

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



TEAM **ARMY**

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

10 December 2018

Monday

PGS



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

TABLE OF CONTENTS

10 DECEMBER 2018

Weather Forecast- http://pagasa.dost.gov.ph/weather/daily-weather-forecast		
Page Nr.	Title	Source
NATIONAL NEWS		
1-2	House tells Diokno: Explain insertions	PDi-A1
3-4	'Trillions lost each year to bribes, corruption'	P Star-1
AFP/ SECURITY RELATED NEWS		
5-6	China's fishing fleet a militia force	PDI-A15
7	'Sue human rights violators'	P Star-5
8	Rody to attend rites for Balangiga bells return	P Star-1
9-10	Balangiga bells: Icons of nation's patrimony, symbol of Filipino's hope	M Bulletin-1
11	Rody man visit US with return of Balangiga bells	M Bulletin-4
12	Balangiga handover peals PH-US alliance	M Standard-A1
13	Duterte to lead handover of Balangiga bells	P Tonight-1
14	AFP confident on Martial law extensions	PDI-A3
15-16	PNP: NPA extortion another reason for ML extension	P Star-4
17-18	Martial law extension opposed defended	M Bulletin-1
19-20	Bishops oppose extended martial law in Mindanao	M Times-A1
21	Security officials face grilling on ML extension	Malaya-B1
22	Police, AFP cite reason for ML	M Standard-A1
23	Mindanao ML extension done deal – lawmaker	P Journal-2
24	PNP: No HR violations during ML in Mindanao	Tempo-3
25	Don't politicize tax cases vs Rappler, Ressa	M Times-A2
26	Bong Go affirms solidarity with the PNP special forces	M Times-A3
27	NPA raids Banana firm, wounds 6 guards	PDI-A14
28-29	Palace to Joma: Stop long-distance propaganda war	P Star-2
30	'Go home, stop propaganda war'	M Times-12
31	Palace deplores Joma's pathetic attacks on Rody	M Standard-A2
32	6 security guards injured in NPA raid	M Times-A7
33	AFP: Troops to be on defensive, offensive stance during holidays	Malaya-B1
34	Rebel leader surrenders in N. Ecija	P Journal-12
35	Rebel leader gives up	P Tonight-10
36	Return home see impact of foreign policy, Sison told	Tempo-2
37	92 petitions for inclusion in BARMM await in Comelec nod	M Bulletin-12
38	Abu Sayyaf abducts 3 Indonesian fishing crew	M Times-A7
EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY		
39	The legal argument against martial law	PDI-A19
40	Climate change movement continues in Katowice	M Bulletin-10
41-43	Media pundits, economic hitmen and Duterte's rebalancing	M Times-A4
44-45	LP, Lumad's persecutor	D Tribune-4

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

46	Climate change movement continues in Katowice	Tempo-6
ONLINE NEWS		
47-49	Schools network rejects AFP claim of communist recruitment	www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com
50	Arms cache recovered from Nueva Ecija NPA camp	www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Section 124 of the House Rules guaranteed that lawmakers "may request heads of departments to appear and be heard by [the] House on any matter pertaining to their departments, invoking its power to conduct question hour."

Coop-Natcco Rep. Anthony Bravo earlier said President Duterte's fiscal performance was worse than his predecessor as government underspending hit nearly P388.4 billion last year.

In 2016, the proadministration lawmaker placed fund underutilization at P596.7 billion, the worst in the country's fiscal history.

Underspending

Interestingly, Mr. Duterte and his economic managers have ridiculed the previous Aquino administration for its failure to fully use the annual budget as they vowed to speed up public spending through the ambitious

"Build, Build, Build" program.

Bravo likened the withholding of state funds to the Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP), which realigned savings of agencies for use by the national government to pump prime the economy. But the DAP was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 2014.

"Underspending during the entire six years of the Aquino administration would be [eclipsed] in the first three years alone of the current administration," Bravo told reporters.

"This could be worse than DAP," he said. "In the past administration, they declared savings from the unused funds. Now, they don't even declare if they have savings."

Since 2015, Bravo said the national government had kept some P1.3 trillion from being used for state-funded projects. **INQ**

'Trillions lost each year to bribes, corruption'

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

Every year, trillions of dollars, equivalent to more than five percent of global gross domestic production, are paid in bribes or stolen through corruption worldwide.

The United Nations made this report yesterday, marking International Anti-Corruption Day, to highlight the pervasive crime.

Around \$2.6 trillion is lost annually to corruption — money that is urgently needed for healthcare, education, clean water, infrastructure and other essential services, the UN said.

"Corruption harms societies in multiple ways. It undermines democracy and rule of law, erodes quality of life, slows economic development, and enables organized crime and terrorism," the UN noted.

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the landmark United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

In the 15 years since its adoption, the Convention Against Corruption has achieved near-universal status, with 118 signatory states.

The Philippines joined the convention in November 2006.

The Convention is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. It covers preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement.

Among the offenses covered are bribery, trading in influence, abuse of functions, and various acts of corruption in the private sector. A highlight of the Convention is the inclusion of a specific chapter on asset recovery, aimed at returning stolen assets to their rightful owners, including countries from which they had been taken illegally.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres highlighted the vital role of the Convention as one of the primary tools for advancing the fight against corruption.

Turn to Page 11

Trillions From Page 1

"Through the Convention's peer review mechanism, we can work together to build a foundation of trust and accountability. We can educate and empower citizens, promote transparency and strengthen international cooperation to recover stolen assets," Guterres said.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime executive director Yury Fedotov said the international community has recognized that combatting corruption is essential to preventing and addressing root causes of conflict and violent extremism, building peace and protecting human rights.

"Governments understand that anti-

corruption is critical to countering organized crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, as well as trafficking of drugs, weapons and natural resources," Fedotov said.

"Thanks to the Convention, nearly every country in the world now has laws in place making corruption a crime," he said.

Through the Sustainable Development Goals, every country signatory to the Convention has committed to reducing corruption and bribery, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets and developing effective, inclusive and transparent institutions.

China's fishing fleet a militia force

By Frances Mangosing
@MangosingINC

The naval and Coast Guard vessels of the People's Republic of China (PRC) have consistently drawn attention in the heavily disputed South China Sea, especially with the completion of military bases on artificial islands that China has built on Philippine-claimed reefs in the Spratly archipelago.

What has not often drawn attention is the presence in the region of China's maritime militia. While the vessels look like fishing boats, they should not be taken lightly, said Gregory Poling, director of Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative and a fellow at Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Force for intimidation

They intimidate the vessels of other claimants in the South China Sea, including the Philippines, Poling said.

"What Beijing has done in the past several years is to establish a force for intimidation."

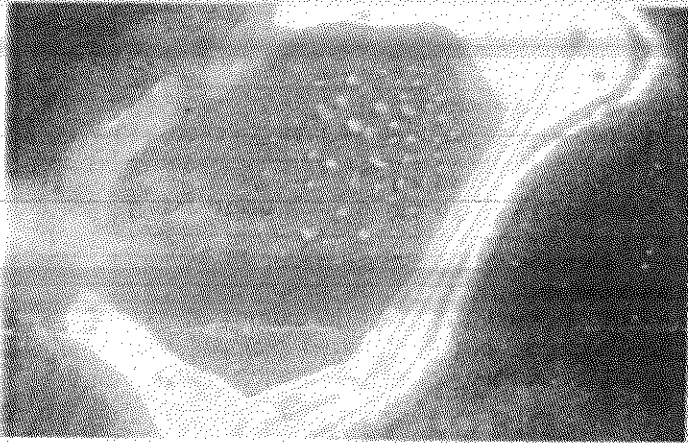
lish 24/7 constant presence of naval and Coast Guard vessels, as well as paramilitary militia throughout the South China Sea in a way that was unprecedented just four or five years ago," Poling told a security forum in Makati City, on Friday.

Despite losing to a Philippines-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration challenge in the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in July 2016, China insists it owns almost all of the South China Sea, including waters close to the shores of other claimants in the strategic waterway.

Besides the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan also claim parts of the South China Sea.

To reinforce its sweeping

ARTIFICIAL ISLE This satellite photo shows Zamora (Subi) Reef with fishing boats in its lagoon. —PHOTO FROM ASIA MARITIME TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE



claim, China has built artificial islands on seven Philippine-claimed reefs in the Spratly archipelago and developed on these military bases equipped with antiship missiles and surface-to-air missiles.

A mistake

"I mentioned the maritime militia, the paramilitary forces or how we'd like to categorize them. I think we have an impression that this is relatively minor part of the Chinese arsenal, and we are at a mistake," he said.

Poling presented a satellite image of Philippine-claimed Zamora (international name: Subi) Reef taken in August, showing about 200 boats in the lagoon in just a single day.

The boats are 50 meters long on the average, much larger than the fishing boats of the Philippines and other claimants in the South China Sea.

"None of these boats are actually fishing, everyone appeared as maritime militia. When we tracked them ... we never see them doing anything

other than intimidating others," Poling said.

He said the boats often left the lagoon and hanged out around Pagasa (Thitu) Island for days and weeks to intimidate resupply missions to the Philippine-occupied island in the Spratly archipelago.

Pagasa, the largest island occupied by the Philippines in the Spratlys, is located just 22 kilometers from Zamora Reef.

Philippine village

The island, located 280 km northwest of Puerto Princesa City, is a single village, which is part of the municipality of Kalayaan in Palawan.

The seat of government of Kalayaan, Pagasa has an airstrip, a five-bed lying-in clinic and a small elementary school for the children of the islanders.

In its annual report to the US Congress, the Pentagon defines China's maritime militia as "an armed force of civilians available for mobilization" and the "only government-sanctioned maritime militia in the world."

The work conducted by the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM) allowed China to pursue its objectives in the disputed waters without risking conflict, the report said.

"In the South China Sea, the PAFMM play a major role in coercive activities to achieve China's political goals without fighting, part of broader PRC military doctrine stating confrontational operations short of war can be an effective means of accomplishing political objectives," it said.

"In the past, the PAFMM rented fishing vessels from companies or individual fishermen, but China has built a state-owned fishing fleet for at least part of its maritime militia force in the South China Sea," the report added.

The Pentagon said some of the incidents in which the militia played a significant role were the 2012 standoff with the Philippine Navy and Philippine Coast Guard at Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, large surge of ships near the Senkakus in 2016 and the patrol of Sandy Cay near Pagasa in August last year. INQ

'Sue human rights violators'

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Malacañang yesterday dared critics of the extension of martial law in Mindanao to file cases if they think the military rule has resulted in human rights violations.

President Duterte has approved the recommendation of government forces to prolong martial law in Mindanao, claiming it was needed to address the rebellion plaguing the region.

Officials have warned that lifting martial law would allow the rebellion to spread in other parts of the country and would frustrate the "progress" achieved in addressing the problem.

Some senators have opposed the extension, saying there is no basis for doing so.

Human rights group Movement Against Tyranny-Northern Mindanao is also against the extension, claiming there has been a marked increase of human rights violations since the island was

placed under martial law last year.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said groups opposed to martial law should bring their concerns about alleged human rights violations before the court.

"The President wants cases filed if there are abuses. He does not allow abuse of power. Those who were given powers should use it to protect our countrymen. They should just implement the law," Panelo said in a radio interview.

Panelo stressed that Duterte's promise to protect policemen does not cover illegal acts like murder and abusive practices. He cited as an example the Chief Executive's refusal to pardon the policemen who were convicted for the murder of teenager Kian delos Santos.

"With respect to the alleged violation (of human rights), I haven't heard about anyone filing cases for violation of human rights with respect to our troops.

Turn to Page 9

Sue

From Page 5

Otherwise, we would have read about it in the newspapers," Panelo said.

Congress, according to the presidential spokesman, has the final say on whether martial law in Mindanao will be extended.

The Constitution allows the president to impose martial law for up to 60 days but it can be prolonged by Congress "if the invasion or rebellion shall persist and public safety requires it."

Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao on May 23, 2017 after Islamic State-linked terrorists laid siege to Marawi City.

Close to 1,000 terrorists and more than 160 soldiers were killed during the siege, the longest urban war in the country since World War II.

Rody to attend rites for Balangiga bells' return

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte will witness tomorrow the handover of the Balangiga bells, which Malacañang sees as an affirmation of the "enduring" and "strong" ties between the Philippines and its traditional ally, the United States.

"The Palace enthusiastically awaits the arrival of the Balangiga bells to the country on Tuesday," presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo

said in a statement over the weekend.

"We thank them for this gesture that would formally put closure to a tragic and contentious episode in both our countries' history," he added, referring to the US.

The bells were seized by American troops as war trophy in 1901.

Panelo said the handover of the bells tomorrow in a ceremony at the Villamor Air

Turn to Page 3

Rody From Page 1

Base in Pasay City will also serve as a reminder to the US that it had also committed human rights violations.

"The Americans killed many of our countrymen and seized the bells. The return of the bells is historic... We thank them for returning the bells and at the same time, we remind them that in the past, they violated human rights. That has to be remembered so it could serve as a lesson," the presidential spokesman said in a radio interview.

"That (killing of Filipinos) will forever remain as a debt of America. They have to pay for that in whatever manner. It will be up to them to decide how they intend to pay that debt," he added.

During the war in 1901, one of the three bells rang seconds after Filipino freedom fighters attacked American forces stationed in Eastern Samar.

A total of 48 American soldiers died during the assault, prompting US general Jacob Smith to order his troops to turn Samar into a "howling wilderness."

Retaliating American soldiers killed

more than 2,500 Filipinos and took three bells from the town church as war trophies.

Two of the bells were brought to a military base in Cheyenne, Wyoming while one was displayed at a museum in South Korea.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, US Ambassador Sung Kim and Philippine security officials are expected to attend the handover rites, which will put closure to an infamous episode of the Filipino-American war.

Lorenzana earlier said the aircraft carrying the three bells will arrive at the air base before lunch. He said he will sign a document stating that he is accepting the bells from the US.

Previous Philippine presidents called for the return of the bells but were unsuccessful.

In his second State of the Nation Address last year, Duterte demanded the return of the bells, saying they are part of Philippine heritage.

The American government agreed to return the bells after a law prohibiting the return of war memorial objects expired last September.

Balangiga bells: Icons of nation's patrimony, symbol of Filipinos' hope

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The return of the Balangiga bells signifies the long-standing relations

between the Philippines and the United States - one that is based on acknowledging our shared histories as former adversaries in war ▶6

Balangiga bells: Icons...

and eventually, as close allies working together to safeguard our common interests.

This was stressed by the Department of National Defense Public Affairs Service (DND-PAS) in a statement released Sunday saying the bells are icons of the nation's patrimony and the symbol of the Filipinos' faith and hope.

It added that the return will catalyze historical healing for both the Philippines and the US and will serve as a closure for both countries of a painful chapter in the past that was a grim consequence of war.

"To the people of Balangiga, the bells are an important historical and religious heritage and icons of our nation's patrimony. They symbolize faith and hope for the Filipino people," the DND said.

"The returning of the bells is not only an act of goodwill from our treaty partner, but more so, a symbol of respect. It is a laudable historic moment, and a milestone in Philippine-US relations that will mark a promising future between our countries," it added.

The DND-PAS said once returned, the bells which served as grim reminders of violence, hatred, and division, shall toll for all humanity as symbols of peace, hope, and friendship.

"To the American, the bells are war relics and symbols of honoring their

dead heroes and patriots."

"To the Filipinos, the Balangiga ambush was an act of defiance from the oppression they suffered from the Americans, a defense of their dignity and their freedom. The bells, therefore, represented the Filipinos struggle against the Americans and the suffering that they endured, signifying their bravery, courage, and heroism."

The Balangiga bells are expected to arrive on Tuesday and President Duterte is expected to lead the historic handover from the United States to the Philippines that same day.

Meanwhile, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said that the return of the Balangiga bells to the Philippines is of significant importance, especially to the people of Eastern Samar, who were deprived of the bells for more than a century already.

Noting that those bells were made instruments in defense of the community at that point in our history, Arevalo said, "It is therefore an icon of nationalism, patriotism, and personal sacrifice in the pursuit of freedom."

"And its return to the people of Eastern Samar, especially at this time of the year is of immense significance," Arevalo said.

"The bells will be tolling again this Christmas," he added.

Arevalosaid that the AFP is elated

over the return of the Balangiga bells which will be received by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in a simple ceremony on Tuesday

In an earlier interview, Lorenzana expressed belief that the return of the Balangiga bells will now convince President Duterte to visit the United States.

Lorenzana said Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel "Babe" Romualdez is already talking to the Chief Executive to convince him to visit America next year.

"Well, pinag-uusapan... [Its being talk about] Ambassador Romualdez here he is trying to talk with the President to go there next year," Lorenzana said at the sidelines of the Pilipinas Conference 2018 forum in Makati City on Friday.

When asked if the president has already expressed his intention of visiting the world's biggest economy and have talks with the leaders there, including President Donald Trump, Lorenzana said: "Meron siyang [He has]... is there but we are still kinukumbinse pa siya ni Ambassador Romualdez [he is still being convince by Ambassador Romualdez]."

Lorenzana also reiterated that President Duterte doesn't hate the Americans, just some of the people there.

"Si Presidente naman sabi niya [The president has stated] 'I don't hate the Americans, I just hate some of the people there,'" he said.

Lorenzana said the historic bells will be flown in by an American military aircraft at the Villamor Airbase in Pasay City before noon on Tuesday.

Upon arrival, the bells will be briefly viewed by the President and other invited guests to be followed by speeches from Lorenzana, United States Indo-Pacific Command chief Admiral Philip Davidson who will represent US Defense Secretary James Mattis, and US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim.

Lorenzana also reiterated that the return of the historic bells will finally put a closure to one of the dark pages in the country's history when these were taken by American soldiers as war booty during the bloody Philippine-American war almost 117 years ago.

"That [return of the bells] will be a closure," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana, who was posted as Philippine military attaché in Washington, D.C. for some time, recalled that the first request to bring back the bells to the country was made in 1925 by Eugenio Daza, one of the leaders of those who attacked the Americans in the town of Balangiga during the war.

"In 1935 when he (Daza) was still alive, he wrote a letter asking for the return of the bells," Lorenzana

recalled.

It was only during the time of former President Fidel V. Ramos when the Philippines reiterated its desire to bring the bells back.

"I was in DC, we had been working for the return but nothing happened because there was no involvement of the US government at that time," he said.

The return of the bells was further stalled in 2012 when some US legislators placed a five-year moratorium on the return of various relics to other countries, including the Balangiga bells.

But when the moratorium lapsed last year, the US State Department intervened, giving the US defense secretary the leeway to work for the return of the bells.

On November 15, Mattis officially announced the return of the historic bells to the Philippines "in consideration of the enduring friendship between the two countries" and its respect of the past as "co-equal brothers in arms."

"In returning the bells of Balangiga to our ally and our friend, the Philippines, we pick up our generation's responsibility to deepen the respect between our peoples," Mattis said.

10

4

Rody may visit US with return of Balangiga bells

By ROY C. MABASA

Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez is currently in Manila trying to convince President Duterte to visit Washington, D.C. to reciprocate the gesture of the United States in returning the historic Balangiga bells to the Philippines.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that Romualdez is conferring with the President about the visit which may take place in 2019.

"It's being discussed. Ambassador Romualdez is here trying to convince the President to go there next year," Lorenzana told reporters at the sidelines of the "Pilipinas Conference 2018" forum in Makati City over the weekend.

Both Romualdez and Lorenzana will be joining the President during the formal turnover of the three bells at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on Tuesday.

The Balangiga bells were taken

from the church of Balangiga, Eastern Samar by American soldiers as war booty during the Philippine-American war in 1901.

With the return of the three bells, Romualdez said it is now appropriate for Duterte to return the US gesture.

"I think the President realizes that this is a very good gesture on the part of the US and I'm sure that he will take that into account that going to the US this time would be appropriate," Romualdez said in a television interview last week.

Earlier, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. indicated in one of his tweets that President Duterte would only embark on the US trip when the Balangiga bells are returned to the country.

While Romualdez did not provide any specific date on the proposed visit, he noted that the President has been vocal about his reluctance on taking long-haul flights and the cold season.

A flight from Manila to the US capital will take about 21 hours.

Balangiga handover peals PH-US alliance

By Nat Mariano

THE handover of the three Balangiga bells on Tuesday will put a "closure" to that episode of history between the United States and the Philippines, Malacañang said Sunday.

"We consider the occasion as an affirmation of our strong and enduring relations with our long-standing ally the United States," Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

"We thank them for this gesture that would formally put a closure to a tragic and contentious episode in both our countries' history."

The bells were taken by the American soldiers in 1901 as spoils of war after Filipino revolutionaries supposedly used them to signal the attack on the American soldiers in the town of Balangiga during the Philippine-American War.

Two of the bells were kept at the FE Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne.

Next page

Balangiga...

From A1

Wyoming, while the other has been in an American base in South Korea called Camp Red Cloud.

Panelo said President Rodrigo Duterte, who demanded the return of the Balangiga bells, will lead the handover ceremony at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who is expected to sign a document to formally accept the bells, said he was not sure if Duterte would give a speech.

"Initially, they said the President will not speak, but he said he will be there," Lorenza-

na said.

He said US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim will give a speech and read a message from US Defense Secretary James Mattis.

Lorenzana said the bells will be turned over by the US after spending over a century on foreign soil.

"The aircraft that will be bringing the three bells will arrive before lunch at Villamor Airbase," he said.

"They are going to unload the bells, they are going to remove it from the crate and put it on display."

The US promised to return the bells three months ago after Duterte said no further discussions would be held between the US and the Philippines unless the bells were returned.

Duterte to lead handover of Balangiga Bells



By EFREN MONTANO

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte will lead the ceremony marking the handover of the Balangiga bells by the United States to the Philippines on Tuesday, Dec. 11.

Page 7

Duterte

From Page 1

Malacañang said the handover will be held at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

On Saturday, two Balangiga bells installed at the F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming were taken down and packed for their historic return to the Philippines.

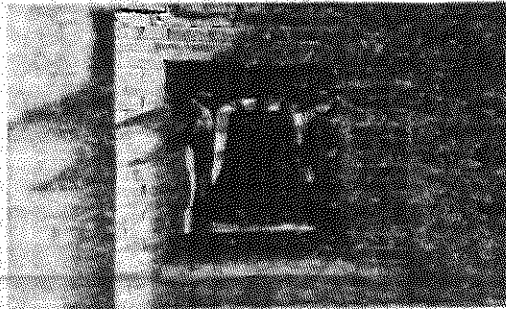
A third bell is at a US Army museum in South Korea.

The US has committed to return all three bells safely in the best possible condition and as quickly as possible, according to the US Embassy.

The Department of National Defense earlier said the Balangiga bells will be back on Philippine soil on December 11. DND spokesperson Arsenio Andolong said the bells will be airlifted on a US Air Force plane to Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, where the first turnover ceremony will take place. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana will personally receive the bells.

The bells will later be airlifted to Eastern Samar by a Philippine Air Force plane for their handover to church officials in Balangiga on December 15, in time for the first Simbang Gabi in the early hours of December 16.

On September 28, 1901, Filipino guerrillas stormed the 9th US Infantry Regiment in Balangiga, killing 48 American soldiers. The Americans retaliated by razing towns to the ground, sending males aged 10 years and above to prison and taking the Balan-



giga bells as war booty. On November 15 this year, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis formally returned the church bells to the Philippines, seeking to close a contentious chapter in the two allies' shared history.

Lorenzana said the much-awaited return of the artifacts is a form of "closure" and a gesture to honor the dead "on

both sides."

In his second State of the Nation Address in July 2017, Duterte demanded that the US return the bells.

"Give us back those Balangiga bells. They are ours. They belong to the Philippines. They are part of our national heritage. Isauli naman niyo, Masakit 'yun sa amin," he said.

CONGRESS NOD

AFP CONFIDENT ON MARTIAL LAW EXTENSION

By Jeannette I. Andrade
@jiandradeINQ

The Armed Forces of the Philippines expressed confidence on Sunday that it could convince Congress to approve a one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Noting a 38-percent downtrend in crime in the region, the AFP maintained that Mindanao residents were satisfied with the implementation of martial law and wanted it extended.

'Relatively peaceful'

In a radio interview, Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office (PAO) said most parts of Mindanao have been "relatively peaceful" with martial law in effect over the region.

Detoyato pointed out that the AFP had prepared its report to Congress for the one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao.

"Actually the presentation will not come from us, it will just be an assessment of the current situation and the sentiments of the people who are affected by martial law."

"We are confident about our report. On the decision, we leave it to the wisdom of the lawmakers," he added.

Detoyato attributed the crime downtrend to "random, constant checkpoints that limit the movements of armed people and those with sinister plans." **INQ**

"So there is relative peace in most of Mindanao. Their growth is increasing and there is investor confidence," he pointed out. **INQ**

PNP: NPA extortion another reason for ML extension

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

Communist rebels are expected to ramp up their extortion activities from candidates in Mindanao running in the 2019 midterm elections, another reason why the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP) are seeking a one-year extension of martial law in the region.

According to PNP spokesman Chief Superintendent Berigno Durana Jr., the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA) will

take advantage of the midterm elections to shore up their funds

"They are glamorizing it as permit to campaign taxes but in a democratic country, it's plain and simple extortion," he said in an interview over radio station *dzBB* yesterday.

President Duterte earlier asked Congress for another extension of martial law in Mindanao upon the recommendation of police and military officials.

Durana said communist CPP-NPA rebels have been monitored specifically in the northeastern and eastern portions of Mindanao.

Defending their recommendation of a

one-year extension, he explained that the rebels have been engaged in extortion and other criminal activities even before the campaign season kicks in.

"Sometimes it can go beyond the election period, that's why I think it's in a better position to extend martial law to a year," Durana said.

The presence of additional security forces in Mindanao will also help prevent election-related violence perpetrated by private armed groups.

The PNP is monitoring about 77 such armed groups in the country, 72 of which are located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Durana said the presence of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, Maute and Abu Sayyaf is another reason why they want martial law extended.

"These are the inputs, reasons why recommended (martial law) for another year," he said.

But Durana said they are leaving it up to legislators to determine the legality of their recommendation for martial law extension in Mindanao.

"We are not here to interpret the law or policy. We just have to provide the necessary inputs and allow our leaders in Congress to decide," he said.

Senate briefing 4

Meanwhile, security officials are set to present to senators today their justifications for extending martial law in Mindanao for a third time.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano will lead the panel of military and

Turn to Page 5

PNP From Page 4

police officials in briefing senators on the situation in Mindanao.

The briefing is supposed to help senators decide on whether or not to grant Duterte's request for another extension of martial law although some lawmakers have already made known their preferences.

Duterte is expected to send today to the Senate and House of Representatives a formal letter calling for a joint session of Congress on Wednesday to vote on his request.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, said he expects his colleagues to have more questions than the briefing a year ago when martial law was extended for the second time.

Lacson added that he expects the House to prevail in the voting, having nearly 300 members.

"As if our votes will be a factor (during the joint session) because we'll be voting jointly and we're only 22 (senators)... but at least our voices will be heard," Lacson told *dzBB*.

3 bishops say 'no'

For their part, three Catholic bishops

from Mindanao yesterday objected to the proposal for another extension of martial law in the southern islands.

Bishops Antonio Ledesma, Jose Colin Bagaforo and Dinualdo Gutierrez of the dioceses of Cagayan de Oro, Kidapawan and Marbel, respectively, all said there is no necessity for such extension.

"No need for martial law (extension). Keeping peace and order can be handled adequately by the police and the military with proper safeguards for respecting human rights," Ledesma said in an interview.

Gutierrez shared this opinion.

"No need. We are OK in (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City)," he said in a separate interview.

Bagaforo, for his part, called on the government to end martial law to allow the people in Mindanao to get back to their normal lives.

"It is about time we normalize everything. Everyone in the government says, including the military and police, that peace and order is at its top and their governance is well placed, so we end martial law. There is no more need for it," he told church-run *Radio Veritas*.

- With Paolo Romero, Edu Punay

Martial law extension opposed, defended

By LESLIE ANN G. AQUINO,
and FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The move to extend martial law in Mindanao is drawing mixed reactions.

At least three Catholic prelates have expressed opposition to the move while key defense and security officials are for martial law.

Bishops Antonio Ledesma of Cagayan de Oro, Jose Colin Bagatoro of Kidapawan, and Dinualdo Gutierrez of Marbel believe such an extension is no longer needed.

"No need for martial law," Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma said in an interview. ▶6

Martial law extension...

◀1

"Keeping peace and order can be handled adequately by the police and the military with proper safeguards for respecting human rights," he added.

Retired Marbel, South Cotabato Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez expressed the same sentiment.

"No need. We are okay in Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos City)," he said.

Kidapawan Bishop Jose Bagaforo is also convinced that martial law should no longer be extended in the south so that the people can go back to their normal lives.

"It is about time we normalize everything. Everyone in the government says, including the military and police that peace and order is at its top and their governance is well placed, so we end ML. There is no more need for it," he told church-run Radio Veritas.

Last week, President Duterte asked both chambers of Congress to allow another extension of the martial law in Mindanao until the end of 2019.

He cited the positive effect of the military rule in Mindanao after it supposedly resulted in "substantial progress in addressing rebellion" as well as "promoting the overall security and peace and order situation" there.

Martial law extension backed

While prelates opposed martial law extension, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana expressed belief that extending it for another year will help eradicate terrorists lurking there.

Lorenzana made the remark after President Duterte had earlier approved the military and police recommendation to prolong martial law in Mindanao and has relayed his request to Congress on the matter.

Martial law in Mindanao, first declared by the President in May 2017, following the terror siege in Marawi City, will expire at end of the month.

"One more year matapos na problema natin doon [One more year so we can finish our problem there]," he added.

Lorenzana expressed belief that extending martial law in the south will be effective to drive out the terrorists, especially the foreigners.

He said that five to 10 foreign terrorists who are experts in bomb making and propaganda were allegedly able to enter the country via the southern backdoor base on a report they received.

Unfortunately, the intelligence community could still not determine the veracity of the report stating the arrival of the foreign terrorists who are said to be Malaysians and Indonesians.

"It will be effective. I will assure you kasi maglalagay kami ng isang division sa Jolo [we will be putting one division in Jolo]. Martial law kailangan natin iyun [We need martial law there]," Lorenzana said.

"If our laws are stricter, masyadong loose ngayon, eh [It so loose today]. I can do that without martial law," he said.

Lorenzana also said that martial law is supposed to be the last option of government in fighting terrorism in Mindanao if we also have a very good human security law.

Meanwhile, Director General Oscar Albayalde, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, said there were no human rights violations reported to authorities in Mindanao since it was placed under martial law by President Duterte in 2017.

Albayalde said the allegations of abuse and rights violation by individuals and groups who go against the extension of martial law in the area were "not even substantiated."

"We haven't heard any or a single case of human rights violation in Mindanao since the implementation of martial law. These are all allegations by the same sectors of society but no case was ever filed," he said.

Albayalde asked the public to support the extension of martial law and vowed that if they have received reports of possible human rights violations related to the imposition of martial law, the PNP would let the people know.

As for the PNP's part, a total of 674 police personnel have already been charged for cases related to human rights violations since the start of the Duterte administration, he said.

In a separate radio interview on Sunday, Chief Superintendent Benigno Durana Jr., PNP spokesman, said that they have monitored active threat groups in Mindanao, particularly Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), communist rebels and Islamic State (ISIS)-inspired terrorists, so the extension of martial law will be helpful in dealing with the problem.

He said the PNP and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have already signed an agreement recommending the extension of martial law in Mindanao for one more year.

"We are not here to interpret the law or interpret a policy. We just have to provide the necessary inputs and allow the leaders and politicians in Congress to decide whether there's a need to impose martial law and extend imposition of martial law for another year," Durana said.

Opposition groups have continuously slammed the proposed third extension of martial law in Mindanao, saying the 1987 Constitution only allows the declaration of martial law based on two merits: invasion and rebellion.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) said there has to be a "strong reason" for the government to recommend another extension based on the recommendation of the PNP and AFP.

Rights group Karapatan said human rights violations were being committed in Mindanao and another extension of martial law will only lead to more abuses.

One example of rights violation, according to opposition groups, was the arrest of National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) consultant Satur Ocampo in Talamog, Davao del Norte last November 28.

Police said Ocampo and 17 others were arrested in a checkpoint for alleged trafficking of minors. But Ocampo's group said they were rescuing the minors from a jumad school which was taken over by military forces.

BISHOPS OPPOSE EXTENDED MARTIAL LAW IN MINDANAO

SOME bishops in southern Philippines have opposed a recommendation of the police and military to extend martial law in Mindanao for the third time.

The reaction came after President Rodrigo Duterte sent a letter to both Houses of Congress requesting them to continue to place the entire region under

martial law for another year.

"There is no more need for it," Kidawan Bishop Jose Collin Bagaforo told the church-run

page A2

OPPOSE FROM A1 BISHOPS

Radio Veritas on Sunday, saying those in power may take advantage of the military control to influence the electorate in the midterm polls next year.

Bagaforo added that it is about time to put things back to normal despite the military's opinion that extending martial law in the region is the best thing to do to maintain public order.

"It is about time we normalize everything. Everyone in the government says, including the military and police that peace and order is at its top and their governance is well placed, so we end martial law," Bagaforo also told Radio Veritas.

He said lifting martial law instead would be an assurance that the Mindanao electorate may enjoy their freedom to vote for anyone they wish.

"This can assure us of a democratic exercise of our right to suffrage in the coming elections," the bishop added.

His stand was supported by resigned Bishop Dinauldo Gutierrez of the Marbel diocese and Cagayan de Oro Archbishop Antonio Ledesma.

"No keeping peace and order can be handled adequately by the police and the military with proper safeguards for respecting human rights. No need for martial law," Ledesma said.

Gutierrez said, "No need. *Ok naman kamisa* [We are doing fine in] Soccsksargen]."

Soccsksargen groups South Cotabato, Cotabato City, Cotabato Province, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos City.

On May 23, 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte declared localized martial law in Mindanao through Proclamation 2216 after terrorist groups Abu Sayyaf and Maute attacked Marawi City, the capital of Lanao del Sur.

The 1987 Constitution mandates that martial law can only be imposed for a maximum of 60 days.

Duterte, however, urged the Congress for a five-month extension of the localized martial law after it expired on July 2017.

Later, he again asked the Congress to extend it for a year.

The Senate and the House of Representatives approved to extend martial law in Mindanao until December 31, 2018 upon the President's request.

Senators to get security briefing

Some senators will ask security and military officials to justify their proposal to extend for another year the martial law in Mindanao in a meeting today.

Top officials from the National Security Council, the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police (PNP) will brief senators on the peace and order situation in Mindanao that led them to seek an extension of martial law in the region.

Pressed what he intends to ask during the security briefing, Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said, "(I) will ask for its legal basis."

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel 3rd said, "Why is it (martial law) needed? What has it achieved in the last 17 months?"

"What do you intend that it achieve in the extension period? How is it being implemented? Strict or not?" Pimentel added in a text message.

Sen. Pantilo Lacson said: "*Kailangan kumbinsihin nila kami na pwede pa ang third extension* (They must convince us that the third extension is feasible).

Senate President Vicente Sotto 3rd said: "We will listen to the briefing they'll be giving."

"(I) will just listen to what they have to say. (I) will reserve my questions for the joint session," Sen. Francis Escudero said in a text message.

Sen. Richard Gordon said "his general position is, when the President asks Congress to do so, he has to justify."

"As a general rule right now, it looks okay. But there should be a limitation," he said.

"*Aoko naman na maging normal na yan na porke may konting kaguluhan ay martial law na agad* (I don't want it to become a normal thing, that whenever there is little trouble, there will be martial law)," he added.

**CATHERINE A. MODESTO
AND BERNADETTE
E. TAMAYO**

Security officials face grilling on ML extension

BY VICTOR REYES
and RAYMOND AFRICA

THE Armed Forces yesterday said it has prepared a presentation for lawmakers this week, explaining to them the need to extend the imposition of martial law (ML) in Mindanao for another year.

Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office, also expressed confidence an extension would be approved by lawmakers, noting continued threats from terrorist and other threat groups.

House leaders have said they would readily approve a request for extension while several senators have said they have to be convinced an extension is needed.

Yesterday, Sen. Panfilo Lacson reiterated that security officials can expect more questions thrown at them now, compared to the first two requests for extension from Malacañang.

The military rule has twice been extended by Congress, on the request of the President who cited as reasons continuing threats from the terrorist groups. The first extension was from July 22 to Dec. 31, 2017. The second extension will expire on December 31.

On Friday, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo said the President has requested Congress to extend martial law for a year because threats continue to persist in Mindanao. Malacañang has not released a copy of the request.

A joint session that will tackle the request for extension has been scheduled for Wednesday.

Lacson said among questions he will ask security officials are, does rebellion still exist in Mindanao, are the conditions needed to extend martial law still present in the region, what good has martial law done in the region, what new actions will be taken this time.

President Duterte declared martial law in Mindanao shortly after the Maute terror group occupied several barangays in Marawi City in May last year. The five-month conflict left at least 1,000 terrorists and government troops dead.

Lacson said he and his colleagues will base their decision on the security briefing to be conducted by the Department of National Defense and National Security Council today.

"Bukas kailangan kumbinsihin nila kami na puwede pa iyong third extension (Tomorrow [Monday], they will have to convince us of the need for a third extension)," he said in an interview with radio dzBB.

Sen. Richard Gordon said he wants to know if "imminent threat" remains, and why houses in Marawi City have not been constructed amid reports that biddings have been held.

Detoyato said "the threat is still there," citing an assessment of the military which recom-

See SECURITY ► Page B2

SECURITY

mended to the President a one-year extension.

Detoyato also said that if an extension is approved by Congress, no additional forces will be to Mindanao.

"They are properly deployed. The game plan is already there, and we have the advantage under the game plan so we cannot stop. We are going to sustain (the operations

being conducted)," said Detoyato.

Detoyato said martial law has led to improved peace and order in Mindanao. Among others, he also said, checkpoints have limited the movement of armed groups and the proliferation of loose firearms.

"They (people of Mindanao) are satisfied with the current situation because areas in Mindanao have become peaceful. The incidents of crime, the PNP reported, have gone down by 38 percent," said Detoyato.

Police, AFP cite reasons for ML

A POLICE spokesman said Sunday that expectations of intensified rebel attacks during the 2019 elections prompted the Philippine National Police and the military to recommend an extension of martial law in Mindanao.

In an interview with radio dzBB, PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Benigno Durana said the rebel activity was expected to continue beyond the May 2019 elections, and that the police would be in a better position to handle this if martial law—which expires Dec. 31, 2018—were extended by a year.

Next page

Police, AFP..

From A1

He added, however, that Congress would have the final say.

"We are not here to implement the law or interpret policy. We just have to provide the necessary input and allow our leaders and politicians in Congress to decide if there really is a need to extend martial law for another year," he said.

In a separate interview also on radio dzBB, Senator Richard Gordon said rebel groups such as the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters were still terrorizing parts of Mindanao, which could be a basis for extending martial law.

But Gordon also wanted limitations put in because he didn't want the government to turn to martial law every time there was a problem.

Duterte placed the entire Mindanao under martial law on May 23, 2017 after the Islamic State-inspired Maute Group overran Marawi City.

Congress, responding to requests from the President, has already extended martial law twice.

Gordon said he expected to see some evidence justifying the extension of martial law again, and to determine if there were really an imminent threat when military and police officials brief both chambers of Congress on Wednesday.

House Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, however, said the approval

of the extension was a mere formality.

"We've seen no shooting. But it does not mean that Mindanao is safe from the recurrence of terrorism similar of that Marawi crisis. The police and military analyze and understand the situation. And let's give that option to them. I urge my colleagues to adhere to their request," he said.

Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo gave President Rodrigo Duterte the assurance that Congress would likely grant the extension.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," she said.

House Majority Floor Leader and Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. added: "If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given."

Rio N. Araja

Mindanao ML extension done deal -- lawmaker

WITH the overwhelming support of the House leadership, an opposition House leader admitted yesterday that the approval of martial law extension and suspension of the writ of habeas cor-

pus in Mindanao for another year during a joint session of Congress this Wednesday is just a matter of formality.

House Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo "Danny" Suarez said he supports the request of the police and military authorities because they know the real situation on the ground.

"We've seen no shooting, but it does not mean that Mindanao is safe from the recurrence of terrorism similar of that Marawi crisis. The police and military analyze and understand the situation and let's give that (martial law extension) option to them. I urge my colleagues to adhere to their request," said Suarez in an interview.

Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assured President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte that the House of Representatives would grant his request.

Arroyo said her leadership is just awaiting the formal request from President

Duterte on the matter.

"If it comes to our Chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," said Arroyo.

House Majority Floor Leader and Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando "Nonoy" Andaya, Jr. reiterated his support for extending martial law in Mindanao for one year or from December 31, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

"If the President will ask for it, then chances are it shall be given," said Andaya, who chairs the House Committee on Rules, stressing that "the concurrence will be expedited if the military and the police will renew their commitment to respect the constitutional rights of every individual in the territory covered by the declaration."

"The inputs and views of the congressmen from Mindanao, who represent the people directly affected, will carry much weight during the deliberations," said Andaya.

Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

10



17

PNP: No HR violations during ML in Mindanao

The Philippine National Police has insisted that there were no human rights violations reported to authorities in Mindanao since it was placed under martial law by President Duterte in 2017.

"We haven't heard any or a single case of human rights violation in Mindanao since the implementation of

martial law. These are all allegations by the same sectors of society but no case was ever filed," Director General Oscar Albayalde, PNP chief, said.

Albayalde asked the public to support the extension of martial law and vowed that if they have received reports of possible human rights violations related to the imposition

of martial law, the PNP would let the people know.

As for the PNP's part, a total of 674 police personnel have already been charged for cases related to human rights violations since the start of the Duterte administration, he said.

In a separate radio interview yesterday, Chief Supt. Benigno Durana

Jr., PNP spokesperson, said that they have monitored active threat groups in Mindanao, particularly the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, communist rebels, and Islamic State-inspired terrorists, so the extension of martial law will be helpful in dealing with the problem.

(Martin Sadongdong) 3

PALACE TO UN RAPPORTEUR:

Don't politicize tax cases vs Rappler, Ressa

BY RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

MALACAÑANG has called on a United Nations special rapporteur to stop "politicizing" the tax evasion charges filed against Rappler and its president, Maria Ressa.

In a statement, Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression, David Kaye, should not meddle with the state's legal and judicial processes, after he called for the dropping of the cases against Ressa.

Kaye said the charges were an "attempt to silence the news outlet's independent reporting."

Panelo said Kaye statement was made "without the benefit of factual information" since legitimate charges were filed against Ressa in court.

"For Mr. Kaye's enlightenment, tax evasion is a serious offense not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well. The case against the media outfit has abso-

lutely nothing to do with the freedom of expression," Panelo said.

"Being a media entity and a journalist cannot shield them from criminal prosecution when they violate the law. A court of competent jurisdiction has found probable cause against them; hence, they have been formally charged," he added.

Panelo insisted that contrary to Kaye's belief, the administration respects freedom of expression.

"The fact that Rappler and its reporters continue to publish articles of dissent against this administration is an eloquent testimonial. The fact that detractors and critics of the President continue to air their protests in various media platforms against our policies is

another irrefutable proof," the spokesman said.

He added that if ever a media outlet experiences censorship, they can always run to the courts.

"We expect the UN representative to be more circumspect instead of politicizing a crime and ignoring its gravity and assaulting the sovereignty of our country," Panelo said.

Last month, the Department of Justice filed cases before the Court of Tax Appeals against Rappler Holdings Corp. and Ressa, who is listed as its chief executive officer.

A few days later, Ressa posted P60,000 bail at the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 265 for the five tax evasion charges filed against her.

Last week, Panelo said President Rodrigo Duterte had nothing to do with the charges.

"The stand of Malacañang is always: You violate the law and you will have to account for it. And the Constitution also says, every person charged with a crime is presumed innocent unless proven otherwise by competent evidence beyond a reasonable doubt - proof. That has been the policy

and will always be the policy of the Duterte administration," he noted.

In January this year, the Securities and Exchange Commission revoked the certificate of incorporation of Rappler allegedly for violating the Philippine Constitution and statutory foreign equity restrictions in mass media.

A month later, Malacañang barred Rappler's reporter Pia Ranada-Robles from covering presidential events and even stepping foot on Palace grounds.

The order curiously came a day after Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go described Rappler and the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* as purveyors of fake news and "irresponsible reporters" after reporting that Go intervened in the P15.7-billion Philippine Navy frigate project.

A few days later, Duterte himself said that Ranada-Robles was barred because "he was pissed off" by Rappler and that he "felt betrayed."

Rappler has strongly denied violating ownership restrictions and evading taxes. A2

10

A3

Bong Go affirms solidarity with the PNP special forces

SENATORIAL candidate Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go on Sunday affirmed his solidarity with the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) in ensuring the safety and security of every Filipino and in upholding President Rodrigo Duterte's fight against crime, corruption and illegal drugs.

"We do our job not based on our personal interest; we do our job because we know the importance of serving the public," Go said in Filipino during his speech at the opening ceremony of the SAF Commando Course Classes 1991-2018 in Taguig City.

The SAF Commando Course is the foundational training program of the PNP-SAF. Its curriculum is constantly updated and adjusted to provide SAF troopers with proper and appropriate knowledge in both combat capabilities and emergency response.

In line with his desire to provide quality public service to the Filipino people, Go, together with President Rodrigo Duterte and his administration, said that he would continue to fully support the police and the military in safeguarding the public.

"I want to continue the vision of President Duterte to strengthen the PNP-SAF. And let us fight the drug menace, criminality and corruption," Go said in Filipino.

"Please be constantly reminded that the President has your back and that the government is also doing its part to help each and every one of you," he added.

Go also reiterated that he prioritizes them.

"You are my top priority. Housing, education for your children," he said in Filipino during a recent chance interview.

Aside from the salary increase that the government has for the police and the military, Go said that the government has a hospital for

them as well; providing PNP and Armed Force of the Philippines members and their families quality healthcare services.

"The government has allocated funds to increase the salaries of policemen. There are also funds for the PNP Hospital that will give Camp Crame a good hospital," he said in Filipino.

Go also mentioned the improvement of the PNP Capability Enhancement Program. It supports the realization of the 10-year PNP Modernization Plan that puts emphasis on the acquisition of equipment and upgrading of its move, shoot, communicate and investigate capabilities. The funding for that was realized through the directive of President Duterte to provide the PNP with mission-essential equipment necessary for the organization to accomplish its mission and functions.

"Funds amounting to P1.7 billion was made available in 2017 by the government for the continuing enhancement capability program of SAF and our police force. This is continuing. For 2018, there is P2.18 billion allocated to improve the capabilities of SAF. You very well know that the government under President Duterte fully supports the country's police force," Go said.

Moreover, Go said that he would continue pushing for localized peace talks to end decades of insurgency in the nation. He also mentioned the "Balik Loob Program" of President Duterte where free houses, livelihood opportunities and jobs are offered to armed rebels who would surrender.

As a candidate in the upcoming 2019 senatorial race, Go reminded the PNP and AFP to stay loyal to the flag and not be biased toward or against particular candidates in the upcoming elections.

20

LAPANDAY TARGET

**NPA RAIDS
BANANA FIRM,
WOUNDS 6
GUARDS**

By Edwin O. Fernandez
@inqmindanao

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Six security guards of a multinational banana company were wounded when New People's Army (NPA) rebels fired rifle grenades at the firm's processing plant on Thursday.

Senior Supt. Maximo Layugan, North Cotabato police director, said the rebels first fired two rifle grenades around 8:45 p.m. at the work area of Lapanday Banana Group of Companies at the village of Dallag in Arakan town, North Cotabato.

It was followed by a series of automatic fire from the attackers, triggering a brief gun battle when the security guards returned fire.

Harassment

The rebels fled deep into the forest when soldiers and police responded, according to Senior Insp. Jose Mari Molina, Arakan town police chief.

"It was harassment by NPAs because the firm ignores extortion demand from the rebels," Supt. Bernard Tayong, speaking for the provincial police, told the Inquirer.

"It is always like that. If rebels extort or demand revolutionary tax from multinational companies they resort to burning of equipment or harassment," Tayong said.

The injured guards were identified as Jerry Gansico, Ramar Embay, Naseran Embana, Joel Algocoy, Nelson Ampugo and Christoval Felix.

Layugan has ordered police to be deployed to the area.

Active defense

Rebels were ready to heed a truce declaration by their leaders for the holidays, but Jose Ma. Sison, Communist Party of the Philippines founder, said rebels would be on an "active defense" posture because the Duterte administration refused to declare a ceasefire for the military.

Sison said communist rebels would have wanted to peacefully end the five decades of armed rebellion, but President Duterte and government forces had only themselves to blame for the failure of peace talks.

Sison issued the statement after presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said that the government wanted a "permanent truce" with communist rebels and not only a short lived ceasefire during the holidays. —WITH A

REPORT BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR. INQ



Palace to Joma: Stop long-distance propaganda war

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Malacañang yesterday lashed at communist leader Jose Maria Sison for criticizing President Duterte's handling of the West Philippine Sea row and dared him to return to the Philippines to see how the government is implementing its independent foreign policy.

Sison claimed on Saturday that former solicitor general Florin Hilbay was right that the Duterte administration has "treasonously and stupidly made a waiver of Philippine sovereign rights" by being silent on the issue.

The rebel leader also lambasted the administration for supposedly putting Philippine sovereign rights at par with China's claims in the memorandum of understanding on the joint exploration and development of oil and gas resources

in the West Philippine Sea.

Sison said Duterte had made a "false and stupid calculation" that the Philippine economy would be buoyed by "burdensome and exploitative Chinese loans." He warned that China wants an "explicit and categorical surrender of Philippine sovereign rights."

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo described Sison's attacks as "lamentable."

"We find it lamentable and pathetic that Communist Party of the

Philippines (CPP) founding chairperson Jose Maria Sison resorted to ad hominem (personal) attacks in criticizing the President's policy on the West Philippine Sea," Panelo said in a statement.

"We urge Mr. Sison to stop his propaganda war by long distance and to return to the Philippines and see for himself the independent foreign policy course that the President has charted, including a cautious, pragmatic and diplomatic stance on how to deal with

the favorable arbitral ruling," he added.

Panelo said the basis of Sison's tirades was a two-year-old article by international political risk analyst Anders Corr, who has worked for several projects with the US military. He said Sison's reliance on a two-year-old article proved that the rebel leader is "out-of-touch with the realities in the Philippines as a result of more than three decades of high living in Europe."

"The President has a wealth of information at his disposal, which is not readily available to ordinary citizens or foreigners hence he is in the best position to decide on international matters that affect the welfare of the nation," Panelo said.

He added that Duterte has steered clear of a "potential warfare with China" and maintained constructive dialogues through a bilateral consultation mechanism, which led to the signing of 29 agreements.

For Panelo, Sison should instead abandon his violent armed struggle as this has already resulted in meaningless deaths and alienated his followers.

"In the twilight of his years, Mr. Sison must accept the reality that his dream of wresting political power from the duly constituted authorities has come to an end," he said. "Truly, the revolution that he has commenced half a century ago has devoured its own children."

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police (PNP) yesterday urged communist rebels to go down from their camps and be with their relatives this yuletide season.

PNP spokesperson Chief Superintendent Benigno Durana Jr. said the New People's Army rebels can go down from the mountains provided that they are unarmed.

This, he added, would give the rebels the opportunity to see the reforms the government has undertaken under President Duterte.

- With Jose Rodol Clapano, Emmanuel Tupas

PALACE TAUNTS SISON A NEW

'Go home, stop propagandist war'

MALACANANG called on Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chairman Jose Ma Sison to return home and examine for himself the government's independent foreign policy, after the communist leader slammed President Rodrigo Duterte's stance on the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) dispute.

In a statement, Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo said Sison was out of touch with realities in the Philippines, since he has been in exile in the Netherlands for more than three decades.

He called on Sison to stop the 'propagandist war' from thousands of miles away.

"We urge Mr. Sison to stop his propagandist war by long distance and to return to the Philippines and see for himself the independent foreign policy course that the President has charted, including a cautious, pragmatic, and diplomatic stance on how to deal with the favorable arbitral ruling," Panelo said, referring to the 2016 decision of an arbitration court in The Hague voiding China's claims on the disputed waters.

He added that Duterte had a "wealth of information" at his disposal.

The spokesman said Sison should "accept the reality that his dream of wresting political power from the duly constituted authorities has come to an end."

"It behooves him to put his ideals to a new tack outside of a bloody course that only resulted in meaningless deaths and destruction to properties that have alienated him and his followers from the very people they sought to liberate from what they perceive to be the inequities in our

society," he added.

"Truly, the revolution that he has commenced half a century ago has devoured its own children."

In a statement posted on his website last Wednesday Sison called Duterte a "traitor" and a "dope-head" for not asserting the country's claims to the disputed area.

Citing a 2016 article by foreign political analyst Anders Corn, Sison said that instead of upholding the sovereignty of the Philippines, Duterte turned the country into a "debt colony" of China because of overpriced infrastructure projects.

Moreover, a joint exploration and development agreement virtually gave China the sovereign rights of the Philippines in the sea.

"Only Duterte and his cronies can make some limited and narrow sense out of his treason and stupidity by admitting the obvious fact that they stand to benefit from contract shares and finders fees. The logic of their greed betrays the sovereign rights and interests of the Philippines and the Filipino people," Sison said.

The United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration junked in 2016 China's "nine-dash claim" on the entire West Philippine Sea.

The ruling also declared that Filipino fishermen should enjoy fishing rights at the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal and that the Kalayaan (Spratly) Islands, as well as the Panganiban (Mischief) Reef, Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal and Recto (Reed) Bank are all within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines.

Later, Duterte decided to set aside the legal victory in favor of improved economic and trade ties with Beijing.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

Palace deplors Joma's 'pathetic' attacks on Rody

By Nat Mariano
and Rio N. Araja

THE Communist Party of the Philippines' criticism of President Rodrigo Duterte's policy on the West Philippine Sea is "pathetic," the Palace said Sunday.

The Palace also urged CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison to return to the country and see for himself what it described as Duterte's independent and pragmatic policy on dealing with contested waters.

"We find it lamentable and pathetic that CPP founding chairperson Jose Maria Sison resorted to *ad hominem* attacks in criticizing the President's policy on the West Philippine Sea," Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

But the Makabayan Bloc in Congress on Sunday slammed the government over the arrest of National Democratic Front of the Philippines consultant Rey Casambre and his wife, Patricia, as well as eight other people for murder and attempted murder raps filed in a lower court in Davao Oriental.

The arrest was "highly preposterous," the group said and added that four of the accused were staying and working in Manila.

The group challenged the arrest and said many of the accused were elders and even suffering from ailments.

The arrest was "utterly absurd," the group said.

Panelo said Sison based his attacks on a two-year-old article by an international political risk analyst who has worked for several projects with an institution that the communists strongly denounce, the United States military.

He was reacting to an article published on July 15, 2016, or two weeks into the Duterte presidency.

"[This] clearly proves that he [Sison] is out-of-touch of the realities in the Philippines as a result of more than three decades of high living in Europe," Panelo said.

"We urge Mr. Sison to stop his propaganda war by long distance and to return to the Philippines and see for himself the independent foreign policy course that the President has charted, including a cautious, pragmatic and diplomatic stance on how to deal with the favorable arbitral ruling."

Panelo then defended Duterte's action in terms of dealing in international matters that concern the disputed waterways.

He said Duterte was in the best position to decide on the issues on the West Philippine Sea as he had a wealth of information at his disposal.

He said Sison should accept the reality that the CPP's dream of wresting political power from the government had come to an end, stressing that the 50 years of believing in the CPP's ideal had "only resulted in meaningless deaths and destruction to property." A2

"Truly, the revolution that he has commenced half a century ago has devoured its own children," Panelo said.

In his remarks, Sison called the President a "traitor and a dopehead" for failing to make diplomatic protests and to sue China in the courts of the US and other countries for violating Philippine sovereign rights.

10

A7

6 security guards injured in NPA raid

COTABATO CITY: A banana plantation in Arakan, North Cotabato, was placed on red alert after communist rebels from the New People's Army (NPA) fired rifle grenades, injuring six security guards Thursday night, police said.

Senior Supt. Maximo Layugan, North Cotabato police director, on Sunday said the NPA stormed the processing plant of Lapanday Lapanday Banana Group of Companies in Barangay Daliag, Arakan, after the management of the company refused to give in to the demand of the NPA rebels for "revolutionary tax."

Senior Inspector Jose Mari Molina, Arakan town police chief, said the rebels have been trying to extort such tax from the banana plantation but it was repeatedly ignored by the

company.

Molina identified the injured banana firm security guards as Jerry Cansico, Ramar Embay, Naseran Embana, Joel Algocon, Nelson Ampugo and Christoval Felix.

Molina believed the rebels also suffered casualties as there were blood stains in their escape routes.

Police and soldiers have been deployed to the village of Daliag, where the banana plantation was located to prevent NPA attacks and a red alert was raised around the processing plant of the plantation.

Despite their injuries, the six security guards were able to return fire, triggering a brief gunbattle until the rebels fled deep into the forest, Layugan said.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

AFP: Troops to be on defensive, offensive stance during holidays

BY VICTOR REYES

GOVERNMENT forces will be on defensive and offensive posture during the five-day holiday ceasefire declared by the Communist Party of the Philippines for the Yuletide season, the military said yesterday.

"We have to maintain the peace so that Filipinos in the countryside can travel peacefully," said Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office.

The CPP on Friday announced a truce from December 24 to 26 and December 31 to January 1 for the holidays and for its 50th founding anniversary on December 26.

On the government side, President Duterte has yet to make a decision on the recommendation of the defense and military

See AFP Page B5

AFP

establishments not to declare a suspension of military operations (SOMO) against the New People's Army, the CPP's armed wing, because of atrocities committed by the communists in past ceasefire periods.

Col. Noel Detoyato, chief of the AFP public affairs office, reiterated the military will not recommend any holiday truce with the communists.

"They are going to celebrate their 50th year of atrocities, lies and deceit so we are not going to make it (easy) for them to celebrate," he said.

He also said there is no need for the government to resume peace talks with the CPP-National Democratic Front of the Philippines, which Duterte terminated in August, because "we have ongoing localized peace talks" with NPA rebels.

"The problems cited by people who became NPA rebels are local

in nature so they have to be solved locally," said Detoyato.

Most of the communist leaders are based in the Netherlands, including CPP founder Jose Maria Sison who has been on self-exile since the late 80s.

The military has said about 11,000 rebels and supporters have surrendered since January this year. The military estimates the NPA strength at 3,000 to 4,000 men nationwide.

Detoyato said NPA rebels are surrendering in droves, disputing claims of the CPP-NPA leadership that it is still in control of their men on the ground.

"We have more incidents of surrender than armed encounters. Many (NPA rebels) are surrendering. Based on the reports that we are getting (everyday), two of three incidents involving the New People's Army are incidents of surrender," he said.

**Rebel leader
surrenders
in N. Ecija
By Steve Gosucio**

CABANATUAN City —
A ranking leader of the New People's Army surrendered to authorities here on Saturday, bringing with him his personal weapon and several bullets.

Acting provincial police director Senior Supt. identified the rebel leader as Leon Victor Z. Rosete Allan Halop alias Tamas, of Guadalupe, Esperanza, Agusan del Sur.

Halop was tagged as a squad leader of Segunda Group operating in Nueva Ecija, Aurora and other parts of the Caraballo mountain areas.

Halop's surrender to the Nueva Ecija provincial police 1st provincial mobile force company headed by Supt. Alexander C. Aurelio on Saturday was facilitated by the Philippine Army's Community Support Program team stationed in Bgy. Pesa, Bongabon under the Cpl. Emmanuel Siblag and his superior 2Lt. Jonemar Suarez. 12

Rebel leader gives up

CABANATUAN CITY - A ranking leader of the terrorist New People's Army rebel group surrendered to police and military authorities here on Saturday, bringing with him his personal weapon and several rounds of ammunition, police said yesterday.

Acting provincial police director Senior Supt. Leon Victor Z. Rosete identified the rebel surrenderer as Allan Halop, alias Tamas, of Guadalupe, Esperanza, Agusan Del Sur.

Halop was tagged as a squad leader of Segunda, said to be operating in the boundaries of Nueva Ecija and Aurora and other parts of the Caraballo mountain areas.

Rosete said the rebel leader gave himself up to the Nueva Ecija provincial police-1st provincial mobile force company headed by Supt. Alexander C. Aurelio here last Saturday. 10

Steve A. Cosuico

10

2

Return home, see impact of foreign policy, Sison told

Jose Maria Sison should stop his "propaganda war by long distance" and return home to see the impact of President Duterte's independent foreign policy, Malacañang said yesterday, following the communist leader's criticism of the government's stance on the West Philippine Sea issue.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said Sison has become "out of touch" with the country's realities and should realize his dream of seizing government power was over.

Panelo made the statement after Sison called Duterte "a traitor and a dopehead" for refusing to sue China over its incursion into the country's territory. Sison reportedly said instead of fighting for the country's sovereign rights and charging China with \$176.6 billion in rent and environment damages, Duterte was "stupid" to turn the country into a debt colony of the Asian giant.

"We find it lamentable and pathetic that Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairperson Jose Ma. Sison resorted to ad hominem attacks in criticizing the President's policy on the West Philippine Sea," Panelo said.

"We urge Mr. Sison to stop his propaganda war by long distance and to return to the Philippines and see for himself the independent foreign policy course that the President has charted, including a cautious, pragmatic, and diplomatic stance on how to deal with the favorable arbitral ruling," he added.

Panelo also hit back at Sison for relying on a two-year-old Forbes article by Anders Corr titled "China May Owe the Philippines \$177 Billion in South China Sea Rent and Damages" to attack the President.

The Palace official claimed that Corr was "an international political risk analyst who has worked for several projects with an institution that Mr. Sison and his cabal strongly denounce, the United States military."

The article, Panelo added, was published last July 15, 2016, "or two weeks into the Duterte presidency, which clearly proves that he is out-of-touch of the realities in the Philippines as a result of more than three decades of high living in Europe."

In the wake of Sison's criticisms, Panelo explained that the President has chosen to pursue dialogue with China instead of waging war for the sake of national interest. **(Genalyn D. Kabiling)**

2

3/p

b

12

92 petitions for inclusion in BARMM await Comelec nod

By ALIE MACABALANG

COTABATO CITY - Petitions from 92 local government units (LGUs), particularly barangays, seeking inclusion in the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) are awaiting decision by the Commission on Elections (Comelec), according to a poll official.

Lawyer Ray Sumalipao, regional elections director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said the 92 petitions were filed separately last month by LGUs in Iligan City, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Sibugay and other areas outside the prescribed BARMM territory.

Republic Act (RA) 11054, or the Bang-

samoro Organic Law (BOL), seeks the inclusion in BARMM of areas currently included in the (ARMM), namely Marawi and Lantoran cities, the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the cities of Cotabato and Isabela (in Basilan), six towns in Lanao del Norte, and 39 villages in six North Cotabato towns.

A plebiscite is set on January 21, 2019, in the areas where BARMM will be established.

Each of the 92 petitions was signed by at least 10 percent of resident voters, whose identities will be verified by the Comelec, according to Sumalipao's briefing at a media forum on BOL here last Thursday.

If the petitions are found legitimate after the validation process, the Comelec en banc will set a separate campaign period and a plebiscite day

among voters in host-cities and provinces of the petitioners, Sumalipao said.

He said a special plebiscite will be held sometime in February next year following a separate campaign period.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (OPAPP) as well as other officials present at Thursday's forum here welcomed Sumalipao's report as "symptom of public pulse" in favor of the proposed BARMM governance.

MILF Vice Chairman Mohagher Iqbal, head of the front's peace implementing body, and Bangsamoro Transition Commission members Jose Lorena and Maisara Latip were hopeful that the electorate within the proposed BARMM territory will take a cue from the voluntary aspiration of neighboring communities via the 92 petitions.

37

Abu Sayyaf abducts 3 Indonesian fishing crew

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Three Indonesian fishing crew were reported kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf gunmen off Sabah near the Philippine border and had been taken to the southern province of Sulu, according to Malaysian media.

The Malaysian media on Sunday said the three fishing crew were working for a fishing company in Sandakan and had been seized by 7 gunmen on the night of December 5 near Pegasus Reef, an area where four armed men also attacked a tugboat and wounded an Indonesian crew two days later in a failed abduction.

Sabah police recovered the trawler of the missing Indonesian crew with its engine still running.

They were abducted on Wednesday. One of the victims apparently made contact with a family member late Thursday night. The sources also disclosed that the family member was urged to seek the assistance of the Indonesian consulate, the media reported.

It said, citing intelligence sources, that the gunmen were led by Abu Sayyaf commanders Al Muji

Yadah and Hajan Sawadjaan, who teamed up with another terrorist commander, Indang Sutukan.

The group was tagged as behind a spate of ransom kidnappings in the waters of Sabah and a recent attack on tugboat off Pegasus Reef.

The names of the abducted Indonesians were not made public by the *Star Online* but said their ages are between 19 and 40.

The *Star Online*, quoting unidentified intelligence sources, said three fishermen had been taken by their abductors to Pata Island and later transferred them to Panamao town.

Panamao is near Luuk town where the Abu Sayyaf bandits had freed their Indonesian hostages several times in the past.

On December 6, the bandits freed 35-year old Usman Yusuf in Luuk's Bual village.

Yusuf was quickly brought to a military base in the capital town of Jolo after soldiers recovered him in Bual village.

He was kidnapped along with another Indonesian man Samsul Saguni, 40, on September 11 off Gaya Island in Sabah's Semporna town and brought to Sulu, one of the five provinces under the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Saguni's fate remains unknown.

The release of Yusuf came after the chief of the Indonesian Consul-General's Office in Sabah, Sulisujio Djati Ismojo, appealed to Malaysia to resolve the kidnapping of its citizens.

It was unknown whether ransom had been paid to the kidnappers in exchange for Yusuf's release.

But in September, the Abu Sayyaf released other kidnapped Indonesian hostages to Nur Misuari, chief of the former rebel group Moro National Liberation Front, and his wife Tarhata; and a former Indonesian army general Kivlan Zein, who was believed to have ne-

gotiated for the victims' freedom.

On September 14 this year, the Abu Sayyaf, whose leaders pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, also released to Misuari three other Indonesian hostages — Hamdao Salim, Subandi Satuh and Sudarlan Samansung — who were kidnapped at sea off Sabah in January.

In August 2016, civilians recovered two of seven Indonesian sailors Ismail and Mohamad Soyfan in the same village of Bual.

The two were part of a crew of tugboat Charles kidnapped in June of the same year after terrorists on speedboats intercepted the vessel while heading to Samarinda in East Kalimantan after a trip from the Philippines.

The remaining hostages — Ferry Anfa, the skipper, M. Mahbra Dahn, Edi Suryono, M. Nasir and Robin Piter — were eventually freed by the Abu Sayyaf to Misuari on October 2, 2016. *AJ*

There were no immediate reports from the Philippine military on the latest abductions.

But it recently said the Abu Sayyaf is still holding at least three more foreigners and three Filipinos in southern Philippines.

The legal argument against martial law

Who sends Tyrion Lannister to a sword fight and Jaime Lannister to a negotiating table? Sadly, this is what the most vocal legal critics of martial law have done in the past 18 months.

Martial law is our most formidable emergency power. Deploying it merits serious political and legal questions.

The political asks: Is martial law correct? The legal asks a more basic question: Is it even permitted given the facts?

Law sets minimums but cannot decide for us.

How confused has the legal debate been?

Initially, for example, critics argued a president may not declare martial law if not recommended by his defense secretary.

No judge could accept this. Our Constitution has no such requirement and it is illogical because a president may overrule or even replace his defense secretary any time.

Sensible legal advocates frame:

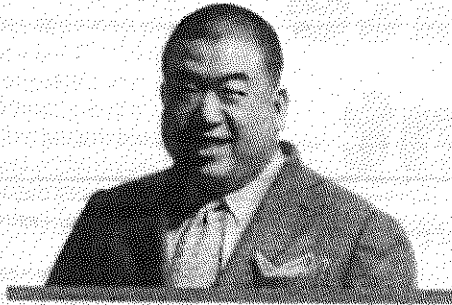
1. What actual powers does martial law grant?
2. How has martial law actually been used since May 23, 2017?
3. What military plans for 2019 cannot be pursued without martial law?

Visualize the Marawi siege.

At its height, Mayor Majul Gandamra and policemen barricaded themselves in Marawi's City Hall, preventing the Islamic State flag from being flown there. City hall reopened days later, although it was too dangerous for staff to come to work daily.

This is the extreme scenario martial law solves. With the mayor fighting for his life and other officials dead or in hiding, martial law empowers a general to intervene and restore government.

But this picture equally demonstrates



SISYPHUS' LAMENT

OSCAR FRANKLIN TAN

when martial law is irrelevant.

If no bullets are flying and City Hall is open, what does martial law authorize the general to do that he cannot normally do? Remember, the military already has broad powers, to match its broad responsibilities.

Article VII, Section 18 of our Constitution primarily requires an "actual"—this is the technical legal term, contrasted with threatened or imminent—rebellion to declare martial law.

Our Supreme Court's Lagman decision, in February 2018, allowed a second martial law extension. It accepted that an "actual" rebellion tried to remove territory from the government. The military is still chasing rebels across Mindanao as they try to regroup, recruit new members and restart the fighting.

How does one dissect planned action in 2019 in a legal context?

If the plan is for a general to run Marawi due to a new attack, this may meet Article VII, Section 18.

But if the plan is to chase rebels into mountains and swamps, troops may be transferred to Mindanao under normal

powers. And generals do not need to temporarily take control of mountains and swamps from civilian leaders.

If the plan is to step up intelligence and counter terrorist recruitment, the military is also already authorized. And only new legislation, not martial law, would give them additional budgets and new legal tools for intelligence.

If the plan is to improve peace and order and scour the countryside for loose firearms, then this is a job for police, not the military. Peace and order is a civilian task and the police is a civilian agency.

Remember, the military may be deployed to assist police under normal powers, without martial law, as they are to help build roads in remote areas and rescue flood victims.

One concludes martial law is the wrong legal tool to achieve many military goals, as opposed to new legislation, increased budgets and troop redeployments. It is thus crucial to set politics and egos aside and have the separate legal debate free of drama.

The goal must be to deploy the best legal tools to allow our soldiers to complete their mission safely and allow Marawi to rebuild with dignity.

Further, we have an obligation to the next generation to document how the new martial law was implemented in fidelity to our Constitution.

But we must understand the difference between political and legal arguments, as we do the difference between standing beside Tyrion and beside Jaime in a sword fight.

React: oscarfranklin.tan@yahoo.com.ph, Twitter @oscarfbtan, facebook.com/OscarFranklinTan. This column does not represent the opinion of organizations with which the author is affiliated.

Climate change movement continues in Katowice

THREE years after the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in which 195 nations, including the Philippines, pledged to carry out national programs to reduce their respective carbon emissions to keep world temperatures down, environmentalists from around the world met this week in Katowice in the coal-mining region of Poland.

It was at the Paris conference in 2015 that the various countries accepted the findings of scientists that world temperatures have been steadily rising due to increasing industrial emissions, causing the ice in the polar regions to melt, raising ocean levels, and spawning increasingly violent typhoons and hurricanes arising from the heated oceans.

This year, our part of the globe has been hit by several powerful typhoons that caused so much death and destruction with their strong winds, heavy rains, and storm surges. The Philippines is listed as the world's fifth most vulnerable country to extreme weather in the last 20 years.

On the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Conference in Katowice, Poland, various international campaign groups renewed their call on countries to shift away from the use of coal and other fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas to produce power for homes and industries.

China and the United States are the leading emitters of carbon into the atmosphere today because of their industries. At the Paris conference, China

pledged to reduce its carbon emissions, announcing a policy of shifting to the use of electric cars. The US, however, has rejected the Paris conference call, with President Donald Trump determined to protect the US coal industry.

Compared to these two giants in industry, the Philippines is a minor producer of carbon emissions but it is among the leading sufferers from violent storms in the world. Last week, the Philippines was featured in the international program of Al Gore "24 Hours of Reality" as the victim of super-typhoon Yolanda, the strongest tropical typhoon ever to make landfall, which took the lives of thousands in the Visayas in 2013.

In our continuing effort to develop, we have great need for considerable amounts of energy and so we continue to depend on coal power plants as the cheapest source of power. We will also soon have oil and gas from our joint exploration projects with China in the Reed Bank in the South China Sea.

But we continue to move forward in our program of renewable energy - geothermal, solar, wind, biomass. We have such great potentials for these natural sources of power that will not add to the world's carbon emissions.

Today we are among the worst victims of climate change. One day we should be able to be at or near the top of the list of nations contributing to the making of a safer world from typhoons and other natural calamities.

Media pundits, economic hitmen and Duterte's rebalancing

President Duterte's recalibration of Philippine foreign policy has the potential for greater stability in the region. But it has unleashed the wrath of media pundits and economic hitmen.

DURING President Xi Jinping's visit to Manila last month, some 30 bilateral agreements were signed. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation on oil and gas development in the South China Sea topped the list of deals in trade and investment, infrastructure, and cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative.



DAN STEINBOCK

President Duterte's recalibration seeks to couple longstanding relations with the US with Sino-Philippine economic cooperation. It is a balancing act, not an act of exclusion. In contrast, there was an element of exclusion in the foreign policy in the Aquino era when good relations with Washington were seen to require distance from China.

Today, some critics of the Duterte policies push similar exclusionary ideas seeking to misrepresent or undermine the Sino-Philippine rapprochement. Ostensibly, this occurs in the name of Philippine national interest, yet these pundits and hitmen are affiliated by external economic and geopolitical interests.

Let's take a closer look at just two such examples. Neither is an isolated case. More recent

examples abound. And still more are likely to occur in the future.

Media pundits and geopolitical interests

A year ago, the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), a US think-tank, published a release about "A Constructive Year for Chinese Base Building." What made the long report intriguing were the many satellite photos and aerial imagery. Yet, the pre-Christmas release did not generate much chatter.

A month later, Richard Heydarian, portrayed as an independent academic and policy adviser, released an AMTI update, "Asean Under Duterte: Lost Opportunities

on the South China Sea" (Jan. 12, 2018). Heydarian complained that "under Duterte's watch, ASEAN has lost a crucial opportunity to hold China to account." Thereafter, GMA News headlined his "take on PHL allowing China to do maritime research in Benham Rise" (Jan. 23, 2018). He was portrayed as "GMA News resident analyst." No mention was made about the author's affiliation with AMTI.

To foster debate, the Inquirer's Frances Mangosing released another "exclusive" entitled "New photos show China done with its militarization of South China Sea" (Feb. 4, 2018). The "source" of aerial photos was not identified, but the photos were reminiscent of those published

14 Steinbock A5

previously by the AMTI. That led to a new - this time anonymous - AMTI release based on the Inquirer's story, which noted that most images "were taken in late 2017 by an unspecified patrol aircraft from an altitude of 1,500 meters" (Feb. 16, 2018). It was followed by Mangosing's new piece, "Kagitingan Reef may be China's 'intelligence hub' in Spratlys - US think-tank" (Feb. 18, 2018), based on the AMTI release.

In reality, AMTI is a subsidiary of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a multimillion-dollar US think-tank led by members of US government, State Department, Congress and Pentagon. Heydarian is a member contributor of the AMTI, the CSIS, and Council for Foreign Relations. His Twitter account is visualized by the UK-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which is pushing an "Indo-Pacific Age" in Asia - which just happens to be the name of Heydarian's forthcoming book.

That leaves the mystery of the source of the satellite photos. In addition to CSIS/AMTI, they belong to DigitalGlobe, which is a US multibillion-dollar vendor of space imagery and geospatial content. In 2016, DigitalGlobe teamed up with

Amazon, which has a \$600 million 10-year cloud deal with the CIA, and the CIA's venture arm In-Q-Tel which has been active in Silicon Valley since 1999.

There is nothing illegitimate about such affiliations or the content they produce. But they are beholden mainly to US geopolitical interests. Truthful journalism should acknowledge such linkages, not suppress them.

Hitmen and economic interests

Since 2016, President Duterte has pushed an infrastructure investment program which relies on sustained growth at close to 7 percent per year. The strategy is to become an upper middle-income economy by early 2020s. Yet, the effort has been almost systemically misreported internationally.

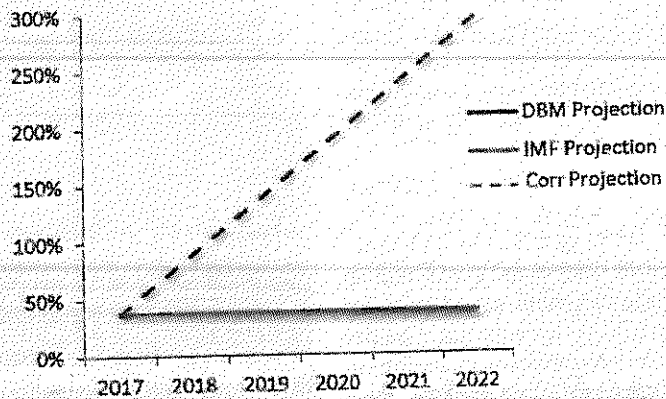
In May 2017, the Philippines' Department of Budget and Management (DBM) estimated that \$167 billion would be spent on infrastructure during Duterte's six-year term. A day later, Forbes released a widely distributed commentary, which alleged that this debt "could balloon to \$452 billion. China will benefit." The

author, Anders Corr, expected the Philippine government debt of \$123 billion to soar to \$290 billion. Assuming that most monies would come from China and with excessive mafia-type interest rates, Corr argued that with accrued interest, the Philippines would end up in debt bondage as debt-to-GDP ratio would balloon to a world record of 296 percent.

Like Heydarian, Corr was framed as an independent observer. Yet, according to his own testimony and that of US Naval Institute, he has done "field research" in Vietnam, the Philippines and Taiwan. He has had "deals" with the Pentagon on Russia and Ukraine. In Afghanistan he has served the US Pacific Command and the US Special Operations Command Pacific for US national security in Asia.

After the 2017 *Forbes* debacle Corr seemed to disappear from public debates. Now he's back, particularly in Australia. He has urged Trump to get tougher in the South China Sea, bullied Pakistan with sanctions, advocated US nuclear weapons against North Korea and blamed China for being the ringleader of global terrorism. Despite grossly failed projections, he continues to be used as an

PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT DEBT, 2017-22E (% OF GDP)



"expert" by major media.

Corr also has his media trolls. In August 2017, Singaporean-based Asean Today, which has many references to Corr's pieces, published his Forbes piece with a new title: "Is the Philippines heading into a debt crisis?" Maybe the idea was to divide the Asean Summit, which Duterte would host weeks later. Yet, the piece was signed by Asean Today's editor Oliver Ward. Interestingly, Ward does not reside in Singapore, but in Boston in the US where he also contributes to The Hill Reporter and OpenDemocracy sites, which

are funded by Soros foundations and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Around the same time, the NED also hosted the launch of Heydarian's critical book on Duterte in the US.

So, what's the truth about the alleged "debt bondage"? Let's compare these forecasts with IMF projections. Between 2017 and 2022, the DBM estimated the debt would mildly decline. My estimate was slightly more conservative because I expect trade wars to have some adverse impact toward 2019-2020. In contrast, Corr claimed Philippine debt-to-GDP ratio would soar to 300 percent of GDP by 2022. In

reality, the IMF's forecast is closely aligned with my projection and that of the DBM. In contrast, Corr's "projections" have nothing to do with reality (see figure).

The lessons

The moral of the story is that in the Philippine debate about China and the US, independent analysts may sometimes be not that independent. Transparent initiatives may at times prove very opaque. Democracy organizations may promote anti-democratic goals. And even reputable reporters, observers and economic analysts may occasionally serve as assets for external interests - knowingly or not.

In such circumstances, mainstream news may be less about actual news than about carefully choreographed exercises of soft power.

Dan Steinbock is the founder of Difference Group and internationally recognized expert of the multipolar world economy. He has served at the India, China and America Institute (US), Shanghai Institute for International Studies (China) and the EU Center (Singapore). For more, see <http://www.differencegroup.net/>

LP, Lumad's persecutor

“Noynoy did not pursue a resolute action on the oppression of the Lumad as this may even have had the blessing of the Liberal Party

A new kind of trouble is brewing in Mindanao as members of tribal groups, mainly the Lumad, are rising up in arms against the exploitation their people are experiencing from the New People's Army (NPA).

Recently, it was revealed, quite by accident, that young tribal children are being boarded by leaders of communist rebels in indoctrination camps in the guise of schools to be turned into hard-core cadres and guerillas.

The abuse inflicted on the Lumad tribe, however, goes way back and had intensified during the term of the chief yellow oppressor, the insensitive Noynoy Aquino

As a result of a long dry spell in Mindanao in 2015, tribal communities went hungry and around 6,000 mostly Lumad farmers protested and sought immediate relief from the catastrophe that had lasted for a year without government action.

After a violent dispersal of a barricade line on the Cotabato-Davao Highway that resulted in the death of one or two farmer protesters, the police armed with a search warrant barged in the compound of a Methodist Church in Kidapawan City where protesters who fled the violent dispersal sought sanctuary.

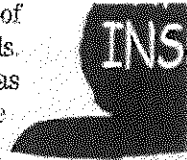
The minorities were seeking government help, which then such as in the "Yolanda" tragedy was mostly denied to those who most needed this and instead went to political allies and supporters since it was a year prior to the polls.

After the violent confrontation between the protesting Lumad and the military, Noynoy callously told media personnel asking about the incident that the government does not have a policy of killing its citizens.

Indirectly, however, his administration was responsible for the minorities' suffering through his incompetence

The El Niño phenomenon was predicted by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration in 2014 and the administration of Noynoy allotted in the budget for 2015 some P19.2 billion for mitigation measures.





The El Niño funds went direct to either the Department of Interior and Local Government or local government officials.

Despite the release of the funds, no concrete program was shown, except for some local governments putting up huge drums in communities that hardly can be considered a government plan. An inter-agency El Niño Task Force was even formed backed by the funding.

The El Niño budget was earmarked for water management projects for farm production and irrigation.

For the Lumad farmers, there was no such government program.

Rights groups and the United Nations assailed Noynoy then for his lack of conviction in protecting rights while local activists associate such insensitive remark with his being a landlord in which oppression of the weak is rampant.

The Lumad were no different from the farm workers in Hacienda Luisita who are being abused and displaced from the land they till.

The exploitation of minorities in Mindanao has been happening mostly as a result of mining operations that require their removal from ancestral lands.

One such mining operation is being run by key members and supporters of the Liberal Party (LP).

Two mining companies interested in the Lumad lands are owned by campaign financiers of LP 2016 standard bearer Mar Roxas.

SR Metals Inc. (SRMI), owned by Eric Gutierrez, was according to Lumad, the big-time mining firm in the area where oppression is rampant.

Gutierrez is a major contributor to the LP campaign.

SRMI formed private armies and paramilitary groups backed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines during the previous regime to enforce their will on the areas of operations, including the Lumad lands in Surigao.

Noynoy did not pursue a resolute action on the oppression of the Lumad as this may even have had the blessing of the LP since it is a beneficiary of the mining operations.

The NPA now draws most of its armed units from the Lumad as the communist movement is quick to exploit discontent.

Doing justice to the Lumad requires that the previous dispensation and its cronies be made answerable.

“
A mere agreement between the adopter and the biological parents of the child without judicial approval is not valid.

“
The Lumad were no different from the farm workers in Hacienda Luisita who are being abused and displaced from the land they till.

16

6

EDITORIAL

Climate change movement continues in Katowice

THREE years after the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, in which 195 nations, including the Philippines, pledged to carry out national programs to reduce their respective carbon emissions to keep world temperatures down, environmentalists from around the world met this week in Katowice in the coal-mining region of Poland.

It was at the Paris conference in 2015 that the various countries accepted the findings of scientists that world temperatures have been steadily rising due to increasing industrial emissions, causing the ice in the polar regions to melt, raising ocean levels, and spawning increasingly violent typhoons and hurricanes arising from the heated oceans.

This year, our part of the globe has been hit by several powerful typhoons that caused so much death and destruction with their strong winds, heavy rains, and storm surges. The Philippines is listed as the world's fifth most vulnerable country to extreme weather in the last 20 years.

On the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Conference in Katowice, Poland, various international campaign groups renewed their call on countries to shift away from the use of coal and other fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas to produce power for homes and industries.

China and the United States are the leading emitters of carbon into the atmosphere today because of their industries. At the Paris conference, China pledged to reduce its carbon emissions, announcing a policy of shifting to the use of electric cars. The US, however, has rejected the Paris conference call, with President Donald Trump determined to protect the US coal industry.

Compared to these two giants in industry, the Philippines is a minor producer of carbon emissions but it is among the leading sufferers from violent storms in the world. Last week, the Philippines was featured in the international program of Al Gore "24 Hours of Reality" as the victim of super-typhoon Yolanda, the strongest tropical typhoon ever to make landfall, which took the lives of thousands in the Visayas in 2013.

In our continuing effort to develop, we have great need for considerable amounts of energy and so we continue to depend on coal power plants as the cheapest source of power. We will also soon have oil and gas from our joint exploration projects with China in the Reed Bank in the South China Sea.

But we continue to move forward in our program of renewable energy - geothermal, solar, wind, biomass. We have such great potentials for these natural sources of power that will not add to the world's carbon emissions.

Today we are among the worst victims of climate change. One day we should be able to be at or near the top of the list of nations contributing to the making of a safer world from typhoons and other natural calamities.

6

4

ONLINE NEWS

10 DECEMBER 2018

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Schools network rejects AFP claim of communist recruitment



The SOS Network said there is no truth to the military's claim that Lumad schools are being used to recruit rebels. Lila Shahani, file

The Save Our Schools Network on Saturday denounced what it said were the military's "fabricated lies" against Lumad schools, which the government has painted as recruitment areas for the communist New People's Army.

The statement was released as the Armed Forces of the Philippines stood by its claim that schools like Salugpongan Community Learning Center in Talaingod, Davao del Norte that provide education to indigenous peoples' communities are being used to allegedly radicalize Lumad youth into joining the NPA and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"The AFP keep on repeating lies just to make it the truth but the Filipino people are wiser than that. The Filipino public is not buying the AFP's deviousness. They want us to veer away from their real agenda and that is to extend Martial law in Mindanao and continue with plundering Mindanao's vast resources," Eule Rico Bonganay, a member of SOS Network said in a release. Bonganay is also secretary general of children's rights group Salinlahi.

In an undated statement on its website, the AFP said that it stands by its statement linking Rep. France Castro (ACT Teachers) and former Rep. Satur Ocampo (Bayan Muna) to the CPP-NPA. Castro, Ocampo, and 16 others were arrested and charged last week for

failing to show documents that the 14 minors they were traveling with when stopped at a checkpoint were there with their parents' consent.

It claimed that party-list groups affiliated with national democratic activist group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan "are known CPP-NPA front organizations operating under the umbrella of the National United Front Commission of the CPP." The military also said the arrest of Castro, Ocampo and the others show "that the activities of Ocampo and Castro in Talaingod is part of a bigger machinery and scheme involving what the CPP-NPA has dubbed as 'Lumad schools'."

The AFP claimed that "Ocampo and Satur kidnap IP children away from their families to be used as mascots for their international solidarity works."

AFP: Schools at 'center of CPP-NPA exploitation'

The AFP statement also listed schools—including Salugpongan, "Tribal Filipino Program in Surigao del Sur", and Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development—that it said "are at the center of CPP-NPA exploitation of the native Mindanawons who are being radicalized at a very young age by CPP-NPA supporters who pose as concerned teachers."

In October, the AFP also named colleges and universities in Metro Manila where films on martial law were supposedly being shown to students to recruit them into communism. The announcement, as well as the military claim of the existence of a "Red October" plot that failed to materialize, was met with denials from school administrations and condemnation from the art and film making communities.

In a series of interviews in early 2018, a volunteer teacher at Alcadev—one of the schools in the AFP list—said that subjects taught at the schools include Math and Science. Students are also taught History, sewing and basic carpentry, reading and writing in English and Filipino, and scientific and sustainable agriculture.

Harassment at Lumad schools

Salugpongan, Tribal Filipino Program of Surigao del Sur and Alcadev have reported being harassed by military and paramilitary forces this year and in 2017.

In 2015, tribal leaders in the Alcadev school were murdered on school grounds. The alleged leader of the paramilitary group linked to the killings has since been seen at checkpoints in Lianga, Surigao del Sur as well as in activities and videos denouncing the IP schools.

"We, in SOS Network, have documented 535 cases of attacks on Lumad schools under the Duterte administration's reign of terror and martial law in Mindanao," Bonganay said Saturday.

SOS Network said that "on the 28th of November, teachers and students fled Sitio Dulyan, Barangay Palma Gil in Talaingod, Davao del Norte because of threats of being killed by the

para-military group ALAMARA at the instigation of the 56th [Infantry Battalion] of the AFP." Castro, Ocampo, and the others said that it was against this kind of harassment that they were "rescuing" the minors from.

Rorelyn Mandacawan, a student of Salugpongan, is quoted by SOS Network as saying the schools "are manifestations of our unity. We treasure it because it teaches us not just how to read and write but to love our ancestral land and defend it from those who want to steal it away from us."

Mandacawan claimed in the SOS Network release that security forces "are the ones who bomb our communities, kill our families and tribe members, displace us from our homes and ancestral land, coerce our fellow Lumad to forcibly close our hard-earned treasure and that is our school."

Investors on ancestral domain

In February, President Rodrigo Duterte said he would take care of looking for investors for ancestral domain, saying "you have been given ancestral domain. The problem is, you aren't using it."

Among the areas he mentioned that he wants opened to investment are Mount Talomo — part of the Apo-Talomo mountain range in the Davao region — the Anda Valley Complex in Surigao del Sur and Mount Kitanglad in Bukidnon.

"If you say you don't want to mine, then don't. No mines. If you say it will pollute your area, we'll block it," he also said. He said, though, that IPs who agree to have mines put up in their ancestral domains are free to do so.

"It's impossible not to mine. But if you say you don't want it, I won't coerce you. I will ban it," he said.

Under the law, IPs have the right to decide for themselves how their ancestral domain will be used and developed. Activities like mining, which some Lumad communities oppose, require free and informed prior consent from the IP community.

Competing claims on who is the rightful representative of an IP group complicates issues on the use of ancestral domain.

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Arms cache recovered from Nueva Ecija NPA camp

Soldiers recovered an arms cache in an abandoned camp of the New People's Army (NPA) on the Caraballo mountain range in Barangay Minuli, Caranglan, Nueva Ecija on Friday.

Maj. Gen. Felimon Santos Jr., 7th Infantry Division commander, said seven M16 rifles, various types of ammunition, three improvised explosive devices, bomb materials, 13 cell phones and accessories and a binocular were found stuffed in a drum unearthed at the scene.

Santos said villagers reported the presence of the NPA camp in the area.