdinand Marcos, mainly for reasons of national security. From the time he declared martial law in 1972 until he fell at the 1986 EDSA revolt, Marcos ruled without a constitutionally designated successor — no vice president, no senate president, no speaker with a right to succeed. There was also no constitutionally designated "survivor" (as in the Netflix series) should an accident or a terrorist attack take down the entire government.

This compelled Marcos to exercise utmost caution in sharing any sensitive information about his state of health, even with trusted members of his Cabinet. Any information that he had fallen ill could trigger a power play among those who had an eye on the leadership, so Marcos tried to keep his various infections — from the most common flu to his kidney transplant — a tightly guarded personal or family secret.

### **DU30 lacks FM's excuse**

DU30's case is nowhere like this. His line of succession is clearly and permanently established. Should he ever be compelled, for any reason whatsoever, to leave the presidency before 2022, the sitting vice president automatically and compulsorily takes over, unless the law of constitutional succession is unlawfully disrupted or overwhelmed. It is not therefore DU30's duty to worry whether this successor is going to be Leni Robredo, who now occupies the office, or former senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., who is contesting it before the Presidential

Electoral Tribunal (PET).

Even the ungodly and the unbeliever know our lives are all in the hands of God. Despite this, DU30's most important duty is to make sure, to the extent within his mortal power, that he remains alive, and that the question of presidential succession does not arise before his time is up. It should not matter then if the whole world knew that he has gone to Fuda Cancer Hospital in Guangzhou, to Dr. Farrah Agustin-Bunch Natural Medical Center in Tarlac, to Cardinal Santos Medical Center at Greenhills, or anywhere else, and that he would be flying to Israel and possibly to the US soon — in search of a cure for his known and unknown maladies. The only thing that matters is that he does everything to get himself cured.

In the last few days, we have been bombarded with the news story that DU30 would be leaving for Israel soon, to reward a group of retired military and police officers for their past services, by taking them on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Foreign travel has become the primary activity of the DU30 presidency, and he obviously wants to win the allegiance and loyalty of the uniformed sector by giving them various freebies. So, he does not have to put up an elaborate production to justify his latest junket. But certain arbitrary acts of his against innocent and defenseless officers have created strong resentments in the ranks.

### **The V. Luna scandal**

One such act involves the summary firing of the officers running the Armed Forces Medical Center, previously known as the V. Luna General Hospital, without any prior investigation. DU30 sacked Brig. General Edwin Torrelavega and Col. Antonio Punzalan after the doctor-wife of an important Cabinet member reportedly ratted on them for alleged but unverified ghost transactions amounting to P1.4 million. It turned out that the papers covering the alleged

transactions had already been completed when DU30 sacked the officials for an alleged crime that did not happen and which they did not commit. A total disgrace.

V. Luna rank and file apparently uniformly regard Torrelavega as an outstanding doctor, a highly respected soldier and a genuine public servant. He is loved by his co-workers. There is no pending charge against him, no suspicion of wrongdoing, in the AFP or elsewhere, but he stands disgraced by DU30's arbitrary action. And the men and women at V. Luna, together with their friends in the other services, are demoralized and pissed off. They are the ones DU30 should probably invite on his next trip.

Magdalo partylist Rep. Gary Alejano has effectively punctured the President's Israel balloon by saying the real purpose of the announced trip is medical in nature. He would like to consult some of the best Jewish doctors. Alejano is probably right, but I would not blame DU30 for it. For Jews, Christians and even Muslims, Israel is not only the birthplace of the great Abrahamic religions; it is also the meeting place of ancient wisdom and modern science; its health care is one of the best in the world, and its best known doctors take good care of the health of its leaders.

### **Israel's caregivers**

In the late 1990s, as a senator, I made a couple of pilgrimages there with my family. Some years later, I traveled there with then former vice president Jejomar Binay, then presidential adviser on overseas Filipino workers' concerns, and met with the late President Shimon Peres in his office. There I asked Peres, in light of the rise of terrorism and other disorders in the world, if he would care to revisit a statement he had made earlier, that "the hunting season is over."

It was one of the most illuminating conversations I ever had.

Peres struck me as the biggest intellectual I have ever met, in the tradition of Pope St. John Paul

2nd and Pope Emeritus Benedict 16th. He described Israel as a small country whose primary export was "knowledge," and which employed Filipinos as the only foreign "caregivers" in their hospitals, hospices, and other health institutions.

Should DU30 decide to visit any of these places, he would likely bump into some Filipino caregivers. We should not therefore begrudge him the opportunity; he may even learn some enduring Christian values and virtues from his own countrymen there.

### **Ultimate stop: US?**

Some of my usually reliable sources in Davao insist that DU30 is also exploring the possibility of going to the US for medical consultation and treatment. Ms. Honeylet Avanceña, DU30's well-known common-law partner, Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio's chief of staff, and the President's own brother Bong are reportedly in the US trying to make the necessary "arrangements."

No one in the US Embassy in Manila seems aware of any forthcoming DU30 visit to the US. But DU30 has a standing invitation from President Donald Trump to visit him in Washington, D.C. or New York. Despite announced threats by anti-DU30 and anti-Trump groups to meet such a visit with noisy street demonstrations, it cannot be completely discounted, the sources said.

The fact that DU30 has begun to criticize China's position in the South China Sea territorial dispute, and to soften his position on the US on a number of issues, could be the clearest indication that the speculation on a possible medical furlough in the US is not entirely without basis, the sources added.

DU30's recent loud unfiltered talk that the "CIA is out to kill him" is perhaps his way of forcing the US government to assure him of maximum protection and comfort should he finally decide to visit, the sources explained.

fstatad@gmail.com

# Germany 'moved on' after Hitler?

I VOTED "No" in 1991 on extending the stay of the US in its bases here. I had wanted to end our status as its last plantation. We probably contend for top colony in terms of longevity, occupied by Spain, England, the US, Japan and the US again, for centuries.

After the alien colonizers left, we moved on. Then Macoy came and inflicted martial law, looted our coffers, opened his secret William Saunders account (Imelda, Jane Ryan) and committed gross human rights violations. We moved down. Time to move on? Or continue to spiral or plunge down?

In one brief shining moment though, in February 1986, we *lahing alipin at busabos*, kicked the Marcoses out; we awed and shocked the world, on cable TV, to acclaim and imitation.

On July 15, 2003, the Supreme Court ordered the Marcoses to return \$658,573.60 as of January 31, 2002, plus interest, billions of pesos in ill-gotten wealth (on top of other recoveries). Done, which helped fund the human rights victims' compensation claims. PCCG, not necessarily *Puro Chick Gabi-Gabi*, has recovered more. *Nakaw na yaman, naibalik sa bayan*.

Time to move on — say the "ill-gotteners." It's been decades. But, it's been many more decades since Hitler's suicide; the Germans have not "moved on," aware of Jorge Santayana's dictum — forget the past and be condemned to repeat it. Digong should not have the



T.G.I.F.

RENE SAGUISAG

chutzpah to ask the Israelis to join him next week in doing Hitler's Nazi salute, as he does here with ignorant or intimidated guests, who do so, with few exceptions.

Countless human rights victims have just collected billions from the ill-gotten wealth of the Marcoses as decreed by the SC, without it however directing the prosecution of the "ill-gotteners." The lesson then seems to be "to steal big-time." kleptocracy pays and buys immunity, as our values continue to decay. No retribution. (The Marcoses have nothing to say for instance about the 20,000 killed when the military bombed and razed Jolo on February 7-8, 1974. Moving on — downward, to decay in values.)

## CJ seniority tradition

Are values involved in picking a chief justice? To begin with, it simply is not true that P'Noy was the first Prez not to honor our local seniority tradition. Macoy, Digong's hero, kept bypassing maverick senior justice Dingdong Teehankee, in favor of Associate Justices Makasia, et al. Seniority was also ignored by GMA in bypassing Justice Rey Puno, and in naming Rene Corona as CJ during an interdicted

period, which egregious mistake the Senate corrected. The superstition persists though that P'Noy bribed the senators with pork many many months later. Not *kaliwaan*? Senate Prez JPE accepting a bribe from P'Noy? Hahaha. Tell me another.

In the long history of the US, no such tradition I see: only three associate justices, I gather, became CJs. The current CJ, John Roberts, named at 50, did not come from within the SC ranks. No one minded. Non-issue. And Holmes, Brandeis, et al. are remembered more fondly than CJs. Politician Earl Warren came from outside and led, as CJ, the Supremes in unanimously outlawing segregation in 1955. Even Judge-Learned-Hand's memory or legacy is revered above those of justices.

Here, outstanding CFI Judge Jesus de Veyra was named Ozanam Awardee of Ateneo, reserved for model Christians. He had irritated Macoy as Baguio CFI judge; he never became justice, but is spoken of with awe, and rightly so. JBL Reyes never became CJ either but his sterling credentials continue to scintillate and shine.

Our Supremes have effectively amended the Constitution by seeing to it that henceforth, no one can be named CJ unless he is a senior justice there. *Batang Klab*. Collegial? Scratch my back and I'll scratch yours? I prefer 15 scorpions in a bottle, in creative tension, in the people's interest.

"Revolving door" I heard of in the

US where Washington-lawyers would join government and then return to their law firms and make use of their connections while in the former. One such lawyer is Paul Reichler, who stars, with Ambassador Albert del Rosario and Justice TonyCarp, in Marites Danguilan-Vitug's *Rock Solid: How the Philippines Won Its Maritime Case against China*.

I have been privileged to work with Paul. He attended Harvard Law. He finished cum laude. He trained in Arnold & Porter, as I did. He prefers slaying giants as a private practitioner, beating the US, for Nicaragua, in the World Court. Please pardon the excursus.

To appoint one as CJ for 41 days seems to trivialize the post-*Paconsuelo*? No revolving door I see. It would have been awesome if the new CJ had voted for Sereno and then was named CJ anyway. No undue reward issue. Justice TonyCarp declined his nomination, wrongly in my view, but it would have been uplifting had he accepted it. There would have been no division as we see today. But, maybe he should just be appointed as the next Secretary of Foreign Affairs when he retires next year, as a subtle message to China. Or named to succeed CJ de Castro after another 38 days. It is his duty to accept.

## The Calida standard

SolGen Joe Calida hammered in his *quo warranto* petition

by Saguisag AS

## Germany 'moved on' after Hitler?

that CJ Sereno did not comply with Sec. 7 of RA 3019, requiring that one report income earned, expenses incurred and taxes paid. It is indeed good law but my studes have yet to show me a single case of compliance on the basis of which I guarantee passing. Joe is deafeningly silent this time on noncompliance with Sec. 7. He himself has not complied, along with Prez Duterte. Scofflaws.

I wrote to Joe last Tuesday that in his petition for quo warranto, he "accorded importance to Sec. 7 of RA 3019 — and even hammered on it — requiring every public officer to file a true, detailed and sworn statement of assets and liabilities, including a statement of the amounts and sources of his income, the amounts of his personal and family expenses, and the amount of income taxes paid for the next preceding calendar year. . . .

"Please examine the SAL of all justices of the SC. Your own SAL does not include what is in bold above [income, etc.]. Neither does the President's. No student of mine has been able to show a single compliance. . . .

"My intent is not to pick any quarrel with anyone, but, I am for law reform. Permit me to doubt your compliance with the wise Tolentino Law on SAL (later SALN, in my sssshhh, stint in the Senate). We are a nation of scofflaws. This anomaly should go.

"My practical proposal is for an amnesty and then strict compliance the year after, so that we may mature as a nation."

I copied certain high officials who I believe have not complied with the Calida standard, either. So, why was CJ Meilou removed? *Utos ng hari, di mababa-*

*li?* And the Caesar's wife standard our Supremes virtually erased, as a practical matter.

Violation of Sec. 7 of my SALN law entitles one to correct his filing. If convicted, he may be fined one peso. Jail time of up to five years. Probationable. Violation of Sec. 8 of the Tolentino Law also probationable. Not impeachable in either case, in my view, given the lightness of the offense, unlike treason or bribery, which are "of so serious and enormous as to strike at the very life or the orderly workings, let alone the life, of the government."

### Move on — from federalism

Move on, we are told. Where I see moving and rising clearly is in the price of rice and other commodities.

Cha-cha of Mo-Cha Uson is not moving. Taking a power nap? A requiem I see. Malacñang should stop rattling the bones of a federal skeleton from which all semblance of life has departed. It "hath not been dead, though it hath slept." Spake Shakespeare in "Measure for Measure." More like the sleep of the dead. I doubt that we would see another Lazarus being raised here. On federalism, we should move on and let it rest in peace.

On the Marcoses, it is not the place of Imelda, Imee and Bongbong to say move on, given their involvement in kleptocracy and human rights violations (as Raissa Robles, for one, can attest and validate). Maybe their sins cannot be visited upon Irene and the apos.

But, with our kind of luck, like in the Asiad, we may yet shock and awe the world, not admiring, but, bewildered, looking askance, this time.

# ML until Fed

*“Rody said his commitment to Mindanao is unwavering and that he would like to see a Moro President in the future.”*

The broad coalition of anti-Duterte forces that included the yellow mob, the Liberal Party (LP), the communists, the prelates, the Islamic extremists and the drug lords is a compelling reason for martial law to be extended in Mindanao since peace in the region is in a critical juncture.

Palace officials said the extension of military rule now in effect over the whole island is an option after the Sultan Kudarat blast that killed a woman and a seven-year-old boy.

The blast last Tuesday happened a month after a deadly explosion that killed 10 in Lamitan City, Basilan.

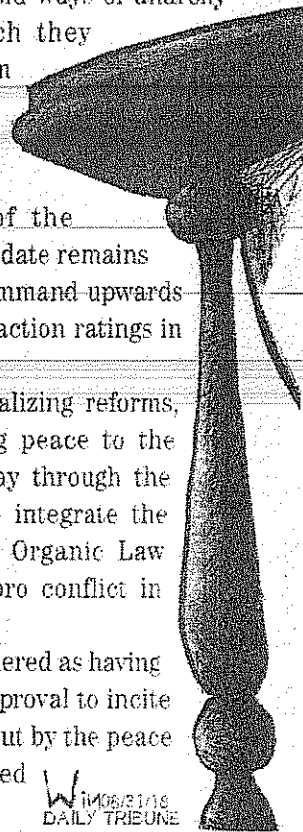
The unlikely alliance has one thing in common which is the ouster of Rody and for the old ways of anarchy and chaos to dominate which they exploit profitably, particularly in the unbridled drugs trade which dominated during the previous regime.

Despite the viciousness of the enemies ranged against him, mandate remains with Rody as he continues to command upwards 70 percent of approval and satisfaction ratings in recent surveys.

Rody's key goal of institutionalizing reforms, particularly in providing lasting peace to the whole country, is now under way through the Federal shift that also seeks to integrate the recently approved Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) to end the protracted Moro conflict in Mindanao.

The recent bombings are considered as having stemmed from the recent BOL approval to incite unrest among those who felt left out by the peace agreement and those not satisfied with it.

Duterte is trying to get both the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to back and promote the agreement based on a federal model that will become the system of government for the whole country if the Federal shift pulls through.



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DAILY TRIBUNE

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"I do not think that the MNLF, MILF in government or in joint venture with government can go wrong." Rody said in a speech regarding the BOL.

Rody said his commitment to Mindanao is unwavering and that he would like to see a Moro President in the future.

"If by 2020, we can have a new president or a Moro president for the Republic of the Philippines, the better for us," he said.

Rody is targeting 2020 to complete the Federal system setup in the country.

The five-month siege of Marawi City last year by (Islamic State) IS-inspired groups was contained indisputably as a result of Rody's decisive move to impose martial law in Mindanao on the very day of the terror attack.

The move resulted in preventing IS groups from spreading its reach outside the occupied city.

Rody's bid for lasting peace was also evident after he gave amnesty to poor Moros who joined the terror groups out of desperation but they will have to renounce violence and join community groups that will secure peace.

*66 The recent bombings are considered as having stemmed from the recent BOL approval.* The interval between the setting up of the BOL and the creation of a Federal government is critical as it would spell the success or failure of the key goals of Rody to bring lasting peace.

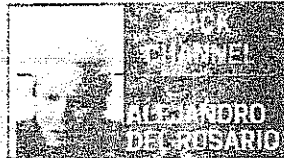
The enemies of Rody know that once the process of instituting his reform agenda is complete, they will become irrelevant.

The LP will become a fringe political group, the communists and the extremists will lose their mass base, the prelates will give up much of their clout embodied in the 1987 Constitution that was crafted according to their design, the narcotics syndicates go out of business and significantly, the IS ideology will be rejected.

Thus far, martial rule in Mindanao had kept in check the ambition of the unholy alliance against Rody.

It should remain at least until the Federal shift has been completed.

# Something smells fishy here



THE expression in the title of this column is derived from an American slang which means something smells bad to arouse suspicion. It is akin to another saying: "Something is rotten in Denmark."

The fake news that the lowly fish *galunggong* has been tainted with formalin has kept away cash-strapped Filipinos from buying the staple seafood.

*Galunggong* is the barometer that opposition political candidates use to attack the administration's failure in handling the economy. The *galunggong* price went up and then down because of the false report the fish, particularly the imported variety, is tainted with formalin. Market forces dictate the law of supply and demand.

Aside from fish, the prices of basic commodities like rice, vegetables, chicken, pork and beef have gone up because of the effects of the government's TRAIN law which increased the excise tax on gasoline diesel and kerosene. Increased VAT on fuel con-

sequently raises the price of transporting prime commodities to distributors and the market. Thus, we have a ripple effect on prices, including increased electric and water rates.

Formalin is the chemical used in the embalming of corpses to make them look good during the wake before the burial. Used on food, it is harmful to humans because of its toxic effect. If it is ingested through food, victims will need a larger dose of it to look good in the coffin. Seriously, we are not making light of a deadly situation.

"There is no truth to the rumor that *galunggong* is tainted with formalin," said Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol. He explained that the fish coming into the country are actually from Philippine waters which are caught by poachers from Vietnam, China

and Malaysia.

The Chinese, who are driving away Filipino fishermen from the West Philippine Sea, is hauling away our fish using trawlers with huge nets and exporting the catch back to Manila. This is the fishy part of the Philippine government's soft stand on enforcing our territorial sovereignty. No matter how hard our officials try to explain

*This is the barometer that opposition political candidates use to attack the administration's failure in handling the economy.*

Turn to A5



## Something...

From A4

this ambivalent policy, the people know this is all bovine droppings.

In my last column I said Agriculture Secretary Pifol and National Food Authority Administrator Jason Aquino should resign and not wait for President Duterte to fire them. Yesterday the group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura filed graft charges against Aquino for allegedly diverting P5.1 billion intended to stabilize rising rice prices. It will be up to the proper court to determine Aquino's culpability.

If true, then consumers will know why the runaway price of rice cannot be stabilized. Pifol, who has direct supervision over NFA and Aquino, shares part of the blame for the anomalous

misuse of the NFA funds.

It seems there is more than a "whiff of corruption" here which Duterte said earlier would be his basis for removing officials under his watch.

### Senator John McCain, 81

John McCain—war hero, longtime senator from Arizona, and presidential nominee passed away three days ago, a victim of brain cancer. He was 81, and with his demise many Americans are probably regretting McCain did not make it to the White House. This is not just paying tribute to a titan in American politics. McCain could have been a more competent and presidential leader than Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Trump who earlier was indifferent to the passing of McCain bowed to public pressure to acknowledge the man's contribution and legacy to America. Trump

ordered the White House flag at half mast. McCain will lie in state at Capitol Hill and will be laid to rest at Arlington cemetery in Washington where America's heroes are buried.

During the 2015 presidential campaign, Trump belittled McCain's heroism when he said: "Heroes are not captured" referring to the US navy pilot who survived more than five years in a Vietnamese prison camp. While US leaders were one in paying tribute to McCain, sources at the White House said that Trump had scrapped a statement praising the Arizona senator.

McCain, however, had the last word when he stressed "I don't want Trump at my funeral." The late senator's family said former Democrat President Barack Obama and Republican President George Bush will deliver eulogies extolling McCain's greatness.

## Moving on, building a nation



CROSSROADS

JONATHAN  
DE LA CRUZ

(Part 2)

IF AS Senator Koko Pimentel advised some days back, only the victims of Ferdinand Marcos' strongman rule have the right to say "It's time to move on" in reaction to Gov. Imee Marcos' admonition for our people and the country "to move on from the Aquino-Marcos feud"—a kind of shorthand used by martial law to insist that the Marcoses apologize for the misdeeds during that period—then Mike Molina and Dads Capellan who also joined our Hong Kong sojourn have every right to declare so.

Well, they have moved on.

Mike and Dads were early recruits from the Ateneo of the Kabataang Makabayan, described by the security forces then as the most radical youth organization under the control of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Together with its twin, Samahang Demokratiko ng

Kabataan, they formed the CPP's one-two punch in the youth and students sector which readily took the sector by storm crowding out the other Y/S groups in schools and communities nationwide. Mike and Dads dropped out of Ateneo for a while to "learn from the masses," organized in the communities and actively led street protests. They were detained a number of times before and during martial law and like many detainees suffered in prison. They protested. Their families cried out for justice as best they could under the circumstances. After denouncing, marching and fighting against an oppressive system with Marcos at the helm in the hope of overturning it to usher a new Philippines, they were overwhelmed and lost. It was a bitter loss made even more tragic by the death of friends and classmates at the hands of the security forces. They did their best but accepted their loss. Unlike others who continued to denounce their fate and demonize Marcos and his regime, they never, as in never, sought any kind of compensation for fighting for their ideals. Instead, they stood up and moved on. In their own ways they channeled

their energies to productive pursuits within the system, always looking for ways to pursue the dream of building a new country by injecting values and practices imbibed before, during and after the martial law years. They managed not to get trapped in the past with all the anger, frustration and bitterness it brought. They licked their wounds and nursed themselves back into solid grounds. They became entrepreneurs, raised good families and managed to impart to a wider circle of people lessons learned from the earlier struggles: Discipline, patience and hard work. They cultivated friends and continued to find ways by which they can, in this fourth quarter of their lives, still contribute to the development of this benighted land and the uplifting of the lives of our people.

The rest of the group—Goody Hernandez, Menow Nivera and Benjie Atilano—may not have been active participants in the FQS struggles but they lived through it and learned the lessons well. They excelled in their own fields, mainly business and finance, and in their own ways contributed in making the country a better place. In his younger days, Goody rose to become a top official of one of the country's engineering and construction companies, EEI, which employed and continue to employ tens of

thousands of our people and built up not only the country's infrastructure and skyline but many others overseas. Two years ago he also retired after serving as the Philippine Representative to the Asian Development Bank for six years. He now tends a farm in Batangas, keeping a nursery for the farmers within the community and serves as the Treasurer of the Ateneo HS '68/College '72 Association. It is in that capacity that he was able to cajole many of our classmates to contribute to the Fr. Thomas Steinbugler Scholarship Fund for poor but deserving students enjoined to enroll at the Ateneo.

On the other hand, Menow, ever the dutiful student, graduated with honors amidst the boycotts in Loyola and proceeded to be a professional manager in many local and foreign companies. For a while he lived in Hong Kong and Jakarta as part of a batch of topnotch Filipino managers entrusted with the fortunes and businesses of many of Asean's tycoons. Now he heads a number of companies one of which being

Turn to A5

*They stood up and learned their lessons well.*

## Moving..

From A4

the Cantubang Golf Club where he gets to interact with business owners and managers encouraging them to enhance their workers' benefits and train youngsters for the life ahead.

As in college, Benjie Atilano is his own man. Singlehandedly he built up his insurance and financial services business from the ground up noting that in college he did things his way anyway ribbing the activists in our group that he always welcomed calls for boycotts then looking at these as opportunities to look around, scout for possibilities (mainly the ladies??) and scoop for news and bond with classmates many of

whom later on became his clients. Today, he makes Manila and Hong Kong his home as he supervises a number of companies some of which he has already ceded to his children. He moved on and still snoops for opportunities this time as part of what he calls his giving-back initiatives to the school and the communities he once roamed in.

Multiply those life experiences thousands upon thousands over and you will see that the vast majority of those who dedicated their lives to struggles, whether in or out of school, during the heady FQS days or the dark days of martial rule lived with those memories but decided they will not let that past immobilize them no end. They moved on and took their chances learning from the past. Many of them took the punch-

es and nursed their wounds vowing to make something of themselves even in a society which remained mired in poverty and in the clutches of an oligarchy. They remained unbowed by their detention and sufferings even as they continue to grieve for the lives lost and the forsaken opportunities. But they moved on. And even in the fourth quarter of their lives they continue to shoulder on hoping that somehow by giving the best examples of purposeful lives the next generations will continue to rage against the darkness and in their own ways help build a nation united in the pursuit of development, freedom and justice for all. Moving on, build a nation remains the over riding call as we all face up to the challenges and opportunities of this 21st century.

# Why China and Russia are obsessed with new war games

BY PETER APPS

AS the West obsesses over Donald Trump's legal and political challenges, Brexit and a host of other "domestic" crises, Chinese troops will join their Russian counterparts for Moscow's largest military exercises in more than three decades.

Coming six months after Beijing's biggest ever offshore naval drills, the joint war games are another reminder of how central military posturing now is to the world's two most powerful authoritarian states.

While neither likely desires or expects war with the United States or its allies, both Beijing and Moscow want to give every impression they are increasingly ready – and are relying on that message to dominate their neighborhoods and intimidate less powerful nearby nations.

Both countries also have an unambiguous message for the Pentagon – that if war should come in Eastern Europe or the South China Sea, the United States would risk serious losses if it tried to intervene.

These landmark military exercises are part of a much wider picture of investment, development and weapons trials – even if the outcome has sometimes been mixed.

According to reports, Russian forces are still attempting to recover a nuclear-powered cruise missile that failed on a test flight somewhere in the Arctic last year. China, meanwhile, is reported to have suffered its own significant increase in military aircraft crashes over the last two years, particularly in the South China Sea.

It's a stark sign of how much risk these countries are willing to take in their quest for military power – arguably significantly more than the United States or any of its European and Asian allies.

Russia's September "Vostok" drills will involve up to 300,000 troops, just as Moscow deploys its largest naval formation in several years to the Mediterranean.

As well as a naked warning to the United States not to intervene with any further Russian action in Syria, they also likely act as domestic political messaging. Russian President Vladimir Putin's

poll numbers have been waning as of late, and military posturing could help his popularity.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has also increasingly embraced militaristic nationalism as he entrenches his power – but if war should actually come, both countries sees themselves in rather different confrontations.

Russia sees future wars most likely taking place on land, a repeat of scaled-up versions of 2008 and post-2014 conflicts with neighbors Georgia and Ukraine, in which victory depends on deploying overwhelming military force within a few miles of Russian territory while keeping the United States and other powerful Western states from intervening.

China, meanwhile, sees its most likely wars taking place offshore, either over disputed territories in the South China Sea or Taiwan, which Beijing considers a rogue province and which has long feared mainland China might intervene to snuff out its hopes for independence. As with any territorial ambitions Moscow might have in Europe, however, victory would again depend on keeping

US and other allied forces back and out of theater as much as possible for the duration of the war.

Much of the new technology both Moscow and Beijing are developing is designed with this goal in mind, particularly China's missiles and submarines built explicitly for sinking US aircraft carriers. But new military purchases and deployments are also part of a much wider diplomatic and propaganda strategy.

Russia has lobbied furiously against Georgia and Ukraine joining NATO, while those who watch Moscow's social media and television feeds closely say it has also been attempting to undermine support for the Baltic states, NATO's most Eastern members.

China has launched a savage diplomatic campaign this year to further isolate Taiwan, encouraging airlines and foreign governments to view it once again as part of mainland China.

In these attempts both countries have had very limited success, but many believe they will continue to intensify their efforts in the

See WHY > Page B5

## WHY

months and years to come.

The United States' response, unsurprisingly, has been to do very much the same.

In Europe, that has meant a dramatically stepped-up involvement in NATO exercises, particularly in countries that are most vulnerable to Russia, such as the Baltic states, Norway and Poland.

US and allied warships and aircraft have continued to aggressively control disputed areas of the South China Sea, even as Bei-

jing has dramatically increased its military presence in the area.

Clearly, that's something that infuriates both Moscow and Beijing.

China has tried to exclude the United States from regional military exercises it wants to organize with other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), while Russian media has repeatedly complained that NATO forces in Eastern Europe are themselves provocative and a threat to nearby Russian troops and territory.

All this feeds into a rising tide of

global distrust. This year, the United States disinclined China from taking part in its annual RIMPAC Pacific naval drills, in part due to espionage fears but also in protest against China's growing South China Sea bellicosity.

For all their increasingly allied interest against America, there are no signs Russia and China particularly trust each other, either.

Moscow has long feared Beijing might try to grab territory in its sparsely populated center, while Beijing has had its own worries about how Russia might use its

military against it.

Indeed, some observers suspect one of the principal reasons Moscow invited Beijing to take part in next month's exercises is to keep Beijing from worrying they may be a precursor to actual military action.

Where the truth lies is inevitably hard to know. But the more energy and focus the world's great powers put into extravagant war games, the greater the likelihood that they may find themselves in a real and perhaps uncontrollable conflict. – Reuters

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# Sultan Kudarat bombing

**T**HERE were several implications and messages sent by the perpetrators of the bomb attack in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last Tuesday, August 28, whether they are Islamist fighters affiliated with Islamic State (IS) or not. Three persons were killed and 40 were injured in the blast.

The most telling of these is that the nation's security forces are still unprepared to counteract attacks coming from Muslim armed groups. Authorities had blamed "failure of intelligence" as one of the major reasons the Marawi City siege happened in May 2017 and the government lost millions of pesos worth of properties and precious lives of soldiers and civilians in fighting the Maute-IS terrorists.

**'These events are telling us, clearly and unequivocally, that the passage of the new Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and the martial law in Mindanao both failed to make a dent in ensuring the stability of peace and order situation in southern Philippines.'**

Yet more than a year later, PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde still claimed the same reason for the latest bomb attack.

Albayalde explains: "The police received an information but then again, no matter how much you conduct or implement a target-hardening measure, the incident still occurred because if the criminal group is convinced to do the operation, they will find ways."

Also, the PNP chief said they got only information in general terms, not specifics, so they were still validating info when the quick-footed fighters struck.

Let us not forget that the bomb blast happened while Sultan Kudarat was celebrating its Hamungaya festival, and while martial law was still very much in effect in the whole of Mindanao.

Eager to be personally known to all Filipinos even in far-flung areas, Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go was invited to this festival, and the attack would have been doubly successful for the Islamists had Bong Go been a victim.

While words of condemnation and assurances of a thorough investigation were heard from Malacañang, military spokesman Col. Noel Detovate said the terrorist group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) is the primary suspect.

Another report from sources by radio station dzBB attributed the attack to the IS-inspired Abu Turaiffe group, led by one Esmail Sheikh Abdulmalik alias Abu Turaiffe, which claimed the operation as its own. Albayalde said this new group is affiliated with the IS and the BIFF.

These events are telling us, clearly and unequivocally, that the passage of the new Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and the martial law in Mindanao both failed to make a dent in ensuring the stability of peace and order situation in southern Philippines.

President Duterte may have the best intentions in pushing for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao but it is delusional to think that this setup, which is a step towards federalism, could ensure peace on the island, where religious and cultural considerations dominate the people's everyday lives.

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### AFP chief defends Army commander in controversial video

By: Gabriel Pabico Lala 09:44 PM August 29, 2018

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez Jr. said that the battalion commander who spoke in front of the Lumad had said nothing wrong.

"Mr. Chair, there's nothing actually wrong with that; they are bringing peace to the area. What's wrong with that?" Galvez said during the budget hearing of the Department of National Defense at the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

During the House Committee on Appropriations hearing, Anakpawis Representative Ariel Casilao presented a portion of a 13-minute video posted on social media showing an army lieutenant denouncing schools allegedly founded by insurgent groups in the area.

The soldier, confirmed by Galvez as Lt. Col. Xerxes Trinidad, commander of the 36th Infantry Battalion stationed in Surigao del Sur, was blaming alternative educational institutions for teaching natives with radical ideology.

"Mga kapatid nating Lumad, nagsibabaan. ang rason, natatakot sila dahil may presensya ng sundalo [...] dahil 'yan po ang itinuturo na sa kanila. kinalulungkot ko dahil sa pamamagitan ng TRIPS, ng Alcadev, ngayon nandoon pa. (The Lumad had gone down because they were afraid of soldiers in the area because that is what TRIPS and Alcadev have been teaching them)," Trinidad said in the video uploaded in July 2018.

He was referring to TRIPS, a tribal educational program, and Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development (Alcadev), an alternative learning system.

He also said that TRIPS is no longer operational in the municipality of San Miguel and it will stop operating as well in Tandag soon.

"Itanong mo sa mga mamamayan kung may binomba ba ang sundalo dito. Dahil ang gusto ko, at ang hangad lang ng kasundaluhan, ay magbigay ng kapayapaan sa ating kapwa Lumad (Ask the people if the soldiers have bombed anything here. What we want is peace for the Lumad)," he added.

While the video was applauded by AFP officials present in the hearing, Casilao disagreed with the AFP head, saying that there is something wrong with it.

"There is (something) really wrong with that Mr. Chair. Napakalaking mali po (It's a huge mistake)," Casilao replied. /ee

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## **1,500 Bacolod homeless demand award of unoccupied houses in AFP-PNP project**

By: Carla P. Gomez - Correspondent / @carlagomezINQ

Inquirer Visayas / 04:32 PM August 30, 2018

BACOLOD CITY – About 1,500 homeless Bacolod residents on Thursday began a campout at a housing project, in Barangay Felisa to demand that they be awarded the unoccupied houses in the area.

The homeless families, along with their children and their belongings, occupied sidewalks in front of the houses at the site of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)/Philippine National Police Personnel (PNP) National Housing Authority (NHA) Project.

They said they would not leave until they got a satisfactory reply from authorities.

Long-unoccupied housing units should be awarded to the homeless, according to Berlita Ante, Kadamay Negros secretary general.

She cited Joint Resolution No. 2 of Congress authorizing the NHA to award to other qualified beneficiaries housing units not yet occupied by the awardees from the AFP, PNP, Bureau of Fire Protection, and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

She said the President has said that unoccupied houses should be awarded to qualified beneficiaries, but the NHA has given them the runaround.

There are so many homeless people and there are houses built by the NHA in Felisa that have not been occupied for a long time, she said.

Bacolod NHA Project Manager Alejandro Ongsuco said they have been addressing the request of Kadamay.

The PNP, he said, had agreed to a dialog with Kadamay on September 7 but they were still waiting for a reply from the AFP.

National representatives of the AFP and PNP housing were needed for the dialog, Ongsuco said, adding that they would get in touch with them to see if a dialog could be fast-tracked.

Ante said the homeless people would not enter the houses until the dialog took place, but would not leave the area to ensure that the dialog pushed through.

The P360-million housing project started in 2012. Developer Eco Strong Builders completed it in 2015, Ongsuco said.



All of the 1,498 houses have been awarded to the beneficiaries, and eight have so far been occupied, he said.

One of the reasons for the delay in the occupancy of the 22-square meter houses was that the beneficiaries had complained that the units were small. The Duterte administration agreed that two units would be awarded per beneficiary to make it 44 square meters, he said.

Bureau of Fire personnel who were already awarded agreed to accept one unit each or there would not be enough for their colleagues, he added.

The houses, which have individual titles, have yet to be connected to the Central Negros Electric Cooperative, Ongsoco said.

A recipient is required to pay P200 a month for 25 years for a housing unit, he added.

The homeless people demanded that the NHA recognize the city government-certified applicants for housing, and award the unoccupied houses to them, Michael Dela Concepcion, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan Negros secretary general, said.

Among the homeless camped out at Felisa was Bebeth Dahildahil and her husband Ruben, a pedicab driver, of Barangay Taculing, and her 4-day-old baby Mera.

She said they have five children and could not afford a decent house so they were hoping the government would award them one of the houses at Felisa.

"We want to avail of a house here because Barangay 40 where we live is flood-prone and has been hit by fire many times." Fiordelisa Robillo, 53, said.

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## **Pangilinan hits possible martial law extension in Mindanao**

By: Darryl John Esquerro - @inquirerdotnet

INQUIRER.net / 03:25 PM August 30, 2018

Opposition senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan on Thursday slammed the possibility of extending martial law in Mindanao after the deadly bombing in Isulan town in Sultan Kudarat that killed two people and hurt 36 others.

In a statement, Pangilinan said that while the culprits of the bombing should be arrested, he insisted that he does not see the need to extend martial law in the region, which is currently suffering from "hunger due to the rice crisis and high prices of commodities."

"While the bombing is deplorable and the perpetrators should be apprehended and brought to justice, I do not see the need for a martial law extension. The existing martial law proclamation failed to prevent the bombing so why would an extension prevent a future bombing?" Pangilinan asked.

The senator said what is needed is "no-nonsense police work" to put the suspects behind bars.

He noted that "if necessary, the calling out of the armed forces to address these lawless elements" can be done without the need for a martial law declaration.

"Up until now, the region is stricken by hunger due to the rice crisis and high prices of commodities. This requires immediate action, and martial law extension is definitely not one of them," Pangilinan stressed.

The martial law in Mindanao which President Rodrigo Duterte declared on May 23, 2017 and extended by Congress due to the Marawi siege, will end on December 31, 2018.

Earlier, Malacañang said it is open to the possibility of extending the martial rule in the region. /ee

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## **Lacson: Martial law, BOL could not guarantee peace in Mindanao**

By: Malle Ager - Reporter / @MAgerINQ

INQUIRER.net / 10:40 AM August 30, 2018

The recent bombing in Sultan Kudarat only suggests that "neither martial law nor the Bangsamoro Organic Law could guarantee peace in Mindanao," Senator Panfilo Lacson on Thursday.

"Instead, it is my view that the National Security Council and our ground security forces should take a hard look at their security plans and strategy, especially in the South, and try to avert the vicious cycle of talking peace with one tribal group while alienating the others," he said in a statement.

The bomb attack in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat on Tuesday night left at least three people dead and dozens of others injured.

The senator recalled that when the government dealt peace with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Form (MILF) was formed and later became the dominant armed force in Mindanao.

"As it may be shaping now, as we make peace with the MILF, a breakaway group is sowing terror," said Lacson, who previously headed the Philippine National Police.

"Having said that, I filed a Senate bill to enhance the Human Security Act of 2007, which has not been proving itself effective in addressing terrorism in our country," he added.

The senator was referring to his Senate Bill 1956 known as the "Anti-Terrorism Act of 2018."

"While an anti-terror law in itself cannot solve the problem of terrorism, an intensified one can, however, give the government and the law enforcement agencies the much-needed tool in dealing with the emerging threats of terrorism," he said in a separate statement. /jpv