

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



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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

26 February 2018

Monday

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

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

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ADVANCED NEWS FEATURES VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | FEBRUARY 26, 2018 | MONDAY

LADAG CITY
23 - 33 °C

TUGUEGARAO CITY
22 - 30 °C

BAGUIO CITY
14 - 25 °C

SBMA/CLARK
24 - 32 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY
20 - 31 °C

METRO MANILA
23 - 33 °C

LEGAZPI CITY
23 - 29 °C

ILOILO/ BACOLOD CITY
24 - 29 °C

TACLOBAN CITY
23 - 29 °C

METRO CEBU
24 - 29 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORO
24 - 29 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY
24 - 30 °C

METRO DAVAO
24 - 29 °C

NORTHEAST MONSOON AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON LOW PRESSURE AREA ESTIMATED AT 205 KM WEST SOUTHWEST OF GENERAL SANTOS CITY, SOUTH COTABATO, at 05:00 am - February 25, 2018

SUNRISE
6:15 AM

SUNSET
6:03 PM

MOONRISE
2:21 PM

MOONSET
2:34 AM

FIRST QUARTER
FEB 23
4:09 PM

FULL MOON
MAR 2
8:51 AM

LOW TIDE
2:35 AM
-0.14 Meter

HIGH TIDE
6:25 PM
0.59 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	MON 27	TUE 28	WED 29	THU 30	FRI 1	SAT 2
METRO MANILA	23 - 32 °C	23 - 33 °C	21 - 30 °C	21 - 31 °C	23 - 29 °C	24 - 29 °C
TUGUEGARAO	22 - 29 °C	22 - 29 °C	23 - 29 °C	24 - 30 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C
LAOAG	23 - 32 °C	23 - 32 °C	23 - 29 °C	24 - 30 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	14 - 24 °C	14 - 24 °C	24 - 29 °C	25 - 30 °C	24 - 32 °C	24 - 29 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 31 °C	24 - 31 °C	24 - 29 °C	25 - 31 °C		
TAGAYTAY						
LEGAZPI						
PUERTO PRINCESA						
ILOILO/ BACOLOD						
METRO CEBU						
TACLOBAN						
CAGAYAN DE ORO						
METRO DAVAO						
ZAMBOANGA						

**MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM**

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

SAGOT KO PABALA MO!

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DRILON: POSTPONEMENT OF VILLAGE POLLS LOOMS

STORY BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO AND VINCE F. NONATO

An opposition senator and a congressman say Duterte allies in the House plan to postpone the barangay and SK ballotings, railroad a new Constitution, and cancel next year's midterm elections to extend their terms.

A2

FROM A1

**By Christine O. Avendaño
and Vince F. Nonato**
@Team_Inquirer

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon on Sunday denounced an alleged plot by allies of President Duterte in the House of Representatives to railroad the amendment of the 1987 Constitution for a shift to federalism so they could cancel next year's midterm elections and extend their terms.

In a radio interview, Drilon said he learned about the plot from sources in the House and at least two had spoken to him about a plan to move the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections, set for May this year, to October or November, during which a plebiscite on a new Constitution would also be held.

"My information is clear. Two sources have told me that the barangay [and SK] elections will be postponed. The mayors will be the ones to seek postponement. That's not right," he added.

Other senators, however, said

they were against another postponement of the barangay and SK elections and any bid to railroad constitutional amendment.

The barangay and SK elections had already been postponed twice, from May 2016 to October 2017 and then to May 2018.

No-el moves under way

An opposition member of the House also spoke about the alleged plot on Sunday.

In a radio interview, Caloocan City Rep. Edgar Erice said moves were under way to synchronize the elections scheduled in May with the plebiscite on a new Constitution to be held in October.

The strategy would allow the cancellation of the May 13, 2019, midterm elections under the transitory provisions of the new, federal Constitution and the extension of the terms of incumbent congressmen and local officials, Erice said.

"That's the purpose of the postponement of the barangay elections: so that a plebiscite could be held on constitutional amendments that would provide for No-el (no elections)," he said.

"Supposedly to help the Pres-



Franklin Drilon

ident, this should be postponed. If possible, the plebiscite could be held in October... so there would be no elections in May and the constitutional changes would proceed," he added.

Erice said Rep. Reynaldo Umali, the justice committee chair, asked Metro Manila representatives during a caucus last Tuesday to get their constituents to support the move for the amendment of the Constitution at the Liga ng mga Barangay convention on Feb. 27 and 28.

He said Umali told the caucus that his bid for the cancellation of elections did not have President Duterte's blessing.

In a separate radio interview on Sunday, Umali confirmed talking about the postponement of the barangay elections during the caucus but not the midterm vote.

Umali, however, said the No-el scenario could still be discussed.

In his radio interview, Drilon said a senator had confirmed the plan.

"The supermajority will railroad within two months between August and October [the constitutional amendment bill] and submit it to [a] plebiscite together with the barangay and SK elections in October or November," he said.

Drilon recalled that President Duterte had formed a study group headed by former Chief Justice Reynato Puno to recommend amendments to the Constitution and instructed it to complete the task in time for his address to a joint session of Congress in July.

No budget for plebiscite

Drilon said there was no budget for a plebiscite this year but this would not be a problem if the plebiscite would be held

simultaneously with the barangay and SK elections.

This will ensure there will be no midterm elections in May 2019 and the terms of congressmen will be extended, he said.

More than 80 percent of current House members are now serving their last terms, he added.

"This is bad for our democracy. We will deprive our people of their right to choose their leaders. You cannot rush in two months' time Cha-cha," Drilon said, using the shorthand for "Charter change."

The House has adopted a resolution for a constituent assembly (Con-ass) that will amend the Constitution for a shift to federalism, but the Senate still holds hearings to decide whether the amendment of the Charter should be done by a Con-ass or by an elected constitutional convention (Con-con).

For the House plot to succeed, Drilon said, the Senate has to agree to the postponement of the barangay and SK elections before Congress goes on recess on March 23.

There are only 12 session

days left, but no senator has introduced a bill that would postpone the two elections, Drilon said, adding that it would be difficult to approve one anyway.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III said he had never heard of the House plan.

Senators oppose plan

Other senators said they opposed postponing the two elections for a third time.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he would not support a move for the postponement "especially if the sole purpose is to accommodate a plebiscite for Charter change."

Sen. Francis Escudero said he was against postponement "if the only reason is to wait for their supposed attempt to amend the Constitution."

Sen. Francis Pangilinan said he had heard that congressmen wanted the postponement of the barangay and SK elections to clear the way for the cancellation of next year's midterm elections.

"If this is true, we will oppose [the] proposal," Pangilinan said. —WITH A REPORT FROM

PATHRICIA ANN V. ROXAS INQ

26 February 2018

The Manila Times

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Terrorists from Marawi regrouping – Australia

BY DANTE "KLINK" ANG 2ND
President and CEO

MELBOURNE: The terrorists responsible for the five-month siege of Marawi are far from finished fighting and may be regrouping to strike again elsewhere, several Australian authorities said in separate interviews recently.

"We see evidence that they're regrouping," Australian Ambassador to the Philippines Amanda Gorely told *The Manila Times* in an interview in Manila on February 16.

The "evidence" was based

on intelligence that has been shared with the Philippine government, she added.

Gorely's statement was later corroborated by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)

➤ RegroupingA2

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when its chairman said last week that ISIS sympathizers were awash in arms and cash and were not done fighting.

"The chances of another Marawi cannot be overruled," MILF Chairman Murad Ebrahim told foreign journalists in the Philippines during a forum as reported by *The Times*.

Gorely also said in the interview with *The Times* that there were enough of the armed men fighting against the government who got out of Marawi, and may be making plans to strike again. "We're monitoring the situation very closely."

Another Australian official based in the capital city, Canberra, clarified that the Australian Defense Force has pulled out its reconnaissance aircraft after the liberation of the besieged city on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, adding, however, Australia was, indeed, keeping a close eye on the region.

Gorely said that since the Bali suicide bombings in 2002, Australia has stepped up its counterterrorism efforts and cooperation with other governments in the region.

Today, what worries Australia is the return of Asians, as well as Australians, to their home countries after their radicalization and fighting for the ISIS cause in Syria and Iraq.

Regional security

In Canberra last Friday, an Australian government spokesman conducted a counterterrorism briefing to visiting journalists from news organizations in the Asean region, including *The Manila Times*.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) gave the visiting journalists permission to quote the information shared with them, but said they may not name the particular officials who conducted the briefing.

That government spokesman working on counterterrorism said as many as 1,000 individuals from Southeast Asia had gone to the Middle East, where Daesh (the name for ISIS adopted by many world leaders) attempted to establish a caliphate. That figure includes women and children, as well as about 600 fighters.

Earlier, Australia tried to keep its citizens from going to the Middle East and joining the religious fundamentalists. But now that the so-called caliphate has been dismantled, the challenge for Australia and other countries is in dealing with those who are returning to their homeland here and around the region.

While Australian authorities believe that the number of Filipinos who joined the fundamentalists in the Middle East was less than those from other countries in Asean, there were other Southeast Asians who fought and died in Marawi, the capital city of Lanao del Sur province.

The counterterrorism spokesman explained that the emergence of ISIS several years ago had energized religious fundamentalists all over the world, and has made counterterrorism efforts in the Indo-Pacific region more difficult.

Referring to Marawi, he said, "That was a situation where the effect of ISIS brought together some groups that, perhaps, no one thought would ever want to work together. And they had done something that had not been done in Southeast Asia before, where terrorists took over an urban center and then held it for five months." Australia welcomed the news that the Philippines, with assistance from other countries, had eventually recaptured Marawi, the spokesman added.

But he added, "Some of the key terrorists have been killed but some have probably gotten

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away. So, that threat is going to remain with us.”

An Australian government spokeswoman, who was not authorized to be identified either, said Marawi was far from over. This spokeswoman works for the South-East Asia Division of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra.

She said what worries Australians was what Marawi means in a larger context, adding that those returning home to this region from Syria and Iraq posed a long-term impact on security and stability in the region, as well as in Australia.

There is concern that this new threat may spread to the region. “Clearly, it’s not just a Philippine issue,” the spokeswoman said.

When Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull was in Manila in November 2017, he told journalists at a news conference, “We are living in a world that, in terms of communication, is borderless. We are here in Manila. We are in the same time zone as Perth. You may as well be in Perth in terms of the way you’re dealing with people in Australia, and they are dealing with us here. That is exactly what is happening to us in the battle against terrorism. Everything, nowhere is far away from anywhere else. So Marawi is not something... it is not a place people in Australia haven’t heard of a long way from home, it is right on our doorstep. So is Raqqa. So is Mosul. That is why we need to be relentless in our efforts to work together, to pull together to keep Australians safe.”

Australians’ safety may not be the only concern Down Under.

Collectively, Asean is Australia’s third-largest trading partner. And Australia was the regional bloc’s first dialogue partner, a relationship established in 1974. Asean is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a bloc of 10-member states that include the Philippines.

In a speech last January, Ambassador Gorely said Australia provided “game-changing” support to the Philippines against

During the siege, two Australian aircraft provided daily real-time intelligence to the Philippine military, which enabled better targeting of the terrorists. Australia also provided urban-warfare training to Filipino soldiers.

Still, more than 160 Filipino soldiers and policemen died, and more than 1,000 others, including civilians, were injured.

Summit in Sydney

Later in March, Prime Minister Turnbull will host an Asean-Australia Special Summit in his hometown, Sydney. And one of the key items on the agenda is counterterrorism cooperation.

Gorely said Australia aims to disrupt the full range of terrorist activities, including the flow of foreign funds to the fundamentalists in the region and monitoring communication over social media networks with hopes of preventing future attacks.

With regard to the Philippines, she added, Australia has been working with Filipino officials for two years now on strengthening its legislation against terrorism.

Because Philippine laws are not specific to terrorist acts, it has been harder to prosecute terrorists, Gorely noted. Under Philippine laws, she said, suspects caught performing terrorist acts were charged with ordinary criminal offenses.

Gorely added that the Philippines has secured a conviction in only one case so far, thanks to the fact that a defendant had actually confessed to the crime.

In contrast, Australia’s anti-terrorism laws are tougher and more specific, and the government here is urging other Asean countries to do the same.

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Marwan's wife arrested in raid

4 others, including police officer in floating status, fall in antiterror operations in Lanao del Norte

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—An antiterror sweep led to the arrest of a woman believed to be the wife of slain international terrorist Zulkifli Bin Hir, or Marwan, and four others in separate operations in Lanao del Norte on Sunday.

Senior Insp. Rodolfo Don-giapon, chief of the Tubod town police office in Lanao del Norte, said soldiers and policemen raided a house at the village of Poblacion and arrested Juromeo Dongon, believed to be Marwan's wife. Also arrested were her sister, Lorlie Atta, and her husband, SPO4 Andy Aseali Atta.

The raids were conducted by authorities serving search warrants for illegal possession of firearms and explosives, Don-giapon said.

Antiterror

A police source, however, said the arrests were in connection with the antiterror campaign. Those arrested were believed linked to terror organizations, including the Maute

group that had declared itself part of the international terror network Islamic State (IS).

Marwan, a Malaysian national, was killed on Jan. 25, 2015, in an operation that also led to the massacre of 44 members of the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force.

At the time of his killing, Marwan was inside territory in Mamasapano town, Maguindanao province, believed to be under the protection of Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, which the military said was now believed to be followers of IS, too.

Another raid

Lt. Col. Ronel Manalo, head of the Army's 5th Mechanized Infantry Battalion, said two relatives of Dongon—Romeo Dongon and Norein Santos—were arrested in a separate raid on Sunday at the village of San Juan in Baroy town, also in Lanao del Norte.

Manalo said the raiding team in Tubod seized a grenade, blasting caps, detonating cord,



latest in antiterror operations against IS suspects in Lanao del Norte in the wake of the failed attempt by IS followers to set up a terrorist base in Marawi City.

On Feb. 8, three terror suspects were killed in a raid by the military in the town of Pantar, Lanao del Norte.

Converts

Lt. Col. Eliezar Valdez, head of the Army's 4th Mechanized Infantry Battalion, said two of the suspects slain in Pantar were members of the Balik Islam Movement, a group of Christians who converted to Islam.

On Nov. 5, 2017, authorities also arrested the Indonesian wife of Omarkhayam Maute during a raid in this city.

Minhati Midrais, alias Baby, 36, was on the list of suspected terrorists that Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana ordered arrested under Arrest, Search and Seizure Order No. 1 he issued as martial law administrator. —REPORTS FROM DIVINA SUSON, RICHEL UMEL AND JIGGER JERUSALEM INQ

Authorities bring the woman believed to be the wife of Marwan (third from right wearing niqab) and other IS suspects to the Cagayan de Oro office of the regional police. —RICHEL V. UMEL

firearms and ammunition

The raiding team in Baroy seized a .45 caliber pistol, a grenade and blasting caps.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Northern Mindanao had taken custody of the suspects "for further

investigation and filing of appropriate charges," Manalo said.

Wrong place for cop

Tubod police chief Dongiapon said police were investigating why SPO4 Atta, who was arrested in the Tubod raid, was

in the town when he should be at the Personnel Holding Unit of the main PNP headquarters in Camp Crame.

Dongiapon said investigators were checking if Atta was still in active service.

The raids on Sunday were the

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Manila Standard

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NPA officer arrested in Agusan Sur, yields grenade

DAVAO CITY—A ranking member of the New People's Army in north-eastern Mindanao was captured in a joint police and military operation in Barangay Villalangit, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur.

The Eastern Mindanao Command on Sunday reported that Pablito Campos, also known as "Batik" or "Ponsoy," front secretary of the Guerrilla Front 21A was captured by Sibagat police and the troops from the 3rd Special Forces Battalion under the 401st Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army.

Campos also served as the spokesperson of the Sub-Regional Committee of Westland of North Eastern Mindanao Regional Committee

Eastmincom spokesman, Maj. Ezra Balagtey, said the operation also resulted in the confiscation of an M4 rifle, a fully loaded long magazine, three cellular phones, and one backpack containing one hand grenade from Campos' possession.

The commander of the 401st IB, Col. Andres Centino, is expecting more arrest of Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army members with focused operations against the organizations which have been derailing development in the rural areas.

Centino said the capture of Campos shows that security forces adhere to the rule of law and the International Human Rights law.

Centino said Campos would face trial for all "atrocious acts [committed] against the people."

Campos has been accused for the failed ambush of the Sibagat police personnel last July 29, 2017 at El Rio, Sibagat, Agusan del Sur. PNA

26 February 2018

The Manila Times

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ANOTHER NPA REBEL SURRENDERS IN CAGAYAN

ANOTHER alleged communist New People's Army (NPA) rebel surrendered to province military and police units in Rizal, Cagayan. The 17th Infantry Battalion (17IB), under the Joint Task Force "Tala" of the 5th Infantry (Star) Division (5ID) said Joel Asucena Ballinan, alias Joren/Javier voluntarily surrendered without firearm to their unit. Ballinan, 19, resident of Sitio Turitukan, Barangay San Juan in Rizal town claimed that he was a member of the NPA's Squad 3, Platoon Bravo of the Danilo Ben Command, Northern Front, Regional Committee, North Central Luzon. He claimed he was designated as Logistics Officer (S4) and Team Leader (TL) of his unit led by Reymund Guzman, alias Bladd/Reyas as their platoon leader. Lt. Col. Isagani Nato, Nolcom public information officer, said though his true name and alias were not found and listed in the latest Periodic Status Report (PSR), Ballinan was identified by his former comrade, alias "Zoren" who surrendered to 17IB on December 11, 2017 and listed Number 34 in the PSR. Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat, Nolcom commander, said they are expecting more to surrender in the coming days and will keep its doors open to welcome those who intend to return to the folds of the law and live a normal life.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

26 February 2018

The Manila Times

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ASG gunman killed in Basilan clash

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Army soldiers killed an Abu Sayyaf fighter in a clash on Sunday in the restive island-province of Basilan.

Army Captain Jo-ann Petinglay, Western Mindanao Command spokesman, said soldiers from the 68th Infantry Battalion recovered the body of the slain militant, including his automatic rifle.

Fierce fighting broke out in Barangay Abong-Abong in Maluso town, a known stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf, that the military dispatched airplanes to attack enemy targets and provide close air support to ground troops pursuing the militants.

The Army also deployed two

more battalions—the 64th and 18th Infantry—and Special Forces soldiers to augment the troops fighting the Abu Sayyaf. The gunfight lasted for over an hour, Petinglay said, adding, there was no report of military casualties.

"Air assets were deployed to the area to provide close air support to the engaged troops after more than an hour of gunfighting while Joint Task Force Basilan provided fire support," Petinglay added.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding several hostages, mostly seamen whose ships had been hijacked off Basilan, just several nautical miles off Zamboanga City.

AL JACINTO

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6 ASG fighters killed in encounter with soldiers

BY AARON RECUENGO

Six suspected members of the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) were killed in a fierce gun battle with Army troopers in a remote area of Maluso town in Basilan.

Chief Supt. Graciano Mijares, director of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) regional police, said the clash stemmed from the operation launched by elements of the 68th Infantry Battalion.

At around 8:45 a.m. on Saturday, the Army troopers chanced upon a group of Abu Sayyaf men in Sitio Kitchen in Barangay Muslim area that resulted in the firefight.

"As a result, six alleged ASG members were killed," said Mijares.

Pursuit operations, he said, were still being conducted by the military in Maluso town and nearby areas for those who were able to escape.

"We are now in the process of identifying the six slain ASGs," said Mijares.

The military has been aggressively running after the Abu Sayyaf which continues to hold several hostages.

The ASG was tagged as responsible in the series of high-profile kidnap-for-ransom cases that include foreigners, its notoriety includes beheading the hostage whose relatives would not pay their ransom demand.

Aside from kidnap-for-ransom, the group has also been tagged in bombing activities and attacks on military posts in Basilan and Sulu.

The military, however, said that the ASG's operational capability has significantly reduced following the death of its top leaders, including the Janjalani brothers, over the years.

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Soldier hurt in Cotabato roadside bombing

KIDAPAWAN CITY — A soldier was slightly injured when suspected communist rebels set off a roadside bomb in President Roxas, North Cotabato, on Saturday night, police said. A convoy of military vehicles of the Army's 19th Infantry Battalion was heading to this city from Arakan, also in North Cotabato, when the roadside bomb went off at 8:10 p.m. in Purok 8, Barangay Poblacion, President Roxas town. Army Corporal Roel Padolina was driving one of the KM-150 truck loaded with soldiers in a convoy when an improvised bomb fashioned from a landmine, with cut nails and metal shards, exploded. Padolina, who sustained injuries on his arms and body, was rushed to North Cotabato provincial hospital here after the incident. Supt. Bernard Tayong, North Cotabato police spokesman, said no one has claimed responsibility on the incident but police are looking at guerillas of CPP-NPA-NDF Guerilla Front 53 as perpetrators of the attack.

PNA

26 February 2018

**Manila
Standard**

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AFP wants 4 more missile-capable warships

TO FULLY protect the country's vast maritime domains and resources, the Philippines needs four more modern frigates aside from the two contracted with South Korean shipbuilder, Hyundai Heavy Industries.

"Based on our Modernization Program, we will require six of the frigates until 2028 Philippine Navy," flag-officer-in-command Rear Adm. Robert Empedrad said during the Frigate Acquisition Project hearing at the Senate.

"That is our Third Horizon. We need four more after we get these two ships," he added, referring to the two missile-capable warships that the country is acquiring from HHI.

These will be armed with weapons capable of neutralizing surface, sub-surface and air threats aside from its electronic warfare ability.

The P18-billion contract for the Navy frigates became the subject of a Senate probe amid allegations that Special Assistant to the President Christopher Go tried to influence the deal.

Go firmly denied the accusations against him, which he described as "fake news."

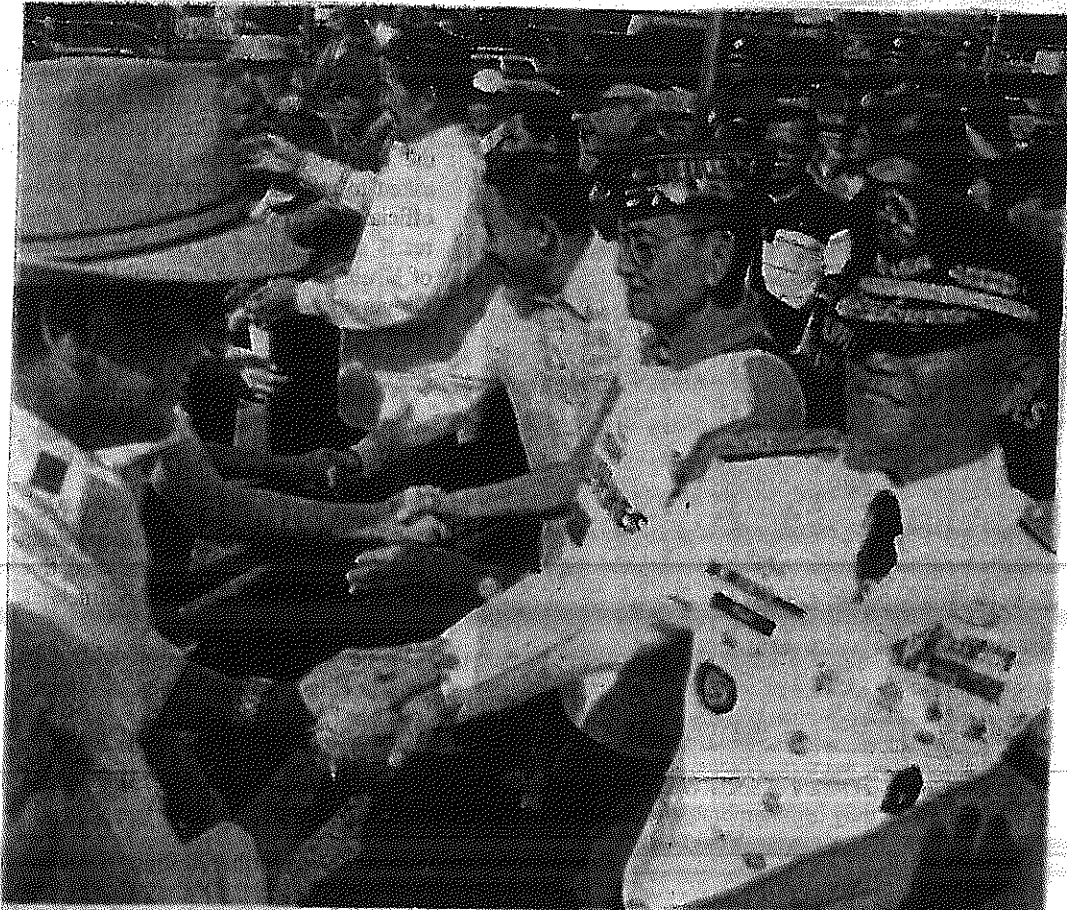
"This was finished during the Aquino administration. Nothing was changed and nobody tried to intervene in the contract," Go said.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said it was impossible for Go to have intervened since the bidding was over and the project was already awarded to Hyundai.

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Manila Standard

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HISTORIC MEETING. Former President Fidel V. Ramos leads the reenactment of the 'Salubungan'—the historic meeting or convergence between civilians and military officers in 1986—during the 32nd Edsa Peoples Power anniversary celebration held at the Edsa Monument. **Manny Palmero**

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Letter to a friend, Vice Adm. RJ Mercado

Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph Mercado,
Office of the AFP Chief of Staff,
Camp Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo,
Quezon City

Dear Ronnie,

I wanted to talk to you personally, perhaps over a cup of coffee, just to see how you are and maybe to get my current events straight from the horse's mouth. But the signals I got from the heavens indicated some discomfort over such a meeting. And so I decided it was best not to pursue the matter. Instead, this will be a one-way conversation in writing, and coffee shall be saved for sunnier days at a time and place of your choosing.

Many years ago, when you and I entered the Philippine Military Academy, we were required by our upperclassmen to put to memory a lot of what I would call as nonsense. Some were silly, idiotic passages written by unknown authors, some were straight out of West Point cadet manuals. But others dwelt on serious matters and in a way helped us get through those frenetic first hundred days of plebehood.

Perhaps the idea was to keep our minds busy so we won't indulge in self-pity over the loss of comforts once enjoyed at home with family.

There was the Cadet Prayer. After all these years, you may have forgotten the prayer but let me refresh your memory with some of its more memorable lines because they are as relevant today as they were in the past. The lines read:

"Let the light of Thy Divine Wisdom direct us to a firm resolve to live up at all times to the creeds of our institution. Strengthen our hearts with fortitude that we may discipline our lives to trail the difficult paths rather than to stray on easier ways."

Last December, you were relieved of command of the Philippine Navy without the traditional rituals that normally accompany this event. In a recent Senate hearing, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana justified the action, basically charging you with insubordination. It is difficult to understand how a senior officer who has reached the pinnacle of his career can suddenly be guilty of insubordination. This attitude would have been detected much earlier and would have been cause for alarm in the organization. And so I have serious doubts that insubordination was the real problem. Neither do I believe the insinuations that you had some personal interests to pursue. When character assassination is employed in conflict situations with no solid evidence presented, it is usually a sign of weakness. The aim is to tarnish the image of the messenger in order to divert attention from the validity of his message.



REVELLE

RAMON J. FAROLAN

The controversy that led to your relief actually involves the choice of a combat management system (CMS) for the two frigates that the Philippine Navy is set to acquire. In simple terms, the CMS is the heart of any naval combat vessel as it coordinates the simultaneous use of its multiple armaments in combat.

The construction of the frigates was awarded last year to Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) of South Korea. But after the contract was signed, South Korea's high court issued a decision banning HHI from participating in government contracts for two years in connection with a bribery case. This is a red flag! How can we as a government possibly continue to honor a contract with a business entity whose own government has banned it from participating in government contracts because of a bribery case?

HHI, the shipbuilder, favored a Korean CMS called "Naval Shield" while Thales, a Netherlands-based subsidiary of Thales Group, offered a CMS called "Tacticos."

Tacticos is the most widely-used CMS in the world. It is used by 22 countries including the United States, Japan and Australia, since 1993 or for almost 25 years.

On the other hand, Naval Shield has been in service for five years and only the South Korean Navy, and possibly, Malaysia, uses this system. Tacticos is about \$7 million more expensive but has a reputation for greater reliability and time-tested performance.

You and the entire naval high command prefer the Tacticos CMS for obvious reasons. Few people realize this but President Duterte is in agreement with your views. Recently he spoke against lowest bidders winning government contracts. His long years of experience in government has taught him that lowest bids are not necessarily the best and that he would rather pay more for a better quality product. The initial cost may be a bit higher but in the long run, we get a more efficient, more reliable product. When it comes to high value, high-tech defense equipment, our country deserves the best. We cannot afford to coast along with a "puwede na" mentality. Too much is at stake. As he did in canceling a signed contract with Canada for helicopters, I believe the President will do what is in the best interests of our country with regard to the frigates of the Navy.

You will be retiring on March 10 after 56 years in the military service. You were a fresh high school graduate from Cebu when you joined the PMA cadet corps in 1979. You graduated with the Class of 1983, finishing No. 9 in the Order of Merit out of 196 members and rose to become flag officer in command, the youngest among your Navy classmates. You espoused what was right and most beneficial for the organization and in a broader sense, for our country. In consonance with the Cadet Prayer, you chose "to trail the difficult path rather than to stray on easier ways." That is what our people expect from the leadership of the different branches of the Armed Forces.

As you move on to another phase in life, I join your countless supporters in wishing you, in true Navy fashion, "Fair Weather and Following Seas."

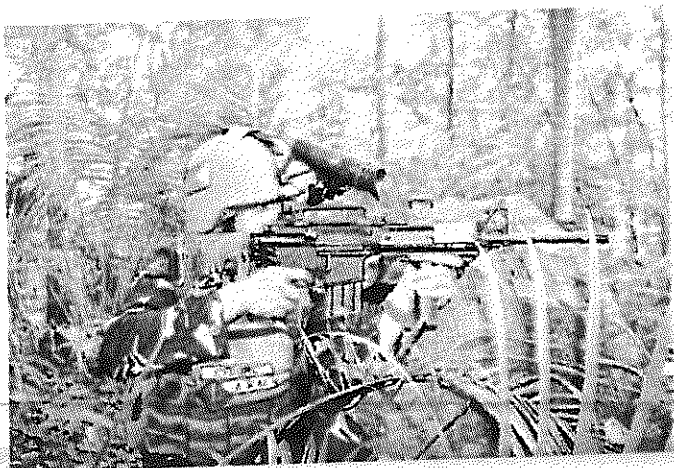
Fraternally,
Ramon J. Farolan
Maj. General, AFP (Ret.)

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Cafgu killed by suspected rebel sniper in Oriental Mindoro

By: Madonna T. Virola



A female sniper from the Army's 1st Infantry Division looks for the enemy from her post in this file photo supplied by the military. In Oriental Mindoro, a suspected communist sniper shot and killed a member of the military's civilian unit on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2018. ARMY PHOTO

CITY OF CALAPAN — A member of Army's militia unit was shot and killed by a sniper believed to be member of the New People's Army (NPA) at a Cafgu Active Auxiliary Detachment in Bulalacao town in Oriental Mindoro province Saturday, police said.

Domingo Berber instantly died from a bullet wound when he was attacked at about 8:30 a.m. at his detachment in Sitio (sub-village) Cambayang, Barangay (village) Cabugao, Supt. Imelda Tolentino, Mimaropa police information officer, said citing a military spot report.

She said Berber was shot by a sniper believed to be a member the communist terrorist group.

The victim sustained a bullet wound on his right chest which caused his instantaneous death.

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Soldier injured in roadside bomb explosion

By: Edwin O. Fernandez-@inquirerdotnet

KIDAPAWAN CITY – Suspected communist rebels set off a roadside bomb in President Roxas, North Cotabato, injuring a soldier driving an Army truck, the police said Sunday.

Supt. Bernard Tayong, the North Cotabato police spokesperson, said a convoy of military vehicles of 19th Infantry Battalion was heading to Kidapawan City from Arakan town, also in North Cotabato, when the roadside bomb went off at 8:30 p.m. Saturday in Purok 8 in Barangay Poblacion, President Roxas town.

Cpl. Roel Padolina, who was driving one of the KM-150 trucks loaded with soldiers, was hit by shrapnel, Tayong said.

He said Padolina, who sustained injuries on his arms and body, was rushed to the North Cotabato provincial hospital here. /atm

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2 suspected BIFF members nabbed after brief firefight with Army

By: Edwin O. Fernandez- @inquirerdotnet

MIDSAYAP, North Cotabato – Two suspected members of the Islamic State-inspired Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) were arrested following a brief firefight in Barangay Nabalawag here on Saturday, authorities said Sunday.

Lieutenant Colonel Angelo Lutera, the commander of the Army's 34th Infantry Battalion, said soldiers and policemen were sent to Nabalawag following reports saying armed men on motorized boats were trying to dock there.

Lutera said soldiers started firing on the BIFF men, who hastily fled as they fired back.

But the boat being used by two suspects had failed to restart, leading to their arrests.

Lutera identified the two arrested BIFF gunmen as Ambong Mamalinta Adam, 39; and Endo Mentato Sapelon, 48.

Seized from them were three caliber 30 Garand rifles, an M-16 rifle, two caliber M-14 rifles, a homemade caliber 50 Barrett sniper's rifle, assorted magazines and ammunition, identification cards of a certain Tong Asilon Salem (a BIFF sub-leader), several upper battle dress uniforms, and a fiber glass motorized boat.

Major General Arnel Dela Vega, the 6th Infantry Division commander, lauded the operating troops.

He said the two suspects had since been turned over to the police for custody and filing of charges. /je

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NPA leader arrested in Agusan del Sur

By: Chris Panganiban- @inquirerdotnet

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur – A ranking New People’s Army (NPA) leader in Caraga region was arrested by joint Army and police operatives in Sibagat, Agusan del Sur, the Army said Sunday.

Capt. Rodolfo Cordero, the Civil Military Officer of the Army’s 401st Infantry Brigade, said Pablito Campos, 43, alias “Batik” or “Ponsoy,” the political officer of the NPA’s Guerilla Front 21A and spokesperson of the West and Northeastern Mindanao command, was collared inside his hide out in Barangay El Rio on Friday.

Cordero said Campos was with eight other rebels but he was the only one captured during the surprise raid conducted by joint operatives of the Army’s 3rd Special Forces Battalion (3SFBn) and the Sibagat police office. The other rebels managed to escape, he added.

He said Campos was responsible for the killing of Police Officer 1 Sharmaine Cañete, who was shot dead while manning a checkpoint of Agusan del Sur Provincial Public Safety Company along the national highway in Sibagat on May 16 last year.

Cordero said the rebel leader had eight pending warrants of arrest for crimes of rebellion, frustrated murder, murder, multiple attempted murder, kidnapping and serious illegal detention issued by various Regional Trial Court branches in Lianga, Surigao del Sur; and Bayugan City.

Recovered from his possession, Cordero said, were an M4 rifle, a fully loaded long magazine, three cellular phones, a backpack containing a hand grenade, and personal belongings.

He said charges were being prepared against Campos.

Cordero said Campos was the fourth NPA rebel arrested in Agusan del Sur since January.

“We are looking forward to more apprehensions in the coming days and weeks because the Armed Forces and the police have already eyes on the leadership of NPA terrorists,” said Col. Andres Centino, commander of 401st Infantry Brigade.

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

“We will continue security operations in our area of responsibility in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the people. I also urged the families, relatives and neighbors of remaining NPA terrorists to encourage them to lay down their arms and live peacefully,” Lt. Col. Rhoderick Parallag, the 3rd SFB commander, said. /je