

By 2029, 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

12 December 2018

Wednesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

12 DECEMBER 2018

Weather Forecast- http://pagasa.dost.gov.ph/weather/daily-weather-forecast		
Page Nr.	Title	Source
NATIONAL NEWS		
1-2	Ex-speaker allotted P5-B pork-Andaya	PDI-A1
3-4	'Balangiga bells are now home'	P Star-1
AFP/ SECURITY RELATED NEWS		
5	SC's Carpio insists protests vs China incursions must continue	P Star-12
6	Protest vs China incursions-Carpio	M Standard-A2
7-8	The search for the 2019 Metrobank foundation outstanding Filipinos is ongoing	P Star-7
9	Lorenzana: ouster plot list is fake news	PDI-A3
10	14 arrested for oil smuggling	P Star-14
11	Duterte presides over AFP change of command	P Star-13
12	Madrigal told to keep AFP gain	D Tribune-1
13	Bagong AFP Chief iniluklok	Ngayon-2
14	Hello ML extension, goodbye 2019 budget	PDI-A3
15-16	Congress to tackle ML extension in Mindanao today	P Star-8
17	Arroyo, Gordon for ML extension	M Standard-A1
18	ML gets bigger backing	D Tribune-1
19	SGMA reiterates support for ML Minda extension	P Tonight-6
20	GMA payag kahit paulit-ulit na extension ng ML sa Mindanao	Ngayon-2
21-22	US returns Balangiga bells to PH after 117 yrs	PDI-A6
23-25	Balangiga bells back home in PH	M Bulletin-1
26-27	Balangiga bells come home	M Times-A1
28-29	US returns 3 war trophy bells in historic act	M Standard-A1
30-31	The Balangiga bells are home	D Tribune-1
32	Balangiga Bells back	Tempo-2
33	3 Balangiga bells naibalik na sa Pinas	PM-2
34	Balangiga Bells balik-Pinas!	Ngayon-2
35	Pagbalik ng Balangiga Bells 'historic'-Palasyo	Ngayon-2
36	PRRD awards 500 houses to Scout Rangers	M Bulletin-1
37	Child rights advocates oppose mandatory ROTC for children	M Bulletin-2
38	North Cotabato village bans communist rebels	PDI-A10
39	NDF tags gov't as top human rights violator	P Star-12
40	Army: Reds top rights violator in Negros	P Star-15
41	FMOs to continue	M Bulletin-13
42	Lumads, tribal leaders hold anti-NPA rally	M Bulletin-13
43	Barangay declares Communist rebels persona non grata	M Bulletin-13
44	NPA threatens DepEd execs-AFP	M Standard-A3
45	'No report on kidnap of 3 Indonesians'	P Star-15
46	2 Abu Sayyaf bandits captured in Sabah	M Times-A7

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

47	Duterte plans to spend night with soldiers in Jolo	Tempo-2
48	MILF member busted	P Journal-13
49	Army mediation	M Bulletin-13
50	Climaco vows not one of Zambo City's 98 brgys will be included in BARMM	M Bulletin-13
51	MILF, MNLF in rare show of unity for BOL ratification	M Bulletin-13
52	BoL last chance to peace, says Murad	M Standard-A6
53	BoL support wide-MILF	D Tribune-1
EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY		
54	Criminals and terrorists don't deserve a truce	M Bulletin-10
ONLINE NEWS		
55	New AFP chief vows to bring in 'culture of excellence'	www.pna.gov.ph

EX-SPEAKER ALLOTTED P5-B PORK-ANDAYA

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS

The districts of Pantaleon Alvarez and Rodolfo Fariñas were allocated the biggest infrastructure funding in the proposed budget for 2019, says the House majority leader. Both claim they had no hand in crafting the bill.

A4

FROM A1

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

The district of former Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, not that of Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo or those of her allies in the House of Representatives, was allotted the biggest infrastructure funding in the proposed P3.8-trillion national budget for next year, House Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. said on Tuesday.

In a letter to President Duterte, Andaya said P5 billion was earmarked for projects in Alvarez's district in Davao del Norte province, making the former Speaker's constituency the biggest recipient of infrastructure allotments.

Former Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles, the President's nephew who relinquished his post after he was named secretary to the Cabinet, got P4 billion, while the district of Andaya's predecessor, Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas, was allotted P3.5 billion.

When sought for comment, Alvarez and Fariñas said they had no hand in earmarking funds for their districts. (See story on this page.)

Breaking her silence on the issue, Arroyo, who was accused by Sen. Panfilo Lacson of getting P2.4 billion worth of projects, said it was not true that her district in Pampanga



Pantaleon Alvarez

Rodolfo Fariñas

Karlo Nograles

province was showered with infrastructure projects.

'Upper-middle class'

"I'm only 'upper-middle class' as far as the allocations are concerned," Arroyo told reporters on Tuesday.

In his letter, Andaya said Arroyo's second district in Pampanga placed 60th, not 100th as he had previously claimed, among legislative areas with the biggest allotments.

Arroyo said it was the House appropriations committee, not her, that prepared the budget. "Because even if I'm Speaker, I think Andaya and many congressmen will attest, that I do not dictate on details."

Andaya said the proposed pork for his district in Camarines Sur province was 110th among legislative areas with the largest projects under the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

His district was allotted P1.9 billion in the proposed budget that the House had submitted to

the Senate, according to Lacson.

Response to Palace

Andaya drafted the letter to Mr. Duterte to explain the insertions in the budget as disclosed by Lacson, who has examined the House-approved spending bill as part of his fight against the graft-ridden pork barrel system, a source of hefty kick-backs for lawmakers.

The letter was in response to a statement of presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo that Arroyo should explain to the public why billions of pesos in projects had been allotted to her district.

Andaya said DPWH officials were unaware of the "huge funding spikes" in the allotments for certain "favored districts."

He added that the National Economic and Development Authority had informed him that the regional development councils did not request the projects.

"As the one who participat-

ed in the budget process from both the executive and legislative side, the Speaker has instructed us to treat the draft national budget as a rigorously crafted instrument, which gives residents in all districts equal opportunity for growth and the same access to services," Andaya said in the letter.

Purging favoritism

He added that what the current House leadership did "was, in a manner compliant with all laws, to purge the budget of development favoritism and as much as possible, apportion next year's spending to all districts in a fair manner."

Andaya surmised that officials of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) did not inform Mr. Duterte about the matter because he would not have allowed it since this would "violate his oft-repeated promise to the people of equal progress for all."

Arroyo, whose tumultuous

nine-year presidency was besieged by various corruption allegations, maintained that she was unfairly criticized for the alleged realignment of pork in the national expenditure program submitted by the DBM to the House.

Stung out by Lacson

Asked if she thought she was stung out by Lacson, she replied: "Yes, yes."

As to Lacson's possible motive in leveling the allegations against her, Arroyo said: "I cannot make allegations about somebody else's motive, just as it is right for them not to make allegations about me."

The Speaker played down the senator's insinuations that her political allies received a windfall from the supposed pork bonanza in the proposed budget.

"The [allies of] the previous leadership of the House have bigger, multiples of the budget of my district ... If I'm No. 90 or No. 60 and I'm the Speaker of the House, do I have to explain that?" she said.

In a statement, Panelo expressed appreciation for Andaya's gesture to explain the proposed infrastructure allocation for the second district of Pampanga.

He said Malacañang wanted Congress to ensure that the budget will equitably respond to the needs of the entire nation and not certain people only.

—WITH A REPORT FROM CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO INQ

'Balangiga bells are now home'

By PIA LEE-BRAGO

One hundred seventeen years after they were pulled down from the belfry of a Samar church by US troops as war booty, the bells of Balangiga "are home now, in the Philippines, where they belong," US Ambassador Sung Kim said yesterday.

Kim and Philippine officials led by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana welcomed the arrival of the bells at Villamor Air Base.

Kim said the bells took a "very long road home," with countless Filipinos and Americans working tirelessly for

decades to make their return possible.

Also present at the handover ceremony were US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Felter, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., US Indo-Pacific Command chief Ad-

miral Philp Davidson and Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez.

"By returning the bells, the United States could restore to its friend and ally an important symbol of national independence and demonstrate our

Turn to Page 6

Balangiga From Page 1

commitment to a relationship of two sovereign nations, two equal partners and mutual respect," Kim said.

The return of the bells was the "right thing to do," he added.

He said the bells should be returned rightly to the people of Balangiga and to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir where they had hung for years before US soldiers on a punitive expedition took them away in September 1901.

The American soldiers were on a mission to avenge the death of their comrades at the hands of Filipino guerrillas in an attack signaled by the ringing of the bells.

The soldiers had orders from Gen. Jacob Smith to turn the town into a "howling wilderness" by razing the town and killing every Filipino male 10 years and above or anyone capable of carrying a rifle.

"May they ring in peace and bear testament to the ties and values which bind our two great nations for generations to come," Kim said.

"The return of the bells of Balangiga lets us reflect on the US-Philippine relationship — where we have been, where we are, where we are going," Kim said. "Having now served over two years as US ambassador to the Philippines, I am convinced that our relationship remains ironclad, consecrated by the service and sacrifice of the Americans and Filipinos who fought side by side for freedom," he maintained.

Before their return to the Philippines, two of the bells were at the Warren USAF Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming and the third was on display at Camp Red Cloud in South Korea.

Lorenzama, for his part, said the bells were a symbol

of a people's struggle during a dark period in Philippine-American history.

"After 117 years, the bells of Balangiga are coming home and will once again take its place in Balangiga Church. There was a time when the bells of Balangiga pealed to a different beat, encompassing a dark and painful episode in history which nonetheless teaches a lesson that nobody wins in war," he said.

Decades of work

Since former president Fidel Ramos first raised the issue of the bells with then US president Bill Clinton in 1993, Kim said virtually every Philippine president has pressed for the bells' return.

In his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) last year, President Duterte strongly demanded the return of the bells.

"President Duterte made a forceful appeal for the bells' return during his 2017 State of the Nation address. I was there

and heard his passionate call loud and clear," Kim added.

US embassy spokesperson Molly Koscina said on Monday that a number of presidents, secretaries, Filipino and US ambassadors had worked for the return of the Balangiga bells, amid protests from some US veterans.

"So there were some legal issues really. It's time for the bells to come back but it was not due to any particular event or any particular statement. People have been working on this for many many years," Koscina said.

The return of the bells, she said, should remind the new generation of the sacrifices of Filipinos and Americans who fought side by side for freedom.

"We fought together for freedom and to protect democratic values across the Indo-Pacific region. In World War II and in Korea, our soldiers fought, bled, died and sacrificed side by side. Together they made possible the peace and prosperity we enjoy

today," he said.

While efforts to have the bells returned had spanned several administrations,

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Romulo Valles said the administration deserves praise for its relentless pursuit of the bells' return.

"With this, we express our profound gratitude to the Philippine government for its years of vigorous efforts to reclaim these bells. We thank in particular our present government, with the leadership of President Duterte, for bringing a most successful and happy conclusion to all these efforts," Valles, who is also Davao archbishop, said in a statement.

"The return of these three church bells, which, for the Catholic Church, are priceless religious treasures used for generations to call Her faithful to prayer and worship, affords us an opportunity to understand and appreciate history better with a more mature perspective. It also demonstrates

that the path to healing and reconciliation may be arduous but is never impossible," Valles maintained.

The CBCP president also said he is grateful to the US government for finally giving back the bells.

"We also appreciate the very wise gesture of the US government in finally bringing back the bells of Balangiga to where they should belong, thereby giving ourselves the experience of a deeper sense of justice and respect between our peoples and consequently letting our friendship grow stronger," he added.

Military chaplain Oscar Florencio also said that he was grateful to those who contributed to the return of the bells.

"This return is also a deeper meaning of reconciliation and healing of the aged wounds of war and anger. We hope and pray that truly magnanimity of hearts and healing of wounds and misunderstanding will prevail," Florencio said. — With Jaime Laude, Evelyn Macairan

SC's Carpio insists protests vs China incursions must continue

By EDU PUNAY

Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has renewed his call for the Duterte administration to file new protests against China for its incursions in waters within Philippine territory.

"I hope they will continue to file protests so that we will be able to show that we never consented impliedly (to Chinese incursions in West Philippine Sea)," Carpio stressed in an interview.

"If you don't protest, you accept. You give up your rights and we don't want to do that," the Supreme Court magistrate said.

Carpio argued that filing of protests against China is necessary to protect the sovereignty of the Philippines over its exclusive economic zones in the West Philippine Sea that Chinese ships have already reportedly penetrated.

"We won in the (arbitration court in) The Hague because

we filed several, numerous protests, note verbales protesting China's incursion in the West Philippine Sea. Had we not made those protests against China's nine-dash line map on time, we would have lost," he explained.

Still, Carpio reiterated his support for the memorandum of understanding signed during the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in the country last month for possible joint oil and gas development in the West Philippine Sea.

He commended the Duterte administration for not accepting the draft MOU presented by China and instead pursued its own version of the MOU, which included the safety provision on service contracting.

Carpio said such provision would "expressly acknowledge that the natural resource belongs to the Philippines" and that "the Philippines has exclusive sovereign rights over the gas and oil."

"On our terms, it means coop-

eration on oil and gas through service contracts. And there's no problem about that because in Malampaya, we have a service contractor which is a foreign company. Should China accept to be a service contractor, then China admits that we have exclusive sovereign rights. That's the most important thing here," he pointed out, referring to the Malampaya gas field in Palawan.

However, he reiterated that joint exploration and exploitation with China cannot be allowed as it is prohibited by the 1987 Constitution as it would be tantamount to surrendering part of the country's sovereignty over its territory.

"We want to use 'cooperation' in oil and gas through service contracts because it could be confusing to use the word joint again. Joint exploration is prohibited by our Constitution. We should call it cooperation through service contracts," he added. }2

TODAY

Protest vs China incursions—Carpio

By Rey E. Requejo

SENIOR Associate Justice Antonio Carpio on Tuesday urged the Duterte administration to file new protests against China over its incursions in the West Philippine Sea.

He said the Philippines should file diplomatic protests against China but backed the memorandum of understanding between the two governments for a possible joint oil and gas development in the West Philippine Sea.

"I hope they will continue to file protests so that we will be able to show that we never consented impliedly [to the

Chinese incursions in West Philippine Sea]," Carpio said.

"If you don't protest, you accept. You give up your rights and we don't wanna do that."

Carpio said the filing of protests against China was necessary to protect the sovereignty of the Philippines over its exclusive economic zones in the West

Philippine Sea that Chinese ships had already reportedly penetrated.

"We won in The Hague because we filed several, numerous protests, not verbales protesting China's incursion in the West Philippine Sea. Had we not made those protests against China's nine-dash line map on time, we would have lost," Carpio said.

Nonetheless, Carpio reiterated his support to the MOU signed during the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping last month.

He commended the Duterte administration for not accepting the draft MOU presented by China and instead pursuing its own version of the MOU,

which included the safety provision on service contracting.

Carpio said such provision would "expressly acknowledge that the natural resource belongs to the Philippines" and that "the Philippines has exclusive sovereign rights over the gas and oil."

"On our terms, it means cooperation on oil and gas through service contracts. And there's no problem about that because in Malampaya, we have a service contractor, which is a foreign company," Carpio said.

"Should China accept to be a service contractor, then China admits that we have exclusive sovereign rights. That's the most important thing here." A2

THE SEARCH FOR THE 2019 METROBANK FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING FILIPINOS IS ONGOING

The search for the next batch of Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos begins as top officials from the Department of Education (DepEd), Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) and program partners from Philippine Savings Bank (PSBank), Rotary Club of New Manila East (RCNME), and Rotary Club of Makati Metro (RCMM) gather in a historic ceremony on November 16, 2018 at the Butwagan ng Karunungan, Department of Education Central Office, Pasig City.

Present during the launch were: DepEd secretary Leonor Magtolis-Briones, AFP chief of staff General Carlito Galvez, Jr., PNP chief directorial staff police deputy director General Camilo Pancratius Cascolan (representing PNP chief police director General Oscar Albayalde) and MBFI president Aniceto Sobrepeña. They were joined by PSBank senior vice president Perfecto Dimayuga, Jr., RCMM vice president Al Miguel Leogardo and RCNME president John Paul Montero.

To mark the occasion, a ceremonial signing of a pledge of commitment was held to signify unity among these institutions in fostering service excellence.

As a prestigious career-service award for Filipino exemplars in the academe, military, and police sectors—4 teachers, 3 soldiers, and 3 police officers will be recognized. Each awardee will receive a cash prize of P1 million, a gold medallion, and The Flame trophy during the formal conferment ceremonies in September 2019.

Guided by the theme "Beyond Excellence", a Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino renders service above and beyond his/her call of duty. Their accomplishments must have inspired and influenced their peers as well as the people in their respective communities. Their works must have transformed a community with a lasting positive impact on people and to the country. To date, the Metrobank Foundation has honored a total of 665 Outstanding Filipinos.

"We believe that achievements, which resulted to positive change, or innovations that addressed major societal problems should be highlighted and widely acknowledged. By doing so, we hope to create a ripple effect that would inspire other people, especially their colleagues in their profession, to follow in their footsteps," Sobrepeña said.

Also present during the launch were USec. Tonisito Umali, Esq.; USec. Annalyn Sevilla; USec. Victoria Medrana-Catibog; ASec. Alma Ruby Torio from DepEd; PNP DPCR police director Eduardo Garado; 2019 RCNME COPS chairman Claro Lorenzo Baarde; Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos past awardees MGen Restituto Padilla (2009); MGen. Arnold Mawcita (2010); CMSgt. Nelson Mercado (2011); BGen. Maxima Ignacio (2015); Mrs. Jennifer Rojo (2017); Col. Elmer Suderico (2017); Dr. Carla Dimalanta (2018) and PS/Supt. Pascual Muñoz (2018).

Through a nomination-based process, teachers, soldiers and police officers who are eligible to join must have a minimum of 10 years of service with at least "very satisfactory" rating in the last decade. Those who are set to retire must have at least three (3) remaining years of service. All eligible nominees must have exhibited good moral character and must not have been charged guilty in any administrative or criminal case.

Teachers in the elementary, secondary or alternative learning system must have full teaching load and must have completed academic requirements for Master's Degree while tertiary and graduate teachers must have attained a Doctorate Degree. Eligible AFP commissioned officers (Captain to Colonel) must have completed a bachelor's degree while AFP enlisted personnel (Corporal to Chief Master Sergeant) must have completed at least a High School Degree. Finally, PNP commissioned officers (Police Inspector to Police Superintendent) and non-commissioned officers (Police Officer 2 to Senior Police Officer 4) must have completed a Bachelor's Degree.

The Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) was established on January 8, 1979 by the late Dr. George S. K. Ty, sixteen (16) years after he founded the Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company (Metrobank). MBFI envisions to be the country's premier corporate philanthropic foundation contributing a significant impact on social development. Its flagship programs include the Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipinos; Metrobank Art & Design Excellence (MADE); Metrobank Scholarship Program (MSP); Metrobank MTAP-DepEd Math Challenge (MMC); Grants and Social Development Partnerships, Disaster Response, National Teachers' Month (NTM) celebration, and the Metrobank Foundation Professorial Chair Lectures. MBFI is also the principal owner of the Manila Doctors Hospital (MDH), one of the leading centers of wellness in the country. As a development organization, MBFI aims to uplift individuals and the sectors they represent and strategically link with institutions for a shared purpose. By creating and propagating a culture of excellence and providing solutions to stakeholder's needs, the Foundation continuously expands its scope of reach and be at the forefront in serving communities. As the heart of the Metrobank Group, "Excel. Engage. Empower" or the 3Es remains its roadmap.

PULONG FACEBOOK

LORENZANA: OUSTER PLOT LIST IS FAKE NEWS

By Jaymee T. Gamil
@jGamilINQ

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Tuesday shot down a controversial Facebook post over the weekend attributed to former Davao City Vice Mayor Paolo "Pulong" Duterte, listing strange bedfellows in an alleged ouster plot against President Duterte.

"The first time I saw that posting, I said it was fake news," said Lorenzana in an interview with

reporters at the Villamor Airbase in Pasay City. "I still maintain that's fake news," he said.

The news, carried by the online site politics.com.ph, showed screen shots of a digital spreadsheet listing down political opposition figures as part of the ouster plot titled "Anti-Administration Group, Ouster-Duterte Movement."

Among those on the list were Vice President Leni Robredo, Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, Sen. Lella de Lima,

Associate Justice Marvic Leonen, journalists Maria Ressa and Ellen Tordesillas, columnist Randy David and Bishops Pablo David and Broderick Fabillo.

Among the bishops listed, one was already dead and another nonexistent.

It also listed corporations, including Dole Philippines and Jollibee Food Corp., "millennial students studying at Jesuit-run schools" and activists wrongfully labelled as part of "mutant" instead of "militant" groups. INQ

14 arrested for oil smuggling

At least 14 men were apprehended after they allegedly tried to smuggle crude oil in Navotas City on Saturday.

Members of the Northern Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Philippine Navy and Philippine Coast Guard intercepted the suspects on two boats before they could dock along Manila Bay, according to Senior Inspector Jason Quijana.

Quijana said boat captain Luis Olesco was not able to present proper documents during inspection.

Authorities said they recovered an estimated 35,000 liters of crude oil worth P1 million.

Olesco said they were paid P500 per trip to transport the oil. The suspects are being held by police on charges of violat-

ing Republic Act 8749 or the Oil Industry of 1998.

Duterte presides over AFP change of command

President Duterte graced last night the change of command ceremony of incoming Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Duterte also attended the testimonial review for outgoing AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., which coincided with the 83rd anniversary of the AFP.

Prior to his appointment, Madrigal served as chief of the Davao-based Eastern Mindanao Command (East-MinCom) since November 2017, where he led several operations against the communist New People's Army.

Galvez reaches his mandatory retirement age of 56 today. Duterte earlier announced that he wanted to appoint Galvez as presidential adviser on the peace process.

In the same event, Duterte also conferred the Order of Lapu-Lapu with the Rank of Kamagi to four soldiers for exemplary service. He also witnessed the awarding of military personnel and individuals recognizing their contribution and service to the AFP.

Duterte on Monday made public his intent to forgo eligibility rules for government appointments provided that the candidates are competent and honest.

"If you want to work during my term, you are competent and you are honest, period. No more eligibility requirement," Duterte said in his speech at the Scout Ranger Villa in San Miguel, Bulacan.

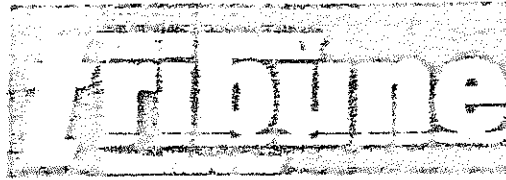
Duterte led the initial awarding of 500 housing units to the Army's First Scout Ranger Regiment based in Bulacan.

"I am not trying to degrade the qualification, the level of qualification but I need an honest person that is not corrupt," he added.

Duterte had defended his decision to place former and retired police and military officials in the past since they would often "obey first" than complain.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said the appointments showed how Duterte trusts the military officials because they are "known for their high degree of professionalism, discipline, and can-do attitude."

—Christina Mendez, Jaime Laude 13



Madrigal told to keep AFP gains

By Elmer N. Masand

President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday ordered incoming Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal to ensure the country remains peaceful and secure in his tenure as chief of

the military forces.

In his speech during the Change of Command ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, Duterte stressed to

Turn to page 6

The Filipino people count on the AFP to remain steadfast in its mission to defend our land and preserve peace in our communities

From page 1

Madrigal that he should build upon the gains of his predecessors as they are now shifting to a new approach in addressing the root causes of the communist movement.

"From the military-centric approach that gave us our recent successes against the communist movement, we now shift to a new civilian-led approach that will tap other government agencies and other private sectors in bringing basic services and other development interventions that will address the root causes of the communist movement," Duterte said in his speech.

"General Madrigal, you are now tasked with the responsibility of preserving peace and ensuring order as we shift to this new approach. Sustain the progress of those who came before you and create a legacy that will cause ripples of positive change in the years to come," he added.

The President noted that the AFP under Madrigal "will achieve more milestones in the campaign to combat terrorism, end insurgency and address lingering and emerging threats to national security."

"The Filipino people count on the AFP to remain steadfast in its mission to defend our land and preserve peace in our communities. Let us not fail them,"

Duterte said, as he urged soldiers to rally behind Madrigal "so that we may soon realize our aspirations for a stronger Armed Forces and a safer and more secure nation."

We now shift to a new civilian-led approach that will tap other government agencies and other private sectors in bringing basic services and other development interventions that will address the root causes of the communist movement.

The newly minted AFP chief of staff succeeded Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., whose eight-month stint at the helm of the AFP led to the neutralization of more than 2,000 terrorists, recovery of thousands of firearms and the clearing of seven guerrilla fronts of the New People's Army, according to the President.

Galvez's retirement came as Duterte set out a new strategy

in addressing the decades-old communist insurgency as provided under Executive Order 70 which the President signed on 4 December.

Madrigal served as the commander of the Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City and also served as commander of the Southern Luzon Command, commander of the 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro, assistant division commander and later acting division commander of the 10th Infantry Division in Compostela Valley and now chief of staff of the Philippine Army.

"He is widely known in the AFP to maintain steep standards, focused on his actions, deliberate with his plans and able to lead the men and women under him to accomplish difficult missions as a team," AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo said.

Madrigal is a member of Philippine Military Academy Sandiwa Class of 1986.

Bagong AFP Chief iniluklok

Iniluklok na sa puwesto ang bagong Chief of Staff ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa pinagsabay na change of command ceremony at ika-83 anibersaryo ng hukbong sandatahan, kagabi.

Si Lt. Gen Benjamin Madrigal Jr., miyembro ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Sandiwa Class 1985 ay humain sa

puwesto ni Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., na pormal na nagretiro kahapon.

Si Madrigal, dating hepe ng AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command at mistah ni Galvez ang ika-51 AFP chief.

Nagsilbi namang panauhing pandangal si Pangulong Duterte sa nasabing okasyon.

Nabawala si Madrigal ay kilala bilang 'mission-

focused-leader' sa AFP dahil sa dedikasyon nito sa tungkulin at serbisyo sa publiko.

Kabilang sa mga puwestong hinawakan ni Madrigal ay bilang commander ng Southern Luzon Command at 4th Infantry Division (ID).

Hinawakan din niya ang posisyon bilang chief of staff ng Philippine Army (Joy Santos) 2

INQUIRY

Hello ML extension, goodbye 2019 budget

By Leila B. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

Congress' joint session for martial law extension has added to the delay in passing next year's P3.757 trillion national budget which a Senate leader said could no longer be done this year.

The Senate and House of Representatives would hold a joint session to deliberate on President Duterte's request for a third extension of martial law in Mindanao.

Senators said it would be impossible for them to approve the 2019 budget on second and third reading by Thursday, Congress' last session day.

Time consuming

As a result, a reenacted budget would be adopted in January as senators also planned to insert a provision exempting from the election ban all projects under Mr.

Duterte's "Build, build, Build" program.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said the joint session was likely to take up the entire Thursday, depriving senators of time for the budget.

Zubiri said the House has close to 300 members and explanation of votes on extending martial law would take time.

The Senate planned to complete interpellation on the budget by Thursday.

"But that's as much as we can do," Zubiri said.

"Unless the President calls for a special session, we cannot finish the budget on time," he added.

Solution

Zubiri said the budget might be ratified by middle of January and sent to the President for signature at the end of the same month.

He said economic managers' concern about a delay in "Build, Build, Build" projects un-

der a reenacted budget could be addressed by inserting a special provision in the 2019 national budget to exempt the projects from the election ban.

Zubiri said the delay in the approval of the 2019 budget was not the Senate's fault as the House had taken a long time to pass the measure.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon also said that in previous years, the budget bill had been submitted to the Senate by the second week of November.

This year, it was submitted a few days before December "because of" insertions in the House," Drilon said.

"But it's not true that government workers would be disadvantaged," he said.

"We assure our people that the opposition will cooperate so that we can recover from this timetable," Drilon added.

"We will finish the budget when we come back in January," he said. INQ

Congress to tackle ML extension in Mindanao today

By JESS DIAZ

The House of Representatives and the Senate will tackle today President Duterte's request for the extension of martial law in Mindanao for another year up to the end of 2019.

Members of the two chambers will convene in joint session at the Batasan complex in Quezon City for this purpose starting at 9:30 a.m. They are expected to approve the President's request.

In a letter to Speaker Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and Senate President Vicente Sotto III, the President said another year of martial law in Mindanao is needed since rebellion in the region still persists.

It's his third extension request. Toward the latter part of 2017, Duterte asked Congress to lengthen his martial law declaration in May of that year by six months. Before the past year ended, he appealed for a one-year extension up to the end of this year.

As in the two previous extensions, administration and security officials are expected to defend the President's latest request.

Preparatory to today's joint session, officials briefed sena-

tors on the security situation in Mindanao on Monday. They held a separate briefing for House members yesterday.

Arroyo and Majority Leader Rolando Andaya Jr. have assured the President that the House would give its concurrence to his martial law extension request. Senators are reportedly divided on it.

The two chambers will vote jointly on the presidential request.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," Arroyo has told reporters.

Andaya said they would approve the President's proposal.

Other administration allies said they would heed Duterte's appeal to prolong martial rule.

"It is the President, the military and our colleagues from Mindanao that know the situation in the area. We have to rely on their word. We cannot pretend to know better," Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III said.

Rep. Michael Romero of party-list group I-Pacman said martial law would ensure the continued safety of residents, their properties and business establishments.

"Businesses should thrive.

Peace of mind is priceless. If there is peace, then there is stability. And with stability comes progress," he said.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, House defense committee vice chairman, said he would support a request from the President and listen to the views of his colleagues from Mindanao.

"Mindanaoans are the ones experiencing what it's like to live under martial law for a year-and-a-half now. They would have a better grasp of what is an acceptable option for them for continued peace and security," he said.

Abra Rep. Joseph Bernos sees the approval of the proposed extension of martial law in Mindanao.

"It is what the people in Mindanao want and are asking," said Bernos, vice chairman of the House Committee on public order and safety.

Support

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said all local officials in Mindanao support the extension of martial law in the region.

DILG spokesman Jonathan Malaya said the umbrella orga-

nization of municipal and city officials, the Union of Local Authorities in the Philippines (ULAP) has expressed support.

"According to our elected local government officials, martial law in Mindanao has led to improved peace and order in their areas. Who are we to argue against that?" Malaya said.

Malaya added the Philippine Councilors League is supportive of an extension and even passed a resolution.

"We had a meeting with the officials of ULAP led by Albay Governor Al Francis Bichara and he said that they are 100 percent behind the recommendation of DILG Secretary Eduardo Año on this matter," he said.

Members of the Lamitan City council in Basilan said they even wanted martial law to be extended until after Duterte's term of office ends in 2022.

"The security situation in Basilan has improved as a consequence of the massive implementation of infrastructure projects by the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in the past six years and the enforcement of martial law since 2017. Why rock the boat?"

Keep it on," Councilor Joaquin Puri Jr. said.

Lamitan Mayor Rose Furigay and her husband Vice Mayor Roderick Furigay expressed their support to extend martial law.

"We have seen improvements in the investment climate of Lamitan City as a result of the martial law so it must be extended," the vice mayor said.

Opposition lawmakers led by Rep. Edcel Lagman of Albay however vowed to question a third martial law extension before the Supreme Court.

They had challenged the President's May 2017 martial law declaration, but the high court sustained Duterte. No challenge was made against the first and second extensions.

Lagman said Duterte's third request "mocks the Constitution for wanton absence of constitutional bases which are the presence of actual rebellion and public safety requires the extension." "Rebellion does not persist in Mindanao and consequently public safety is not imperiled," he said.

He said both Gen. Car-

lito Galvez Jr., chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana were "foot-dragging in recommending another martial law extension because it appears that it is not of critical immediacy and another extension is an admission that the military has failed to achieve the purported objectives of the previous martial law extensions."

Lagman added Galvez's justification that "there is public clamor for the extension is flawed because popular clamor is not a ground for martial law or its extension." "Moreover, the alibi that 'terrorists are still lurking in the area' is not also a basis for extension because terrorism is not rebellion and the threat of terrorism, like the imminent threat of rebellion, is not a constitutional ground for martial law or its extension," he stressed.

He pointed out that the old ground of "imminent threat of rebellion" has been removed in the 1987 Constitution because "threat is contingent, self-serving and nebulous."

- With Artemio Dumlaog, John Unson, Emmanuel Tupas, Mayen Jaymalin

TODAY

Arroyo, Gordon for ML extension

By Maricel V. Cruz

SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Tuesday backed President Rodrigo Duterte's proposal to extend martial law in Mindanao.

"If it comes to our chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," Arroyo said Tuesday of the President's request that martial law and the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao be extended a year, to Dec. 31, 2019.

Arroyo said she would support the President's call to extend martial law "as long as it is needed." *Next page*

Arroyo,...

From A1

The House and the Senate will hold a joint session today (Wednesday) at 10 a.m. to decide on the President's request for martial law.

Arroyo said her personal experience as president who declared martial law in Magindanao in 2009 was her basis for supporting military rule in Mindanao.

The Palace has asked for the extension by citing the continued terror threat.

Senator Richard J. Gordon, meanwhile, said he will likely support the President's call for a third extension of martial law in Mindanao following a military briefing on the situation in the south.

Gordon said that aside from wanting to ensure the complete rehabilitation of Marawi City, which was torn apart by the armed conflict, he has received reports that Mindanawans feel safer with martial law imposed.

He added that there were also no reports of abuses since martial law was imposed in Marawi City after the siege.

"I don't hear an outcry in Mindanao. In fact, my friends tell me they're okay with martial law, and that they feel safer with it," Gordon said in a mix of English and Filipino.

"My position is that the President is more knowledgeable because he has the intel. Is he using it badly? I don't think so. Martial law is working well," Gordon added.

Marawi civic leader Samira Gotoc disagreed, however, and spoke out against the third extension.

"Martial law has failed in social service delivery. It has failed to secure justice for most Moro. It is a blunt instrument against a civilian population," Gotoc, an opposition candidate in the 2019 midterm polls, said in a statement.

ML gets bigger backing

By Kathleen Mae Bulquerin

Local government units (LGU) are throwing their full support to the proposed martial law extension in Mindanao, Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) spokesman Jonathan Maglaya said yesterday.

Turn to page 6

Martial law in Mindanao has led to improved peace and order in their areas. Who are we to argue against that

From page 1

He added the proposal gained overwhelming support from local executives in Mindanao, reiterating that its declaration had brought peace and order to the region.

Martial law was declared following the attack by Maute terrorists in Marawi City in May of last year. It was supposed to be in effect for only 60 days but the House of Representatives voted in favor of its extension in July with a validity until December of that year.

Then it was extended again until end of December this year due to the remaining threats of ISIS-inspired terror groups.

Last week, the Armed Forces of the Philippines recommended its extension for yet another year in a bid to make a "significant dent on terrorism."

Maglaya said local leaders are all in favor of another extension.

"According to our elected local government officials, martial law in Mindanao has led to improved peace and order in their areas. Who are we to argue against that?" he said.

Davao City Councilor Danilo Dayanghirang said the implementation of martial law paved the way for various developments that helped the island.

The councilor added resistance is coming from an "insignificant minority" who opposes the plans and programs of President Rodrigo Duterte.

"They are just the insignificant minority who keep on attacking

President Rodrigo Duterte and his administration," said Dayanghirang, who is also the chairman of the Philippine Councilors' League. "In reality, majority of the people in Mindanao are at peace with martial law. Practically, the economy is up and criminality is down. Infrastructures and investments are growing due to an improved peace and order situation in Mindanao."

He added tourism and the overall economy of Mindanao experienced growth under martial rule.

Meanwhile, Sen. Richard Gordon is likely to support the third extension of martial law.

Majority of the people in Mindanao are at peace with it.

Gordon said aside from eyeing a complete rehabilitation of Marawi City, he received reports that residents of the region feel safer and that no case of military abuse has been reported.

"I don't hear an outcry in Mindanao," Gordon said. "In fact, my friends say that they are all in favor of martial law. They feel safe there. There are checkpoints and we see that we are being guarded."

"While it may not be perfect, I don't see any abuses in Mindanao. So, for me, my position is that the President knows whether to extend it or not because of his intelligence. It's only him who knows. Is he using it badly? I don't think so," he added. "Martial law is being implemented properly."

SGMA reiterates support for ML Minda extension



SPEAKER Gloria Macapagal Arroyo reiterated yesterday that the House of Representatives would vote today during a joint session of Congress granting the request of President Rodrigo "Rody" Duterte to extend for one year the martial law implementation and suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao.

Mrs. Arroyo said she will keep her support to President Duterte's desire for martial law in the region "as long as it is needed."

"If it comes to our Chamber, I will recommend that we pass it," Arroyo told reporters Tuesday during

her Christmas party with House reporters.

The House of Representatives and the Senate will hold a joint session at 10 in the morning today to approve the President's request for martial law.

Arroyo said her personal experience as President who declared martial law in Maguindanao in 2009 was her basis in supporting the military rule in the region.

Citing the continued terror threat, Malacañang, through Executive Sec. Salvador Medialdea, wrote a letter to Senate President Vicente "Tito" Sotto and Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to extend for the third time the military rule in Mindanao

from December 31, 2018 to December 31, 2019.

Medialdea said the imposition of martial law in Mindanao has resulted in the "reduction of the capabilities of different terrorist groups, particularly the neutralization of 685 members of the local terrorist groups (LTG) and 1,073 members of the communist terror group (CTG); dismantling of seven guerrilla fronts and weakening of nineteen others; surrender of unprecedented number of loose firearms," among others. **Q**

Ryan Ponce Pascaso

GMA payag kahit paulit-ulit na extension ng ML sa Mindanao

Sang-ayon si House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo na magkaroon pa ng kahit ilang extension ang pagpapalal ng Batas Militar sa Mindanao para lang masiguro ang katahimikan at kaayusan sa rehiyon.

Sinabi ni Arroyo na bilang dating pangulo ng bansa ay alam niya kung gaano kahalaga ang mabibilis na aksyon kung mayroong banta ng kaguluhan tulad noong magdeklara siya ng martial law sa Maguindanao matapos ang Maguindanao massacre. Kaya kung mayroon

umanong pangangailangan para ipatupad ang Martial Law sa Mindanao ay hindi dapat ito harangin, bagkus ay palawigin lamang hanggang sa tuluyan nang maresolba ang problema sa banta ng terorismo.

Ngayong umaga ay tatahakayin ng mga mambabatas sa isang joint session ng Kamara at Senado ang pagpapalawig ng Martial Law hanggang Disyembre 31, 2018 matapos na rin itong hilingin ni Pangulong Duterte balay na rin sa naging rekomendasyon ng Philippine

National Police (PNP) at Department of National Defense (DND).

Una nang sinabi ni Arroyo na pabor ang House Leadership sa Martial Law extension subalit rin naniniya na matayang makaboboto ang mga Kongresista sa kung ano ang kanilang posisyon sa isyu.

Subalit ang mga taga Metro Manila lamang umano ang umaayaw sa martial law habang pabor naman dito ang mga taga Mindanao dahil ligtas ang kanilang pakiramdam kapag nasa ilalim ng batas militar. (Gemma Garcia)

US returns Balangiga bells to PH after 117 yrs

By the Inquirer Staff
@Team_Inquirer

Three bells taken as war booty by American soldiers from Balangiga, Eastern Samar, more than a century ago were flown back to the country on Tuesday on a US military plane in a move long demanded by Filipino leaders, closing a dark episode in the treaty allies' love-hate relationship.

American Ambassador Sung Kim and representatives of US Defense Secretary James Mattis handed back the bells of Balangiga to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in a solemn ceremony at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

The bells are revered by Filipinos as symbols of national pride, particularly of their struggle for independence.

"It is my great honor to be here at this closing of a painful chapter in our history," Kim said. "Our relationship has withstood the tests of history and flourishes today."

Gesture of friendship

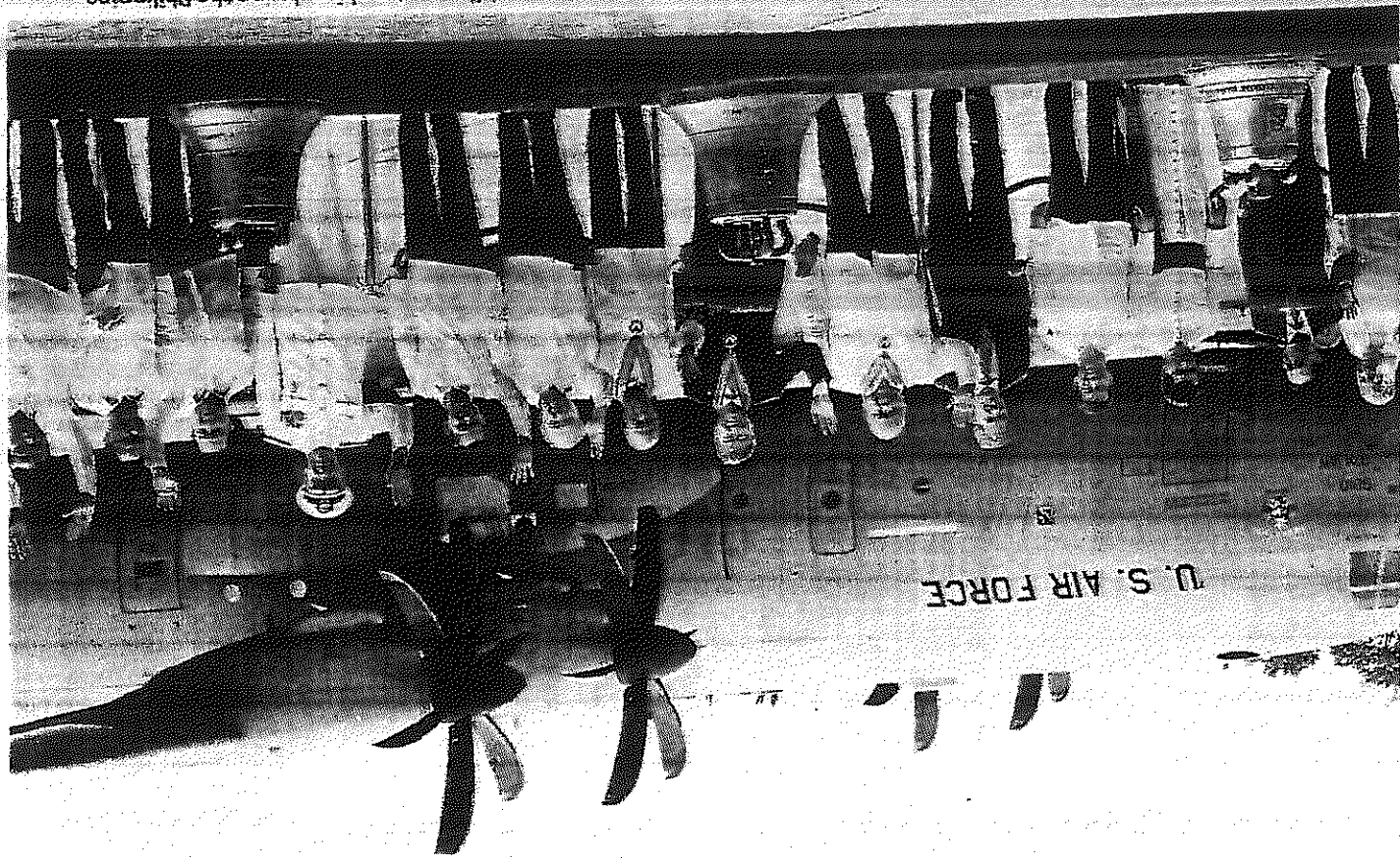
Mattis earlier said the handover was an important gesture of friendship and was in the US national security interest. Some US veterans and officials had opposed the return of the bells, calling them memorials to American war dead.

Two of the bells had been displayed at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and the third had been with the US Army in South Korea.

Returning the Balangiga bells meets a decades-old demand from the former US colony at a time when the two nations' ties have been rattled by President Duterte's pivot to China.

"The bells of Balangiga will once again peal, it will still remind the people of Balangiga of what happened in the town square more than a century ago," Lorenzana said.

After being colonized by Spain for more than three centuries, the Philippines became a US possession in 1898 in a new colonial era that began



CLOSURE US officials formally hand over three historic bells seized by American soldiers as trophies during the Philippine American War in Balangiga, Samar, in 1901 to Philippine officials at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on Tuesday. — MARIANNE REMONDEZ

with the bitter issue of the bells now resolved, he expected a strong US-Philippine alliance.

US-Philippine defense alliance

Mr. Duterte has lashed out regularly at Washington, despite a tight US-Philippines defense alliance. He has condemned what he sees as the United States' history of hypocrisy, arrogance and political interference.

Years of lobbying

Their return follows years of lobbying by former presidents, priests and historians, and challenges from Wyoming veterans and lawmakers opposed to dismantling a war memorial, resulting in legislation that barred their removal. Mr. Duterte's supporters have claimed his willingness to stand up to American influence was key to the bells' return, but history professor Francis Gell-igo of Ateneo de Manila University, said the process was more complicated.

Bolo-wielding villagers

took the bells from a Catholic church in Balangiga following an attack on Sept. 28, 1901, by bolo-wielding Filipino villagers, who killed 48 US soldiers in the town in one of the US Army's worst single-battle losses of that era. The Filipinos suffered 28 dead and 22 wounded. One of the bells had been sounded to signal the attack by the villagers, some of whom were disguised as women who hid in the church near an American garrison, according to historian Rolando Borrinaga. The Americans retaliated, reportedly killing thousands of villagers above the age of 10, and a US general, Jacob Smith, ordered Samar to be turned into a "howling wilderness," Borrinaga said. In his State of the Nation Address last year, Mr. Duterte, who has had an antagonistic attitude toward the United States, asked Washington to "return (the bells) to us." "Give us back those Balangiga bells ... They are part of our national heritage," he said.

States, asked Washington to "return (the bells) to us." "Give us back those Balangiga bells ... They are part of our national heritage," he said.

States, asked Washington to "return (the bells) to us." "Give us back those Balangiga bells ... They are part of our national heritage," he said.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement. — REPORTS FROM CHRISTINE A. AVERA, JEROME AMINS, AFP, AP AND REUTERS INC

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

These bells are emblematic of the continuing injustice committed against our country and people in the name of the hegemonic and imperialist greed of America," the leftist congressman said in a statement.

12

1

Balangiga bells back home in PH

Bells' return reflects the strong bonds,
mutual respect between PH, US – Kim

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The historic Balangiga bells, seized by American soldiers in 1901 as war trophies, tolled for the first time on Philippine soil on Tuesday following their return from the United States.

The bells arrived at about 10:35 a.m. Tuesday at Villamor Airbase in Pasay City aboard a US Air Force C-130.

AFP Chaplain (Msgr) Brig. Gen. Tirso Dolina led the tolling of the bells shortly after Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Yong ▶8

23

Balangiga bells back...

◀1

Kim signed the certificate of transfer and inspection, formalizing the return of the bells taken from Balangiga town in Eastern Samar, where US soldiers massacred hundreds of Filipinos to avenge the death of their 48 comrades in an ambush staged by Filipino guerrillas on September 28, 1901.

It's a time for healing

In his speech, Lorenzana heralded the return of the bells after more than 100 years of absence from Philippine soil.

"Now, they are home and are going back to where they belong. It is a time for healing. It is a time for closure," Lorenzana said in his remarks at the turnover ceremony at Villamor Airbase in Pasay City.

"After 117 years, the bells of Balangiga have come home and will once again take its place in the Balangiga Church," Lorenzana said.

"There was one a time when the bells of Balangiga pealed to a different beat, encompassing a dark and painful episode in history which nonetheless teaches a lesson that nobody wins a war," he added.

Lorenzana asserted that after more than a century, the return of the bells to the Philippines from United States now symbolizes the two countries' shared histories and ideas, new beginnings, renewed friendships, and a stronger brotherhood.

In a separate speech, Ambassador Kim said the bells are the original bells that hanged in Balangiga's San Lorenzo de Martir Church. The history of these bells, he said, spans the entire relationship between the United States and the Philippines.

Return underscores enduring friendship

"In the process, they have touched many lives. And their return underscores the enduring friendship between our countries, our shared values, and shared sacrifices," Kim said.

"This solemn ceremony reminds us of the many brave Filipinos and Americans who fought for freedom. In 1901, our two countries were adversaries. That painful conflict soon ended, and our countries became partners and friends."

"We fought together for freedom and to protect democratic values across the Indo-Pacific region. In World War II and in Korea, our soldiers fought, bled, died, and sacrificed side by side. Together they made possible the peace and prosperity we enjoy today," he added.

Kim, at the same time, said the return of the Bells of Balangiga lets us reflect on the US-Philippine relationship - where we have been, where we are, where we

are going.

"Having now served over two years as US Ambassador to the Philippines, I am convinced that our relationship remains ironclad, consecrated by the service and sacrifice of the Americans and Filipinos who fought side by side for freedom," Kim said.

"Our shared history is enduring and deeply personal. Our relationship has withstood the tests of history and flourishes today. And every day our relationship is further strengthened by our unbreakable alliance, robust economic partnership, and deep people-to-people ties," he said.

Strong bonds, mutual respect

Kim said on behalf of the United States, it's a great honor for him to be at the closing of a painful chapter in the two countries' history.

"The Bells' return reflects the strong bonds and mutual respect between our nations and our peoples. It demonstrates our determination to honor the past and the sacrifices made together by Filipinos and Americans. And it heralds our bright future as friends, partners, and allies," Kim said.

"The Bells of Balangiga are home now, in the Philippines, where they belong. Secretary Lorenzana, please take them to the people of Balangiga and to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir. May they ring in peace and bear testament to the ties and values which bind our two great nations for generations to come. Thank you very much," he said.

Kim said it has been a very long road home for the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippine people. He said many Filipinos and Americans worked tirelessly for decades to make the day possible and he is so glad many of them are here today.

The US ambassador explained that since former President Fidel V. Ramos first raised the issue of the bells with President Bill Clinton in 1993, virtually every Philippine president has pressed for the Bells' return.

"As the video we just watched reminds us, President Duterte made a forceful appeal for the Bells' return during his 2017 State of the Nation address. I was there and heard his passionate call loud and clear," Kim said.

Kim said President Duterte followed this up with a personal appeal to US Secretary of Defense James Mattis when, like all of the people in attendance in the turnover, recognized that returning the bells is the right thing to do and that, by returning the bells, the United States could restore to its friend and ally an important symbol of national independence and demonstrate our commitment to a relationship of two

sovereign nations, two equal partners, and mutual respect.

As part of the transfer ceremony, Philippine and United States officials, led by Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Lorenzana, Kim, Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel "Babe" Romualdez, US Defense Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Felzer, and Undersecretary for Civil, Veterans and Retiree Affairs Reynaldo B. Mapagu, inspected the bells.

Also present during the ceremony were outgoing AFP Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez Jr., United States Indo-Pacific Command chief Admiral Philip Davidson, who represented US Defense Secretary James Mattis, lawmakers from the Senate and Congress, and other government officials.

Historical background

It was recalled that on that fateful September 28, 1901, the Balangiga bells tolled, signaling the launch by Filipino guerrillas of an ambush against Company C of the 9th US Infantry Regiment, killing 48 American soldiers and wounding 13 others.

In retaliation, Gen. Jacob Smith directed his men to turn Balangiga into a "Howling Wilderness" by ordered the killing of all male Filipinos, aged 10 years old and above, and the burning of the entire town.

American soldiers then took the three bells from Balangiga as "war trophies." One of the bells was sent to Camp Red Cloud in South Korea while the other two bells were sent to Fort D.A. Russell in Cheyenne, Wyoming, USA.

"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."

12

City of Manila

A1

BALANGIGA BELLS COME HOME

AFTER 117 years, the Balangiga Bells are finally home, arriving at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on Tuesday.

The historic return of the famed Balangiga Bells to the country marks an "important milestone" in relations between the Philippines and the United States.

Malacañang said.

President Rodrigo Duterte skipped the handover ceremony and will instead attend the presentation of the three bells to town officials of Balangiga in what is now Eastern Samar on

December 15, according to Salvador Panelo, Palace spokesman.

In a statement, Panelo said the return of the bells, which were taken as war trophy by US troops during the Filipino-American War.

► Home A2

HOME FROM A 1

BALANGIGA

shows that the US is a "true friend" of the Philippines.

"The return of the Balangiga Bells to their place of origin is historic and unprecedented. This marks an important milestone in and gives new meaning to the shared history between the Philippines and the United States," he added.

Panelo said all stakeholders from the Philippines and the US "worked tirelessly" to bring back the church bells to the country.

The Palace official noted that "many have tried but it is our President's strong political will and unquestionable dedication in asserting the rights of our country and its people which significantly contributed to this event coming into fruition."

"As we move forward in our history, we hope that the bells of Balangiga will become constant reminders of our people's gallantry, heroism and strong sense of national pride," Panelo said.

"As we recall this dark page of our history, let the world know that our race will not allow itself to be subjugated by any foreign power and we Filipinos will always assert our sovereignty against those who will attempt to subvert it," he added.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim participated in the official turnover of the bells to the Philippine government.

"The history of these bells spans the entire relationship between the United States and the Philippines. In the process, they have touched many lives. Their return underscores the enduring friendship, partnership and alliance between our countries," he said.

"The return of the Balangiga Bells demonstrates the strong bonds and mutual respect between our nations as well as the vitality of the US-Philippine alliance, one of the most enduring relationships in the Indo-Pacific region," the ambassador added.

Two of the bells had been kept at the Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, while

the third bell was kept at a US Army museum in South Korea.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said the return of the bells shows that there is justice and that the "path to healing and reconciliation may be arduous but is never impossible."

Also in a statement, CBCP president Romulo Valles expressed "profound" gratitude to the people behind the return of the Balangiga Bells to its "rightful" owner, the Borongan diocese in Eastern Samar.

"We thank in particular our present government, with the leadership of President Rodrigo Duterte, for bringing a most successful and happy conclusion to all these efforts," he said.

"We also appreciate the very wise gesture of the US government in finally bringing back the bells of Balangiga to where they should belong, thereby giving ourselves the experience of a deeper sense of justice and respect between our peoples and consequently letting our friendship grow stronger," Valles added.

To the Catholic Church, according to the Davao archbishop, the three bells are "priceless religious treasures to call Her faithful to prayer and worship."

He said the Church joins the Borongan diocese, led by Bishop Crispin Varquez, in prayer of thanks to their "God," "for He has, once again, done marvelous deeds in our midst today."

The bells were carried by the US Air Force's C-130 plane "Spirit of MacArthur" from Okinawa, Japan, at 7:57 a.m. (local time), landing at the Villamor Air Base at 10:35 a.m.

The bells were unboxed from their crates, towed to a podium wrapped in red carpet and met with cheers from the crowd.

These were then inspected by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Kim, US Department of Defense deputy assistant secretary Joseph Felter, Senators Aquilino Pimentel 3rd and Richard Gordon, Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Romualdez and Panelo.

The event was also attended by Admiral Phillip Davidson, commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command and Foreign Affairs Assistant

Secretary Elmer Cato.

The bells from Wyoming were refurbished in Pennsylvania and were initially inspected by US officials.

Two of the bells had been shipped to Okinawa, where the bell from Seoul was transferred, for their return to the Philippines.

Lorenzana said the bells have come to symbolize a "painful episode" in the history of the Philippines and the US.

"How could mere three bells, church bells [cause] so much intense emotion among Filipinos and Americans, maybe because we are human beings who live by symbols such as the national flag and in this instance, these bells," the Defense chief added in his speech.

"These bells came to symbolize something precious and important to both sides... the courage and patriotism of the soldiers, those acts we should like to perpetuate with these bells, and now, they are home," he said.

Reynaldo Mapagu, DND undersecretary for civil, veterans and retirees' affairs, said the bells' return was timely since they would be brought to the San Lorenzo Church in Balangiga on December 15, the start of "Simbang Gabi" tradition of Filipinos every Christmas season.

Nemesio Duran, 81, a resident of Balangiga town, expressed his happiness over the return of the bells. He flew all the way from Samar to Manila to witness the return of the bells.

Duran's mother was Vicente Candilosas, the altar boy who rang the bell in 1901.

"The significance of this return is the friendship between the Philippines and America. That is the best significance we also have," he told reporters.

The bells will be open for public viewing at the Villamor Air Base starting Tuesday, December 11, until Friday, December 14.

The League of Filipino Students also on Tuesday welcomed the return of the Balangiga Bells, but said this was not enough reason to celebrate and pretend that the country is truly free from the US.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE,
CATHERINE A. MODESTO,
DEMPSEY REYES AND
NEIL A. ALCOBER

US returns 3 war trophy bells in historic act

By Ayee Macaraig

CHURCH bells seized from the Philippines by the US as war trophies over a century ago were returned on Tuesday, in a bid to turn the page on a difficult chapter between the historical allies.

Returning the three so-called Balangiga bells meets a decades-old demand from the former US colony at a time when the two nations' ties have been rattled by President Rodrigo Duterte's pivot to China.

An American C-130 Hercules cargo plane delivered the bells to Villamor Air Base, where Philippine and American officials gathered for a symbolic handover ceremony set for later Tuesday.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim led the handover of the bells to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana at Villamor Air Base.

Next page

US returns...

From #1

"The decision to return the bells clearly reflects our shared values, shared history and our commitment to this relationship, relationship of equals, independence of our nation and mutual respect," Kim said.

Among those who witnessed the turnover were US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Southeast Asia Joseph Felter and Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez.

The public will be able to view the three bells from Dec. 12 to 13 at the Air Force Museum in Villamor Air Base. The two-day public viewing will be open to all, free of charge.

The bells will then begin the journey home to the local parish of Balangiga in Eastern Samar, where they are expected to arrive by Dec. 15, Defense Department spokesman Aresenio Andolong said.

The bells were said to have signaled a surprise attack by machete-wielding Filipino revolutionaries that killed 48 US troops on Sept. 28, 1901 in the central town of Balangiga.

In reprisal, the US commander Jacob Smith ordered the surrounding island of Samar be turned into a "howling wilderness" and that all Filipino males aged 10 or above be killed.

Thousands of Filipinos were slaughtered, the town was razed and the bells were carted off as trophies. Two had been on display at a US air base in Wyoming

and the other in South Korea.

The return of the bells has been divisive with some US veterans and lawmakers, who see them as a tribute to fallen American troops while the Philippines hails them as a symbol of its struggle for independence.

American officials have emphasized the return is an important step in closing a painful chapter between the two nations, which have close military, cultural and trade ties.

Manila's push for the bells' repatriation began in the 1990s and has had backing from Philippine presidents as well as from the Catholic Church and historians.

Duterte, 73, bluntly called on Washington in a 2017 speech to "Give us back those Balangiga bells. They are not yours," as he rattled his nation's close alliance with the US.

Within months of winning the presidency in mid-2016, he signaled his intention to split from the Philippines' former colonial master and end a standoff with Beijing over the disputed South China Sea.

Duterte's supporters have claimed his willingness to stand up to American influence was key to the bells' return, but experts cautioned the process was much more complicated.

"No single president can claim credit to it," Francis Gealogo, history professor at the Ateneo de Manila University, said. "The credit should be given to the Filipino people who campaigned vigorously and actively."

A key factor was also major American veterans' associations, including the largest group Veterans of Foreign Wars, dropping

their opposition to the bells being given back.

"The return of the bells would be 'the right thing to do,'" said a resolution the group approved in July calling on the US government to return them.

Malacañang described the US government as a "true friend" of the Philippine government for "working tirelessly" for the return of the Balangiga bells to their home in Eastern Samar.

"Stakeholders from both the Philippines and the United States worked tirelessly for the return of the Balangiga bells," Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

"They will be remembered as true friends of the Philippines and of Filipino heritage," he added.

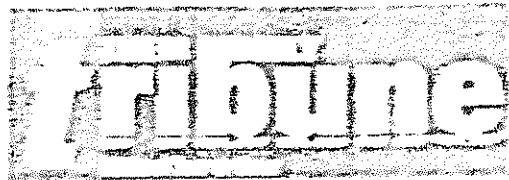
"This marks an important milestone in and gives new meaning to the shared history between the Philippines and the United States."

Panelo said President Duterte will be present during the turnover of the Balangiga bells to town officials in Balangiga, Eastern Samar on Dec. 15.

He earlier said Duterte would no longer attend the handover of the bells on Tuesday in Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

Senator Risa Hontiveros hailed the bells' return as an important milestone in Philippine-American relations.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines also welcomed the return of the bells. With Masca Ramos-Arneta, PNA and AFP



The Balangiga bells are home

By Kristina Maralit

From bells of war to bells of peace and friendship.

After 117 years, the Balangiga bells – painful reminders of one of the darkest episodes in Philippine and US history – are on their way home.

The bells had a red-carpet return yesterday at the Villamor Airbase, accompanied by American soldiers who turned them over to Philippine authorities without the signs of conflict that once started the country's relationship with its present world partner.

The bells' return also washes away the bitter aftertaste of the Philippines' relationship with the US caused by a harrowing battle that turned Eastern Samar into a wilderness in 1901.

"Today marks a watershed in our nation's history. The Balangiga bells are now on Philippine soil," presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said. "We express our sincerest gratitude to all stakeholders from both the Philippines

Turn to page 2

The Balangiga bells are home

Today marks a watershed in our nation's history. The Balangiga bells are now in Philippine soil

From page 1

and the United States who worked tirelessly and selflessly for the return of the bells."

"Many have tried, but it is our President's strong political will and unquestionable dedication in asserting the rights of our country and its people which significantly contributed to this event coming into fruition," he added. "As we move forward in our history, we hope that the bells of Balangiga will become constant reminders of our people's gallantry, heroism and strong sense of national pride."

The official also urged every Filipino to "let the world know that our race will not allow itself to be subjugated by any foreign power and we Filipinos will always assert our sovereignty against those who will attempt to subvert it."

Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana led the arrival rites along with Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, other Palace officials, Philippine envoy to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez, US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim and US Department of Defense Deputy Assistant Secretary Joe Felter, among others.

Kim said the US government returning the bells to the Filipino people "is the right thing to do."

"The bells' return reflects the strong bonds and mutual respect between our nations and our peoples. It demonstrates our determination to honor the past and the sacrifices made together by Filipinos and Americans. And it heralds our bright future as friends, partners and allies," the US envoy remarked.

He also called on Filipinos and Americans alike to "reflect on the US-Philippine relationship, where we have been, where we are and where we are going" as ties between the two nations remain "iron-clad."

We express our sincerest gratitude to all stakeholders from both the Philippines and the United States who worked tirelessly and selflessly for the return of the bells.

Prior to the bells' shipment to Okinawa from Wyoming, they first made a pit stop in Philadelphia to be refurbished and restored.

The bells will embark on a last journey before their final reinstallation at the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga, Eastern Samar.

President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to lead the hand-over ceremony of the bells to local officials on Saturday, 15 December.

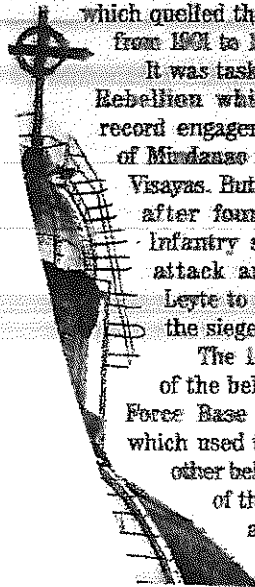
For the US, it has moved on since losing 48 members of its 9th Infantry to the sharp holes of the Samareños.

It was the US Army's worst defeat since the Battle of the Little Big Horn 25 years before.

As a result, all three Balangiga bells were taken by the US Army 11th Infantry Regiment which quelled the Philippine insurrection from 1901 to 1903.

It was tasked to put down the Moro Rebellion which was achieved with record engagements against the Moros of Mindanao and the Filipinos of the Visayas. But it stopped in Balangiga, after four members of the 9th Infantry survived the Samareño attack and escaped on foot to Leyte to report the gory result of the siege.

The 11th Infantry brought two of the bells to the F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming which used to be its main base. The other bell stayed in the possession of the 9th Infantry Regiment at its base in Camp Red Cloud, South Korea.



Balangiga Bells back

Church bells seized by the United States as war trophies over a century ago were returned yesterday in a bid to turn the page on a difficult chapter between the historical allies.

Returning the three so-called Balangiga bells meets a decades-old demand from the former US colony at a time when the two nations' ties have been rattled by President Duterte's pivot to China.

An American military plane delivered the bells to a Manila airfield, where Philippine and American officials gathered ahead of a symbolic handover ceremony set for later Tuesday.

The bells were said to have signalled a surprise attack by machete-wielding Filipino revolutionaries that killed 48 US troops on Sept. 28, 1901 in the central town of Balangiga.

In reprisal, the US commander Jacob Smith ordered the surrounding island of Samar be turned into a "howling wilderness" and that all Filipino males aged 10 or above be killed.

Thousands of Filipinos were slaughtered, the town was razed and the bells were carted off as trophies. Two had been on display at a US air base in Wyoming and the other in South Korea.

The return of the bells has been divisive with some US veterans and lawmakers, who see them as a tribute to fallen American troops while the Philippines hails them as a symbol of its struggle for independence.

American officials have emphasised the return is an important step in closing a painful chapter between the two nations, which have close military, cultural and trade ties.

Manila's push for the bells' repatriation began in the 1990s and has had backing from Philippine presidents as well as from the Catholic Church and historians.

Duterte, 73, bluntly called on Washington in a 2017 speech to "Give us back those Balangiga bells. They are not yours," as he rattled his nation's close alliance with the US.

3 Balangiga bells naibalik na sa Pinas

Pagkatapos ng 187 taon ay ibinalik na sa Pilipinas ng pamahalaan ng Estados Unidos ang tatlong madalaking kampana na kinuha ng mga sundalong Amerikano sa Balangiga, Eastern Samar bilang 'booties' noong panahon ng gyera.

Isinakay sa US C-130 plane ang tatlong kampana na dumating sa Villamor Air Base ng Philippine Air Force dalang alas-10:40 ng umaga na iturnover ng mga opisyal ng Estados Unidos sa pangungena ni US Ambassador Sung Kim

sa mga opisyal ng pamahalaan na pinangunahan naman ni Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea at Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Sinabi ni Lorenzana na magkakaroon ng abala ang araw na 'public viewing' sa Balangiga bells sa Philippine Air Force (PAF) museum bago ito dalhin at ibalik sa Balangiga, Eastern Samar sa dumaag na Sabado.

Kaya' nauli nang marinang ang pagtatag ng tatlong kampana sa San Lorenzo de Martyr

Church sa Balangiga, Eastern Samar kaugnay ng pagsisimula ng Simbang Gabi sa Disyembre 16 para sa madalapi na kapaskahan.

Nabatid na dalawa sa mga kampana ay kinuha sa Wharfedale Air Force Base sa Cheyenne, Wyoming habang ang isa pa ay sa Camp Red Cloud sa South Korea kung saan nagkaroon ito ng stopover sa Kadena Air Force base sa Japan bago ito ibangayac ng US C-130 plane at pinal na naibalik sa bansa kahapon. -Joy Castro

Balangiga Bells balik-Pinas!

Matapos ang 117 taon, naibalik na sa Pilipinas ang tatlóng makasaysayang Balangiga bells.

Pasado alas-10 ng umaga nang tumagap sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) ang C-130 cargo plane ng Amerika mula sa Okinawa, Japan dala ang tatlóng kampana.

Mula sa NAIA, dinala ang mga kampana sa Villamor Air Base kung saan doon nagkaroon ng maik-

ling programa para sa pormal na handover.

Ang handover ceremony ay pinangunahan nina Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana at US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Yung Kim.

Magkakaroon ng 2 araw na public viewing sa Balangiga bells sa Philippine Air Force Museum bago ito itahatid ito sa

Eastern Samar sa Sebado na kanyang huling destinasyon kung saan personal namang dadalo si Pangulong Duterte para sa turnover.

Dalawa sa mga kampana ay nanggaling sa Warner Air Force Base, Cheyenne, Wyoming, habang ang isa ay nagmula pa sa Camp Red Cloud sa South Korea.

"The history of these bells spans the entire relationship between the United

States and the Philippines. In the process, they have touched many lives. And their return underscores the enduring friendship between our countries, our shared values, and shared sacrifices," wika ni Kim.

Ang Balangiga bells ay kinaha ng mga Amerikano bilang "war trophy" pagkatapos ng tinagunang "Balangiga Massacre" sa Samar noong September 1901. (Joy Santos) ↓

Pagbabalik ng Balangiga Bells 'historic' - Palasyo

Ilinutong ng Malacañang na makasaysayan ang pagkabalik ng Balangiga Bells sa Pilipinas mula sa Estados Unidos makalipas ang 117 taon.

Ayon kay Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo, megbibigay ito ng bagong kahulugan sa relasyon ng Pilipinas at Amerika kung saan ay magsasara na rin sa yugto ng kasesaysayan ng 3 kampana ng Balangiga na kinuha ng American troops noong July 1901 upang maging trophy ng mga ito sa Philippine-American war.

Sinabi ni Panelo, kinikilala nito ang pagsisikap ng mga stakeholders mula sa Pilipinas at Amerika para maibalik sa bansa partikular sa Balangiga, Eastern Samar ang mga nasabing kampana.

Bagama't hindi nakarating kahapon

ang Pangulo para salubugin ang pagdating sa bansa ng 3 Balangiga bells sa Villamor Airbase ay pangungunahan naman ni Pangulong Duterte ang 'handover ceremony' nito sa Balangiga, Eastern Samar sa Disyembre 15 (Sabado).

Tanging si Pangulong Duterte lamang ang matagumpay na nakapagpabalik ng 3 Balangiga bells na kinuha ng US na binanggit pa mismo ng Pangulo sa kanyang ikalawang State of the Nation Address (SONA) noong 2017.

"Give us back those Balangiga bells. They are ours. They belong to the Philippines. They are part of our national heritage," pahayag ng Pangulo sa kanyang second SONA kung saan ay nasa audience noon si US Ambassador to the Philippines Sung Kim. (Fudy Andaj) 2

PRRD awards 500 houses to Scout Rangers

By GENALYN D. KABILING and PNA

Living up to his promise to provide decent and affordable housing units for the uniformed personnel, President Duterte turned over an initial 500 housing units to Army Scout Rangers Monday. The Scout Ranger Ville Housing Project sits on a 50-hectare **►9**

PRRD... ◀1

land area located in Barangay Cahumpang, San Miguel, Bulacan near Camp Tecson, home of the First Scout Ranger Regiment of the Philippine Army.

"Owning a house has always been a dream of every Filipino. I urge every beneficiary of this housing program to take good care of these units. May this project further inspire you to serve your nation, deepen your patriotism and foster your sense of family and community," Duterte told beneficiaries after the ceremonial turnover of the housing units.

"Be assured of my support as we advance the common good and promote genuine and lasting peace for our motherland," he added.

First Scout Ranger Regiment commander, Brig Gen. William Gonzales, expressed "sincerest" appreciation to the President for his care and concern for the soldiers.

Surprise

The 150-square meter property has a floor area of 60 square meters. The National Housing Authority (NHA) appraised the value of the property constructed by Eddmari Construction and Trading at ₱1.5 million. But government reduced it further to ₱944,000 per unit.

At Monday's turnover ceremony, the President surprised the beneficiaries with another ₱100,000 discount. As a result, the beneficiaries will pay a low monthly amortization of ₱4,000 for a fully-furnished two-bedroom unit.

"Ngayon kasi nakikinig kayo dito, and very behave kayo [Now because you are listening and you are behave], less 100. So 844. So it's about 4,000 monthly," Duterte said, drawing applause from the soldiers and their families.

NHA general manager Marcelino Escalada Jr. announced that the remaining 500 units of the housing project in San Miguel, Bulacan will be completed by May next year.

Aside from amenities like clubhouse and wet market, Escalada said the Scout Ranger Ville Housing project will have an Olympic-size swimming pool where AFP swimmers can train.

The housing project will also have one three-story housing unit and a 15-classroom school building.

Supplemental budget

The Commander-in-Chief also said he plans to seek a "supplemental budget" next year for the massive housing project for the country's uniformed personnel.

"I was talking to Escalada, I told him to hasten the other housing units, to prioritize, then ask the Navy and the Air Force if they have available lands," Duterte shared.

"Because if they have lands, I want it done next year. I may ask for a supplemental budget. I will tell Congress that we want it implemented at the same time because I don't want anyone to complain," he added.

Duterte said if the military or police have shortage of vacant lots, the government might acquire lands for the housing project.

"The police must have houses, the Navy, the elite Marines must have one too so look for your lands. If none, we will buy lands pero I'd prefer to have one like this so houses can be built immediately," he said referring to one of the units he inspected earlier.

Escalada said the AFP and PNP have other housing projects in Davao City, Lanao del Norte, Tarlac, Negros Occidental, Zamboanga, Baguio City, La Union, Samar and Davao Oriental.

He said 10,000 units are being constructed for 2018 and additional 10,000 will be built in 2019.

12

2

Child rights advocates oppose mandatory ROTC for children

By ELLALYN DE VERA-SUIZ

Child rights advocates have opposed moves to introduce mandatory military training for children below 18 years old, specifically the move to revive the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).

Child Rights Network (CRN) said this would backtrack on various developments that have taken years to come into fruition.

"We would like to remind the Philippine government and our legislators on the death of University of Santo Tomas student Mark Welton Chua in March 2001, which catalyzed the passage of the National Service Training Program (NSTP) Act, which has made participation to the ROTC

optional," the group said.

Chua was allegedly killed by his ROTC advisers whom he reportedly exposed for mismanagement of funds.

To introduce mandatory military training for senior high school students aged 16 to below 18 is tantamount to renegeing in past international commitments on the protection of children from compulsory recruitment into the armed forces, CRN pointed out.

It explained that as a state party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Philippines has a legal and moral obligation to promote and enact policies that place utmost importance to the best interest of the child.

It cited that in 2000, the United

Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child told the Philippine government that military training for high school students "promotes militarism and is contrary to the peace building education of the State party and to the spirit of the Optional Protocol (on children situated in armed conflict)."

The Committee further recommended "the abolition of military content from the training, and to promote instead the values of peace and respect for human rights within the education system."

CRN also feared that the proposed scope on the revised ROTC will gravely undermine children's basic human rights, safety, and security.

"The contents of proposals to revive ROTC are wider than the original military training as it includes marksmanship training and weapons orientation. This proves to be problematic in the Philippines, where the proliferation and use of small and light weapons lead to death and injury of children and adults," it said.

37

RECEIVED

NPA NOT WELCOME

NORTH COTABATO VILLAGE BANS COMMUNIST REBELS

KIDAPAWAN CITY—Communist rebels have lost a mass support base in Arakan town, North Cotabato province, after villagers declared the New People's Army (NPA) persona non grata, a military official said on Tuesday.

Lt. Col. Enrique Noel Paraso, 19th Infantry Battalion (IB) commander, said the village council of Datu Ladayon in Arakan had banned NPA rebels from the mountainous community near the town's boundary with Davao City.

On Friday, close to 500 residents staged a rally to declare the rebels "unacceptable" and "unwelcome" to their community.

"This initiative of local officials and residents of Barangay Datu Ladayon will give the NPA a very hard time in trying to recover its former lair at Arakan Valley," Paraso said.

NPA stronghold

Datu Ladayon is the first village in Arakan to withdraw support from the NPA. It used to be known as an NPA stronghold for several years until the military gained control of the area, according to 2nd Lt. Angelique Taban, 19th IB civil-military operations chief.

She said the village used to be under the influence of NPA Guerrilla Front 53 headed by

Joel Golmatico, also known as Commander Joel or Geta.

Taban said they would put up a detachment in the village to be run by the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit-Civilian Active Auxiliary under the supervision of the military.

Revolutionary taxes

In a resolution on Dec. 3, the Datu Ladayon council said the NPA collected revolutionary taxes from residents and harassed those who did not join or support the communist movement.

Jonathan Ramirez, Barangay Datu Ladayon chair, said the rebels used to act like "authorities" in the village, at one time even raising the communist flag at a community school until government soldiers established their presence early this year.

He said a P17-million irrigation project intended for Datu Ladayon did not push through after NPA rebels burned heavy equipment there in 2013.

Clashes between soldiers and rebels also displaced some residents. Due to lack of opportunity in the village because of the presence of rebels, many of the village's men had gone to Davao City to work as construction workers, Ramirez said.

—BONG SARMIENTO INQ *AP*

NDF tags gov't as top human rights violator

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

The Philippine government remains the number one violator of human rights in all aspects despite it being a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the communist National Democratic Front (NDF) said yesterday.

NDF spokesperson Maria Malaya said the administration of President Duterte has surpassed its predecessors in perpetrating grave human rights violations against the people.

Since 2016 when Duterte was elected, more than 20 persons have become victims of extrajudicial killings and more than 10 frustrated killings were committed by the police and military.

Malaya said almost 300 people have been charged with trumped-up criminal cases, while more than 50 have been jailed as political prisoners.

For those left behind by the spate of human rights viola-

tions in recent years, former education secretary Armin Luistro said one way to help them is to make them feel that they were not forgotten.

"Someone said if it's not worth fighting for, it is not valuable," Luistro said during the launch of the Citizens for Promoting Human Rights (CPHR) on Monday in commemorating the 70th year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"This is one of the best times to launch a project that will allow individuals, groups, organizations, communities to spread the word that human rights is not dead," he added.

The CPHR seeks to respond to the current human rights challenges by promoting human rights as a Filipino value.

It will also serve as alternative mechanism to receive individual and group donations for victims of human rights violations.

"We work with orphans and the families who have been left behind by various situations

where human rights have been violated," Luistro said.

Commission on Human Rights (CHR) chairman Chito Gascon said CPHR was inspired by the public support that the commission received when Congress threatened to reduce its budget to P1,000.

"They didn't expect that the public would get angry. It is unusual that constituents call on their congressmen, but they were calling on their congressmen, demanding them to explain," he recalled, noting that they have received messages from people wanting to donate to the agency.

"We were just overwhelmed here in the commission... We felt that this goodwill from the public should be harnessed, so the idea of the fund came about," he said.

Gascon said the creation of CPHR shows a lot of people still value human rights despite the challenges it has faced in recent years.

- With Janvic Matro, Gerry Lee Gorit

34

Army: Reds top rights violator in Negros

By GILBERT BAYORAN

BACOLOD CITY - The military yesterday tagged the New People's Army (NPA) as the number one violator of human rights on Negros Island, citing at least 40 atrocities that the group reportedly committed this year.

Col. Benedict Arevalo, chief of the Army's 303rd Infantry Brigade (IB) based in Negros, slammed human rights organizations that refused to speak against NPA atrocities despite admission by the communist group.

Arevalo said the military recorded 26 murder, three attempted murder and five arson cases reportedly committed by the NPA insurgents in Negros in the past 11 months.

He said the insurgents owned up to committing several atrocities including the burning of road equipment in central and southern part of the island.

In observance of Human Rights Day on Monday, Arevalo condemned the left-leaning rights groups and their affiliated organizations for allegedly lying to discredit the government and manipulate the minds of the people.

"Not all who shout human rights are genuine advocates," Arevalo said, adding that several, if not many of them, are bogus who secretly support the communist movement.

Arevalo urged the people of Negros to condemn the NPA atrocities and the fake rights groups whom he said are fooling the people.

• **FMOs to continue**

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City
- Field unit commanders under the operational and administrative control of the Army's Northeastern and Northern Mindanao Fourth Infantry Division (4th ID) on Tuesday said their community outreach program will continue "without let up" in their respective areas of responsibility (AORs). In interviews with The Manila Bulletin, the 4th ID's field unit commanders also said their Focus Military Operations (FMO) will also continue in an objective to secure villagers from any terroristic activities posed by any lawless elements. "Our concern are villagers in far-flung areas and we will not allow any lawless group to harass them (villagers)," an army Battalion Commander assigned in Caraga region said. Another ground commander of the 401st Infantry (Unite and Fight) Brigade also vowed to pursue operations and community outreach programs despite the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the central committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). (Mike U. Crismundo) B

Lumads, tribal leaders hold anti-NPA rally

By **MARIE L. CRUZ**

BUTUAN CITY - The anti-New People's Army (NPA) rally on Monday by the different tribes with their respective tribal leaders coming from various areas in Caraga region was generally peaceful, the Police Regional Office 13 (PRO 13) on Tuesday said.

The Indigenous Peoples (IPs) held their peaceful rally from the Libertad Sports Complex to Guingona Park in Butuan City to express also their support for the government's peace and development program.

PRO 13 Regional Director Chief Supt. Gilberto DC Cruz said the IPs, composed mainly of Manobo, Maman-

wa, and Higaonon tribes from Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and other tribal groups gathered to express their support for the Duterte administration and to strongly condemn the ruthless acts of the CPP-NPA.

"They (natives) condemned the extortion, recruitment of minors and other terroristic activities of the CPP-NPA," the region's police chief said.

"They stood up mustering their courage so that their voices will be heard by the public against the communist terrorists," Chief Supt. Cruz said.

The peaceful rally of the IPs was in line with the International Human Rights Day.

A certain "Tatay Boon," an alleged former officer of Guerilla Front 21 of the CPP-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee, also recognized the effort of the government in ensuring that the programs and services are being delivered to the grassroots benefiting IPs. **B**

Barangay declares Communist rebels persona non grata

By JOSEPH JURELAS

ABAKAN, North Cotabato—Officials of a barangay here have declared all members of the New People's Army (NPA) persona non grata.

Led by their chairman Jonathan Ramirez, officials of Barangay Datu Ladayao have passed a resolution, declaring NPA rebels as persona non grata, or a person not appreciated, because of the atrocities allegedly perpetrated by the terrorist group, particularly those coming from Guerilla Front 53 which operates in North Cotabato and Bukidnon.

The barangay officials' bold decision came even as Barangay Datu Ladayao is known to have been one of the Communist group's bailiwicks in the past.

"The local villagers of Barangay Ladayao have already spoken against

the atrocities perpetrated by NPA rebels," Ramirez said.

He said the village officials and residents of Datu Ladayao will no longer allow the NPA rebels to enter their village.

Ramirez led some 500 local villagers in staging a rally last Sunday to voice out their indignation and opposition against the presence of NPA rebels in their community.

Lt. Col. Eberich Noel Paraso, 19th Infantry Battalion commander, said security will be tightened around Barangay Datu Ladayao to thwart harassment or retaliation the NPA might wage on the villagers.

He ordered the deployment of security forces in strategic areas of the village to prevent the entry of NPA rebels in the area. B

TODAY

NPA threatens DepEd execs—AFP

THE MILITARY is not discounting the possibility that some Department of Education officials and personnel were threatened by the New People's Army to allow the operation of Salugpungan schools in the Davao Region.

This was stated by Armed Forces of the Philippines public affairs office chief Col. Noel Detoyato in a message to the Philippine News Agency Monday.

"We are not discounting that angle. The enemies of [the] state particularly the CPP-NPA [Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army] has a way of using threat and intimidation to attain their objective," Detoyato added.

He added that they have requested the DepEd to conduct an investigation on the matter.

"The AFP will just bring up the matter to the DepEd and it's the department call to act on the matter," he said.

Salugpungan schools came to light after they were discovered as being used to recruit minor members of Indigenous People to fill up the NPA ranks.

With this development, IP leaders urged government agencies to close the above-mentioned facilities.

Detoyato said that they are monitoring the Salugpungan schools in the wake of this development.

"We are monitoring them and we are banking on the actions to be taken by the DepEd to resolve this matter," he added.

Earlier, Mindanao Indigenous Peoples Council of Elders chairman Lipatuan Joel Unad said the NPA targets

communities, where settlers are particularly uneducated.

"Pinipili nila [ang] mga ignoranteng tribo, doon sa mga 'di marunong magbasa, doon sa mga parents na walang alam kundi magtanim ng kamote, maghanap ng usa at baboy ramon, tyon ang pinapuntahan nila (They choose those ignorant tribes. Those who don't know who to read, whose parents' only livelihood is to plant sweet potatoes, to hunt for deer and wild boars. That's their target)," he said.

Showing parts of the MIPCEL Resolution No. 20, Series of 2018, Unad, who personally submitted the document at the Commission on Human Rights office in Quezon City, urged the body and other groups to start a probe over alleged human rights violation against IPs in the region.

Unad said the 52 IP signatories to the resolution represent 18 major tribes in Mindanao.

"Yong nag-attend ng emergency

meeting almost 51. Ang context doon, i-condemn ang ginawa ni Satur Ocampo. Pangalawa, declaration na kailangan ipasara na ng DepEd ang Salugpungan, kung hindi nila magpasara, ang IP mismo ang magpasapara (Those who attended the emergency meeting reached almost 51. Its context is to condemn the actions of Satur Ocampo. Second, a declaration that the DepEd must close Salugpungan. If it can't close it down, the IPs would close it for them)," he said.

Unad and Datu Jomar Bucales submitted the MIPCEL resolution before the CHR office on Thursday.

The resolution surfaced right after former Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and 17 others were arrested over alleged trafficking and kidnapping of 14 minors, who were students of the Salugpungan Ta'Tanu Irganogon Community Learning Center Inc. in Talaringod, Compostela Valley. PNA AB

44

'No report on kidnap of 3 Indonesians'

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY —

There has been no report on the alleged kidnapping of three Indonesian fishermen by the Abu Sayyaf bandit group, the military said yesterday.

The military issued the statement after reports from Sabah, Malaysia said the three Indonesians, who were working with a Sandakan-based fishing company, were discovered missing from their fishing boat.

The boat was found listing and its engines running in the waters bordering Sabah and Tawi-Tawi on Thursday.

The fishermen were believed taken on Wednesday near Pegasus Reef.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command, said they have not received any feedback about the incident.

Besana, who was in Sulu over the weekend, said the military has verified the report and received no information on the alleged presence of the captives and their captors in Sulu.

Quoting intelligence authorities based in Sabah, a Malaysian news firm said seven men suspected to be behind the incident were monitored to have arrived with the hostages on Pata Island in Sulu on Friday night.

The source said the gunmen, reportedly led by Abu-jer Yadah, moved the hostages to a village in Panamao town.

Yadah is known as a trusted man of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan, whose group is believed behind the kidnapping activities and several attacks launched after the death of Abu Sayyaf leaders Muammar Askali, alias Abu Raeni, and Alhabsy Misaya.

2 Abu Sayyaf bandits captured in Sabah

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Two Filipinos who are members of the pro-Islamic State (IS) group Abu Sayyaf were captured in Sabah in a fresh crackdown by Malaysian terrorist police in the eastern state near the Philippine border of Tawi-Tawi.

The operation, carried over several days last month, also led to the capture of five Malaysians who have IS links in Syria and Jamaa Ansharut Daulah, its largest affiliate in Indonesia. The arrest foiled terror attacks in Malaysia, according to a Channel News Asia report.

"The suspect is a member of the Abu Sayyaf group that was involved in at least three se-

rial kidnappings in southern Philippines and Sabah. He is occupied as an individual who is requested by the Eastern Sabah Security Command to assist in criminal investigation in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone," Police Insp. Fuzi Harun, said.

One of the Filipinos was arrested with his 40-year-old Malaysian wife in Tenom, Sabah. They were also accused of hiding information

about the presence of Abu Sayyaf in Sabah.

The capture of the suspects prevented potential terrorist attacks, particularly in non-Muslim sites of worship in Malaysia, as two of its citizens had received orders from the Islamic state to launch attacks in the country.

No other details on the Filipinos were made available by Malaysia or the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila. **A7**

Duterte plans to spend night with soldiers in Jolo

By GENALYN KABILING

President Duterte is eyeing a visit to Jolo, Sulu soon to bond with government troops in the area.

The President said his upcoming Jolo visit would coincide with the deployment of a new military division to the province to address security threats.

"In a few days, we will activate the (division) sa Jolo. But I will be there with you. Matulog ako siguro doon," Duterte said during his visit to the Scout Ranger Ville housing project in San Miguel, Bulacan Monday.

"Lamok, ang cockroach? Na... Hindi tayo matulog buong gabi istorya na lang," he added.

The President explained that he decided to assign an entire military division to Jolo to prevent the deadly attacks by lawless elements.

Duterte has expressed concern about the recent violent clash between government forces and the Abu Sayyaf Group in Patikul, Sulu last month. Five soldiers were killed and 23 others were injured during the attack by the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

"Araw-araw may dalawa, tatlo, o dalawa, tatlo - isa, dalawa, tatlo - sabi ko, "Is there a way na tapusin

na natin 'to?" Duterte said.

"They suggested to me that we will deploy one division. Well, sabi ko, if that is the way how it would go, so kindly do it. So I will also go to Jolo," said Duterte, who recently sought another yearlong extension of martial law in Mindanao to address lingering rebellion.

The President, meantime, urged anew government troops not to be captured alive by terrorists. He said they should save a bullet for themselves than risk capture and torture by the enemies of the state.

"You choose to be a warrior, then die a warrior. Eh maski na

hindi ka warrior, eh mamatay ka lang man rin," he said.

"You follow the golden rule: Yolo, yolo. You only live once so make the most out of it. Rather than be a coward running away, fight tayo," he added.

Duterte reiterated that he also won't allow himself to be caught alive by terrorists. In case his plane gets shot down by enemies, he said he would never surrender and instead continue to fight them.

"I will do the same. Kung mag-black hawk down kami, fight tayo hanggang... But I will never surrender," he said.

2



MILF MEMBER BUSTED

A SUSPECTED member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) was arrested by operatives of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency in an anti-narcotics operation in Maguindanao, PDEA chair Director General Aaron Aquino said yesterday.

Ryan Bartolome alias "Ardy Ali," a 26-year-old "high-value" drug target in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao was caught in an entrapment operation on Pendatun Street in Pagalungan, Maguindanao.

Aquino said the suspect yielded around two grams of shabu, various drug paraphernalia, three mobile phones, a caliber .22 pistol with several live ammunition and the buy-bust money he received from an undercover officer of the PDEA-ARRM.

Bartolome is facing charges for violation of Republic Act 9165 or The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 and RA 10591 or the Comprehensive Firearms and Ammunition Regulations Act of 2013.

13

Alfred Dalzora

• **Army mediation**

COTABATO CITY — The leadership of the Army's Sixth Infantry Division (6ID) has embarked on mediating stiff rivalries among politicians within its area of jurisdiction by warning voters and candidates about the dangers of political feudalism. Maj. Gen. Cirilo Sobejano, head of the multi-awarded 6ID, launched recently his command's mediation drive, starting with his hosting of a meeting between third-term Maguindanao (1st District) Rep. Bai Sandra Sema and incumbent Cotabato City Mayor Cynthia Gulan Sayadi. Sema is contesting the reelection bid of Sayadi in the 2019 mayoralty race, which is expected to be heated up by issues about the ratification of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BOL) in a plebiscite set on Jan. 21, three months before voters would choose between them. The lady colonel is a co-sponsor of the BOL in the lower Congress, while the female mayor had earlier aired her inking against the inclusion of her turf in the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). (Ali G. Macabatang)

Climaco vows not one of Zambo City's 98 brgys will be included in BARMM

By **NONVIE LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY - The local government here yesterday vowed to work hard to ensure that not one of this city's 98 villages will be included in the January 21, 2019 plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

This was disclosed by Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco, who joined the city's legal team to the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in Manila Friday to formally oppose the petitions of barangays Busay and Landang Gua to join the BOL plebiscite.

She emphasized that the city and all its 96 component barangays, of which eight are islands, were not in any way contiguous to the island province of Basilan.

She claimed that Zamboanga City was not under the jurisdiction of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) nor any area identified and proposed to be among the core territories of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

"Zamboanga City and Basilan Island are separated by the Basilan Strait, an important and strategic body of water," Climaco told the Comelec.

Meanwhile, in Tawi-Tawi province, the people of Tawi-Tawi province pledge to support and vote favorably on January 21, to the ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) which will give birth to a new autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao, called the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

In a forum called by Tawi-Tawi gubernatorial bet and former governor of the province Sadikal Sahalim Saturday, a majority of the 11 town mayors and their officials reported that voters in their respective towns vowed to vote favorably to ratify the BOL.

The political leaders here said that the people in the province felt that the BOL or BARMM was the more appropriate political solution to the Bangsamoro issue or conflict in Mindanao.

MILF, MNLF in rare show of unity for BOL ratification

By ALI G. MACABALANG

COTABATO CITY – Leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), alongside local and national officials, led a mammoth crowd in launching here, Monday, a massive campaign for the ratification of Republic Act No. 11054, or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

MILF Chair Murad Ebrahim, Vice Chair Mohagher Iqbal and Chief of Staff Sammy Gambar, and MNLF faction chair Muslimin Sema were joined by Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Governor Mujiv Hataman, Vice Governor Haroun Al-Rashid Lucman and some members of the Duterte Cabinet in delivering messages, persuading local voters to approve the proposal that will create the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region

in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The Muslim luminaries came out in full force to participate in the "Yes for BOL" or Y4B campaign in the plebiscite set on January 21, 2019.

This city of tri-people, Muslim-Christian-Lumad, has ironically served as the "temporary seat" of ARMM for 29 years, even after its resident-voters rejected its inclusion in regional autonomy government in the 1998 and 2001 referendums.

This has compelled Murad, Sema and Hataman, alongside their lieutenants and representatives of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), to sit together for the first time and advocated for a common cause – the BOL ratification in this city.

The presence inside and outside the 32-hectare ARMM here of huge number of supporters from Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Lanao del Sur further buoyed the campaign push.

The BOL seeks the creation of BARMM and its absorption of all ARMM component areas – Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces and the cities of Marawi and Lamitan, Cotabato and Isabela cities, six towns in Lanao del Norte and 39 barangays in six North Cotabato towns.

The campaign speeches of Murad, Sema, Hataman, OPAPP Undersecretary Nabil Tan, and representatives of the Muslim, Christian and Chinese chambers of commerce here focused on many advantages of BARMM over ARMM.

One of major advantages, they said, will be the "automatic allocation" by the national government of an annual subsidy to BARMM. The ARMM governance has been "begging for funds" in Congress and other national entities annually in a fashion that usually came with political haggling, they said. 13

TODAY

BoL last chance to peace, says Murad

COTABATO CITY—The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BoL), which Congress passed in July, provides the last opportunity to achieve lasting peace in Muslim Mindanao, Hady Murad Ibrahim, chairman of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, said.

He was addressing thousands of residents and peace supporters gathered in a huge assembly here on Monday.

Schools and local authorities had suspended classes at all levels to anticipate huge influx of vehicles and people for the kick-off assembly here of the 45-day campaign period for the BoL ratification in all five provinces and two-cities core territory of the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Murad said the BoL was "the last chance to attaining lasting peace"

which all sectors—apart from the government and the MILF—are "bound by their common commitment to help achieve peace for our people."

Under the BoL which enacted by Congress as Republic Act 11054 on July 23 to 24, BARMM will replace the current ARMM once the law is ratified with a majority "yes" vote in a plebiscite set for Jan. 27.

A second plebiscite will also be held on Feb. 5, 2019 for local government units outside the core ARMM territory but which may opt to join or have petitioned to become part of an expanded BARMM territory.

He said the non-Muslims would not have to worry about being left out in BARMM governance.

"For, we saw to it that there are specific offices to look after the wel-

fare of the Lumad, the Indigenous Peoples Tribes, as well as the Christian settlers," he said.

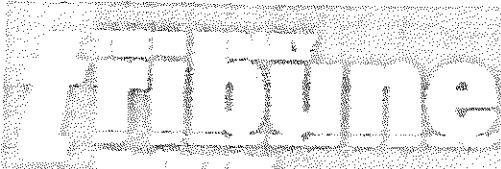
Murad said he did not want to be named head of BARMM, but that it was the collective decision of the MILF Central Committee that he would be holding the top post of the proposed Parliament, during the transition period from 2019 to 2022, as provided under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed in 2014.

"This is not about leadership as I am contented with being MILF chairman. But I have to abide by the decision of the Central Committee to lead the Parliament. But after the transition period, you would be free to choose by electing your leaders," Murad said.

Nash Maulana

12

February 2012



7

BOL support wide – MILF

By Elmer N. Manuel

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on Tuesday expressed confidence the Bangsamoro people will ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), according to its chairman Al Haj Murad Ebrahim.

Turn to page 2

We have formally commenced the campaign for the ratification of the law

From page 1

In his message read by Edward Guerra, chairman of the MILF Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities, during a forum in Makati City, Ebrahim said they are confident their people will ratify the BOL, adding there is already clamor for change in the region.

"Despite all the challenges in the plebiscite, we feel confident that our people will ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law," Ebrahim said, noting that around 300,000 people had flocked to Cotabato City on Monday for the official launch of the plebiscite campaign to ratify the BOL.

"With this event, we have formally commenced the campaign for the ratification of the law. We ask that everyone support our effort to inform and allow our people to participate in a democratic process because many of them will vote for the first time," he said.

However, he disclosed that some Bangsamoro people were "deprived of their right to vote by blocking their registration" due to issues such as identification cards and certificates of residency.

He stressed that a consistent effort in

Cotabato City has been waged by those against the BOL "to prevent our people from participating in this democratic process of attending a peaceful rally to express their support to the BOL."

MILF peace implementing panel chairman Mohagher Iqbal, on the other hand, said there are more or less two million people who are registered to vote on the plebiscite next year.

We ask that everyone support our effort to inform and allow our people to participate in a democratic process because many of them will vote for the first time.

"If you look at the popularity of the issue of BOL for everybody, nobody will be left behind. It's for the Muslims and Christians - more than two million or at least two million registered voters," Iqbal said in a statement, adding for the Bangsamoro people, the BOL is a "sign of hope and peace and justice in Mindanao."

Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Koji Haneda, meanwhile, promised Japan will continue to support efforts to achieve peace and order in Mindanao.

"For Japan, supporting the Mindanao peace process has been a high priority for more than a decade," Haneda said. "Many Japanese experts have been working in Mindanao together with our friends and partners on the ground under the Japan-

Bangsamoro initiatives for reconstruction and development."

We feel confident that our people will ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

"We are taking into account new circumstances after the passage of the BOL. In considering our future support in the Mindanao peace process, there are a couple of key aspects that need our attention and to be dealt with," he added.

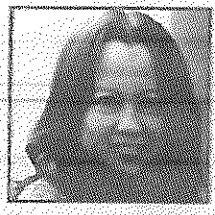
Through a plebiscite scheduled on 21 January and 6 February, voters will decide on the ratification of the BOL which was already ratified by the Congress and later on will be approved by President Rodrigo Duterte.

The BOL aims to end decades of atrocities in the southern portion of the country by creating a political entity that would enjoy greater autonomy than the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

13

UNRAVELING

Criminals and terrorists don't deserve a truce



By GETSY TIGLAO

IT'S a good thing that military and defense officials are finally getting their groove back, declaring that they are not in favor of a ceasefire with communist rebels this Christmas season.

This is a break from the tradition of a holiday ceasefire, which the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) have always taken advantage by using this "safe period" to recruit more members and even stage ambushes against the military and the police.

"I have objected to a SOMO (suspension of military operations). We shall not allow the CPP to use a SOMO to celebrate their 50th anniversary," said Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

This was affirmed by Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines who said: "We are not inclined to recommend the said SOMO. We see in the past they have not been sincere in any suspension of military operations. They continue with their terroristic, criminal activities, extortion, harassment."

"Experience showed us that it's not worth it," he added.

Indeed, it's time that the military and defense officials to show their strength against a group whose only claim to fame is that it holds the Philippine media in sway.

The communists are masters in propaganda, and they have managed to brainwash local media practitioners

into calling them "militants" or "progressives" instead of the criminals and terrorists that they really are.

But the CPP-NPA's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire for select days in December reveals its desperation for a breathing spell as a revitalized military continues its operations against them.

Usually, the Philippine government would welcome such a ceasefire. Not anymore. Not after the communists bungled the peace talks last year with their extreme demands such as the abrogation of all existing economic laws and treaties, their demand for power sharing with the government, and their refusal to lay down their arms.

The CPP-NPA with their hubris and arrogance lost their best chance at striking a peace deal with the Philippine president who had the most sympathy for them, President Rodrigo Duterte, who even gave known communists positions in his Cabinet (at which they underperformed and underwhelmed, and thus didn't last long).

The military, on the other hand, found a renewed sense of purpose with the strong support Duterte has been giving the organization.

It is only under this administration that the Armed Forces of the Philippines has finally been given the much-needed financial and political support. The salaries of military personnel have been upgraded, and the AFP's weapons and equipment are finally being modernized, with new planes, drones, tanks, radars, frigates, and even a submarine, now in the pipeline.

But more than this, Duterte's focus

on the military has created a new appreciation for their vital role in protecting the country's democracy. Since 1906, the military has been operating with a big chip on its shoulder, as if it had to justify its existence as the previous left-leaning governments ignored or minimized its role in keeping the country safe from communists and other rebels.

In the past, the military was restrained by the desire of the sitting president to reach a peace agreement with the communist rebels. But every chief executive has been stymied by the recalcitrance of the communists.

It is safe to assume after 50 years that the CPP-NPA-NDF have no real desire for peace. They just want to keep hacking away at the edges, hoping for a break when they can violently overthrow the government and take power for themselves.

The military operations were intensified following the issuance of Presidential Proclamation 300 in November last year, which formally terminated the peace talks with the communists (including its political arm the National Democratic Front).

President Rodrigo Duterte also signed on December 2013 Proclamation No. 374 declaring the CPP-NPA as a terrorist organization.

We sincerely hope that President Rodrigo Duterte will not soften his heart again and give the communists another chance to make the military and the government look like fools. Criminals and terrorists won't change their ways even after 50 years.

dy

ONLINE NEWS

12 DECEMBER 2018

www.dna.gov.ph

New AFP chief vows to bring in 'culture of excellence'

By Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA — Newly-appointed Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal on Tuesday vowed to bring a 'culture of excellence' to the 145,000-strong military.

"As we pursue a culture of excellence, we will also endeavor to achieve good governance and professionalism among our ranks and as we look forward to another year of service, I call on (all) soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of Team AFP for your selfless dedication to our sworn duty," Madrigal said in his speech during the assumption of command ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Since the AFP has targets and deadlines to meet, Madrigal urged all AFP personnel to march in cadence towards the same direction with the same urgency and in the same determined pace.

"To all our fellow Filipinos, your support and encouragement will inspire us every step of the way, we will count on you once again as we unite to achieve our common aspirations for our nation," the new AFP chief said.

Madrigal replaced Carlito Galvez Jr., his classmate at the Philippine Military Academy, who retired after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

The newly-appointed AFP chief, 51st overall, served notably as 4th Infantry Division commander, Southern Luzon Command and Eastern Mindanao Command chief. His appointment as next AFP chief was approved last Dec. 5 by President Rodrigo Duterte.

Madrigal will retire on Sept. 28, 2019. (PNA)