

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



TEAM ARMY

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

10 January 2018

Wednesday

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

10 JANUARY 2018

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	Phil Star p.12
HEADLINE NEWS			
2-3	Duterte shuts down logging firm	Christina Mendez	Phil Star p.1
4-5	Palace: New charter will lead to 'No-el'	Leila Salaveria & DJ Yap	PDI p.A1
6	Duterte OKs police, military pay hike	Catherine Valente	Mla Times p.A1
7-9	PH steps up island dev't in China Sea	Francisco Tuyay, Bill Casas & Vito Barcelo	Mla Standard p.A1
ARMY RELATED NEWS			
10	BIFF attack	Joseph Jubelag	Mla Times p.12
11	2 hurt in Maguindanao roadside blast	PNA	Tribune p.3
12	NPA naka-5 atake nung Disyembre: 24 sundalo patay	-	Police Files p.2
AFP RELATED NEWS			
13	Military verifying presence of foreign terrorists in PH	Dempsey Reyes	Mla Times p.A2
14-15	AFP goals for 2018: Reduce NPA strength, defeat Sayyaf and BIFF	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B1
16	Tiamzons under tight watch-Lorenzana	Dempsey Reyes	Mla Times p.A8
17	Military eyes to reduce NPA strength by half	Mario Mallari	Tribune p.3
18	AFP vows to reduce NPA strength by half	Francis Wakefield	Tempo p.12
19	Joma: I'm Pinoy, not Dutch; says yarn 'fake news'	Rey Requejo	Mla Standard p.A1
20	NPA terrorists malabong matuldukan sa 1-year Martial Law extension	Joy Cantos	Ngayon p.2
21	Sayyaf bomb maker arrested	Roel Pareño	Phil Star p.12
22	Police arrest Abu Sayyaf bomber in Zamboanga	Al Jacinto	Mla Times p.A7
23	ASG explosive expert captured	PNA	Tribune p.3
24	Abu Sayyaf bomber, nasakote	Rhoderick Beñez	Ngayon p.6
25-27	Lorenzana: Phl to protest China airbase on Kagitingan	Christina Mendez, Reuter	Phil Star p.1
28	Palace in China: No breach in commitment	Jocelyn Montemayor	Malaya p.B2
29	Salaries of soldiers, cops hiked	Jocelyn Montemayor	Malaya p.B1
30	'Joint reso' sa increase ng AFP at uniformed personnel, pirmado na ni Pres. Duterte	-	Police Files p.2
31	Año assumes DILG post	Roy Narra	Mla Times p.A8
32	Palace eyes drafting 4K Maranaos to AFP, PNP	John Paolo Bencito & others	Mla Standard p.A2
33	No restlessness in the Navy: AFP chief	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B2
34	Walang nag-aalburoto sa Phl Navy	Joy Cantos	Ngayon p.2
35-36	Traslacion more orderly, peaceful	Rey Galupo & Evelyn Macairan	Phil Star p.1

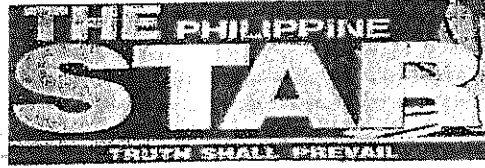
Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

COMMENTARY/EDITORIAL

37-38	IS regrouping	-	Tribune p.6
39	Martial law lapses	-	Malaya p.B4
ONLINE NEWS			
40	3 more NPA rebels yield to Army in Sultan Kudarat	-	www.pna.gov.ph
41-42	Army braces for BIFF retaliatory attacks in Maguindanao	-	www.pna.gov.ph
43	ASG explosive expert captured (photo)	-	www.pna.gov.ph
44	SIGNIFICANT GAINS SND Traditional New Year's Call	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
45	SAVORING PEACE NPA Terrorist Group Member Surrender in Kalinga	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
46	COMMUNITY RELATIONS 546 th ECB conducts 5-Day Medical Mission (Day 5)	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
47	TOWARDS PEACEFUL LIVES 7 Former Rebels Receive Financial Assistance	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
48-49	CHANGE OF COMMAND Com, NOLCOM at 5 th Infantry Division Ceremony	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
50	TROOP VISIT Com, NOLCOM at 77IB	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
51	TALK TO MEN Com, NOLCOM at 5 th Infantry Division	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
52	TROOP VISIT Com, NOLCOM at 86IB	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
53	CRUMBLING MOVEMENT NPA's Organizer Leads Members to Surrender	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph
54-55	CHANGE OF COMMAND New Leadership at SOCOM and FSRR 3	Alvin Santiago	www.dwdd.com.ph

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

10 January 2018



Page: 12

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
www.panahon.tv

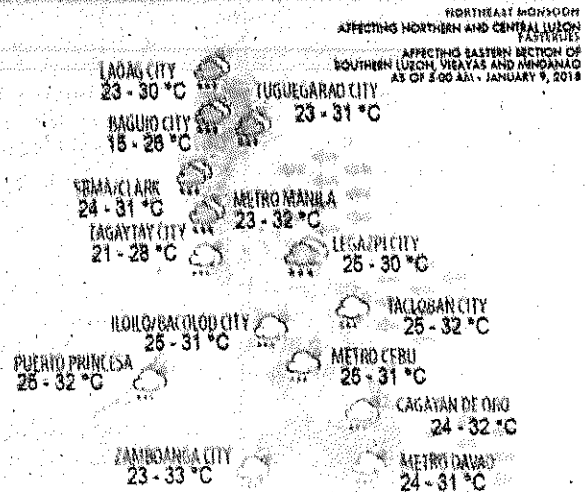
NEWS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
11AM & 3PM
PILIPINAS
WEEKDAYS
6AM, 8:30 PM & 9PM
WEEKENDS
6AM

NEWS
CHECK FOR PANALAS NG

Panahon TV

SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOONRISE	MOONSET
6:24 AM	6:43 PM	12:38 AM	12:44 PM
1st QUARTER	WAXING MOON	LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
6:25 AM JAN 9	10:17 AM JAN 17	10:30 AM P. 10 HIGH	6:02 PM 1.63 METER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST JANUARY 10, 2018 | WEDNESDAY



EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 11 THU	JAN 12 FRI	JAN 13 SAT	EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	JAN 11 THU	JAN 12 FRI	JAN 13 SAT
METRO MANILA	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 29 °C	22 °C 29 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 31 °C
LAOAG	22 °C 30 °C	22 °C 30 °C	23 °C 30 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 31 °C
BAGUIO	15 °C 26 °C	15 °C 25 °C	16 °C 26 °C	TACLOBAN	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	23 °C 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 32 °C
TAGAYTAY	20 °C 28 °C	20 °C 27 °C	20 °C 27 °C	METRO DAVAO	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C
LEGAZPI	24 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	23 °C 33 °C	24 °C 33 °C	23 °C 32 °C



1st January 2018



Page: 1

Duterte shuts down logging firms

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

After a Cabinet meeting where he was reportedly shown images of massive forest denudation in Zamboanga, an enraged President Duterte ordered a halt to logging operations in the province where recent typhoons Urduja and Vinta took a heavy toll on lives and property.

“The President also ordered several logging concessions in Zamboanga peninsula to be suspended,” presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a regular press briefing yesterday.

Duterte came out with the order to suspend the logging contracts

of at least two firms after being briefed on the devastation caused by flooding in Zamboanga and

Davao at the first Cabinet meeting for this year last Monday at Malacañang.

He reportedly blew his top on seeing a five-minute video presentation of environmental degradation caused by logging.

Authorities blamed heavy flooding during the onslaught of Urduja and Vinta on the denudation of

Turn to Page 7

Sodaco: Link to killer landslides premature. Story on Page 7

Duterte From Page 1

forests, especially in Zamboanga peninsula.

At the Cabinet meeting, Roque said the President was apprised of the situation of indigenous people displaced by logging operations of some companies.

"And he also observed that it is widespread logging that is responsible for the flash floods that Mindanao experienced only this month of December with two typhoons," Roque said.

In his social media post last Monday, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol identified one of the firms as the Sodaco

Agricultural Corp., which reportedly got a 60,000-hectare concession from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in 2006.

"Agriculture and fisheries were adversely affected by the flooding and landslides. Even if you have the ISF (integrated social forestry) license, it does not give you the right to cut down trees for commercial purposes. They made the ISF as an excuse to conduct logging operations," Piñol told reporters yesterday.

DENR region director Felix Mirasol Jr. confirmed yesterday the suspension order on Sodaco and sister firm Sirawai Plywood & Lumber Corp. (SPLC) in Sibucu for breach in their Industrial Forest

Management Agreement (IFMA) with the government.

Sodaco and SPLC are under the Dacon Group of Companies (DGC), with DMCI as mother company.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said that DENR investigators have been deployed in the province so that "an exhaustive probe can be conducted to see if there have been violations in their permits."

President Duterte blamed the companies for the flash floods and mudslides that killed dozens of people in Zamboanga del Norte at the height of Typhoon Vinta.

The environment chief said a 12-member team consisting of local DENR officers

from the forestry, mines and environment bureaus has been created to look into possible irregularities in the operations of Sodaco and SPLC.

Under their IFMA terms, SPLC and Sodaco are allowed to establish industrial tree plantations, which they can harvest. The agreement bars them from cutting residual trees unless authorized by the Office of the DENR Secretary under very strict conditions such as for site development and plantation establishment.

The DENR has issued five IFMAs to the two firms with a combined area of 70,709 hectares, covering 12 towns traversing the boundaries of Zamboanga del Norte and Zamboanga del Sur. – **With Rhodina Vilanueva, Louise Maureen Simeon**

10 January 2018



Page: 11

PALACE: NEW CHARTER WILL LEAD TO 'NO-EL'

STORY BY LEILA B. SALAVERRIA AND DJ YAP

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque says there will be no need for midterm polls if the people ratify a new Constitution in a plebiscite before 2019. Otherwise, he says, there is no reason to stop the scheduled elections. **A2**

Palace: New Charter will lead to 'No-el'

FROM A1

By **Leila B. Salaverria**
and **DJ Yap**
@Team Inquirer

Malacañang on Tuesday said postponing the 2019 elections should be done only if a new Constitution would be drafted and ratified by the people before the polls. Otherwise, it said, there is no reason to stop the scheduled balloting.

At a Cabinet meeting on Monday, President Duterte "reiterated he is against No-el," or "no-election," said presidential spokesperson Harry Roque.

"He wants to push through with the elections in 2019 and has committed to give us the most honest and the most credible elections in 2019," Roque said.

Mr. Duterte's allies have floated the idea of postponing the elections next year and extending the terms of elected officials as part of the transition to a federal government.

If the new Constitution has been ratified, then there will be no need to hold the 2019 elections, Roque said.

"As I said, if they are able to amend the Constitution and have the people ratify it before 2019, that's the only possibility of the postponement of the elections," he added. "But unless the Constitution is actually ratified by the people and the President calling for the transitory provisions, the

elections will push through.”

The top leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives have agreed to convene a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the 1987 Constitution for a shift to a federal form of government.

House discussions begin

In the House, the committee on constitutional amendments will begin discussions this month on a draft of a new Constitution based on federalism models earlier presented to the panel, according to a House leader.

“[T]he subcommittees of the House committee on constitutional amendments are scheduled to submit their output to the mother committee this January,” Deputy Speaker Fredenil Castro said.

Castro, vice chair of the constitutional amendments committee, said the “output,” or the draft federal Constitution, should be debated and put to a vote by the House panel.

“Then, the House will have to wait for the action of the Senate on the joint resolution calling the House and the Senate to convene as a Con-ass,” he said, referring to Concurrent Resolution No. 9.

“The decision of the Senate, whether negative or positive, will dictate the next procedure to be followed by the House,” Castro told the Inquirer.

Concurrent Resolution No. 9 seeks “to constitute the Congress of the Philippines as a Con-ass for the purpose of proposing amendments to, or revision of,

the 1987 Constitution.”

Under a Con-ass, the Senate and the House, acting as one body, will introduce and approve changes to the Charter by an absolute three-fourths vote and the approved changes will be submitted to a national referendum.

The House began plenary debates on Concurrent Resolution No. 9 on Dec. 13, while the Senate version was expected to be filed this week.

Both Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III have agreed publicly to adopt the measure.

Two proposed drafts

While the mode of Charter change is under discussion, the House constitutional amendments committee has begun consolidating two proposed drafts of a new Constitution that will later be submitted to a Con-ass, once it is convened.

The first is Resolution of Both Houses No. 8 containing an 83-page draft proposal of the new Charter filed by ABS Rep. Eugene Michael de Vera and Pampanga Rep. Aurelio Gonzales Jr.

The second is a draft Charter prepared by the PDP-Laban Federalism Institute from a study group led by the institute’s executive director Jonathan Malaya and University of Santo Tomas professor Edmund Tayao.

Based on these two models, the House panel formed four technical working groups to handle specific areas in the drafting of the new “Philippine Federal Constitution.” INQ

10 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: A1

Duterte OKs police, military pay hike

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has signed Joint Resolution 01 increasing the base pay of the military and uniformed personnel in government.

The joint resolution, signed by the President on January 1, provides that the modified base pay shall apply to all military personnel under the Department of National Defense and uniformed personnel under the Department of Interior and Local Government, Philippine Coast Guard, and the National Mapping and Resource Information Authority.

"There is a need to adjust the compensation package of MUP in order to make it more commensurate with their critical role in maintaining

► **PayA2**

■ **PAY FROM A1**

Duterte OKs police

national security, and peace and order, taking into consideration their exposure to high-risk environments in the performance of their duties," the resolution read.

Under the resolution, a Police Officer 1 and those with equivalent rank will enjoy a 100 percent increase in their monthly base pay -- from P14,834 to P29,668.

The Department of Budget estimates that the government will need an additional P63.4 billion to cover the pay increase. The salary adjustment will be implemented in two tranches -- in 2018 and 2019.

The amount needed for this year shall be sourced from the Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund and other available funds, while the funding requirements for the succeeding years shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

"Pending review of the current MUP pension system by the legislative and executive branches

of government, which is aimed toward ensuring a sustainable and equitable pension system, the indexation of the pension of retired MUP with base pay of those in the active service shall be suspended with respect to the base-pay increase authorized in the joint resolution," the resolution said.

The pension indexation shall be based on the rates of the base-pay schedule provided under the law.

Also, the resolution fixed the hazard pay of all military and uniformed personnel at P540 a month.

Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno earlier said the increase in the base pay would "result in increases in other allowances and bonuses that are computed as a percentage of Base Pay such as Longevity Pay (or Foggy Pay), Mid-Year Bonus, Year-End Bonus, and will effectively discontinue the grant of provisional and officers' allowances; an interim measure pending the modification of the base pay schedule."

10 January 2018

Manila
Standard

Page: A1

PH steps up island devt in China sea

Protest Sino militarization of Kagitingan

By Francisco Tuyay, Bill Casas and Vito Barcelo

THE Philippines will follow the lead of China and Vietnam and develop islands under its control in the disputed South China Sea, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Tuesday.

"My plan of action is also to develop all the islands there because they are occupied by us," Lorenzana said, referring to China's aggressive posturing in the South China Sea and evidence of its massive reclamation projects in various disputed islets and atolls.

The government has allotted funding for the rehabilitation of a runway at the Philippine-held Pagasa Island, a few nautical miles away from Puerto Princesa.

Modern facilities have also been built at Pagasa intended to

Next page

PH...

From A1

support the 300 inhabitants, including communication facilities and ports.

Lorenzana gave no technical details of the projects that would be established in all of the Philippine-held islands.

At the same time, Lorenzana said, the Philippines is set to file a diplomatic protest of China's militarization of the South China Sea and the recent harassment of Filipino fishermen by the Chinese coast guard.

Reports said China has been deploying soldiers in Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef, in violation of Beijing's recent commitment not to militarize any of the reclaimed islands in the area.

"Our stand here is that we will register our protest through the Department of Foreign Affairs because I know for a fact that the Chinese government sometime ago said that they are not going to militarize those re-

claimed islands," Lorenzana said.

Fiery Cross is located in what Manila calls the West Philippine Sea and is within the vicinity of the Kalayaan Group of Islands near Palawan.

Pamalakaya, a group of militant fishermen, urged the government to file a protest over China's transformation of Kagitingan Reef into a full-scale military airbase.

Kagitingan Reef is part of the disputed Kalayaan Group of Islands in the Spratly region of the South China Sea. It is part of the Philippines' 220-naughtical mile exclusive economic zone.

In 2004, China began to construct an artificial island on the reef.

A recent report from a Hong Kong-based news site said the reclaimed island now features a 3,125-meter runway for strategic bombers to land.

"The Philippine government must pursue filing a

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diplomatic protest to condemn and expose Beijing's aggressive usurpation in our marine territory. China destroys not only our marine biodiversity but also the livelihood of our Filipino fishermen who used to fish in the West Philippine Sea. The continuous reclamation of our waters in the West Philippine Sea is also a threat to our domestic supply of fish products," Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya chairman, said in a statement.

The group hit Lorenzana for "dilly-dallying" on defending the country's territory.

"Why would Secretary Lorenzana have to wait for the complete militarization of Kagitingan Reef before filing a diplomatic protest? It seems that the complete transformation of our resource-rich reef into military airbase is not enough for the government to get alarmed over this outright foreign invasion. The government's

indecisive action is the reason why China has been able to swiftly reclaim our waters and construct military facilities without us knowing," Hicap said.

The group also urged the government to assert the international tribunal ruling that invalidates China's claim over Philippine waters.

The Palace, however, said that China had not breached its good faith obligation because it has not embarked on new reclamation work in the South China Sea.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said that while aerial photos showed the extent of development on Kagitingan Reef, this was one of the islands that China had already reclaimed.

"And this is one of the islands subject of the arbitral tribunal's decision that it is within the Philippine economic zone," Roque said.

"When we invoke the good faith of China, it is against making further reclama-

tions and not making further works on islands that it had already reclaimed," he said.

But he added that if China militarizes these islands, that would constitute a further threat to peace and security in the area.

"But for as long as there is [no] reclamation of new islets or reefs, then we continue to respect that they are true to their commitment... But I think from the very beginning, China, we knew, was militarizing the area by reclaiming these areas and by using them as military bases," Roque told reporters.

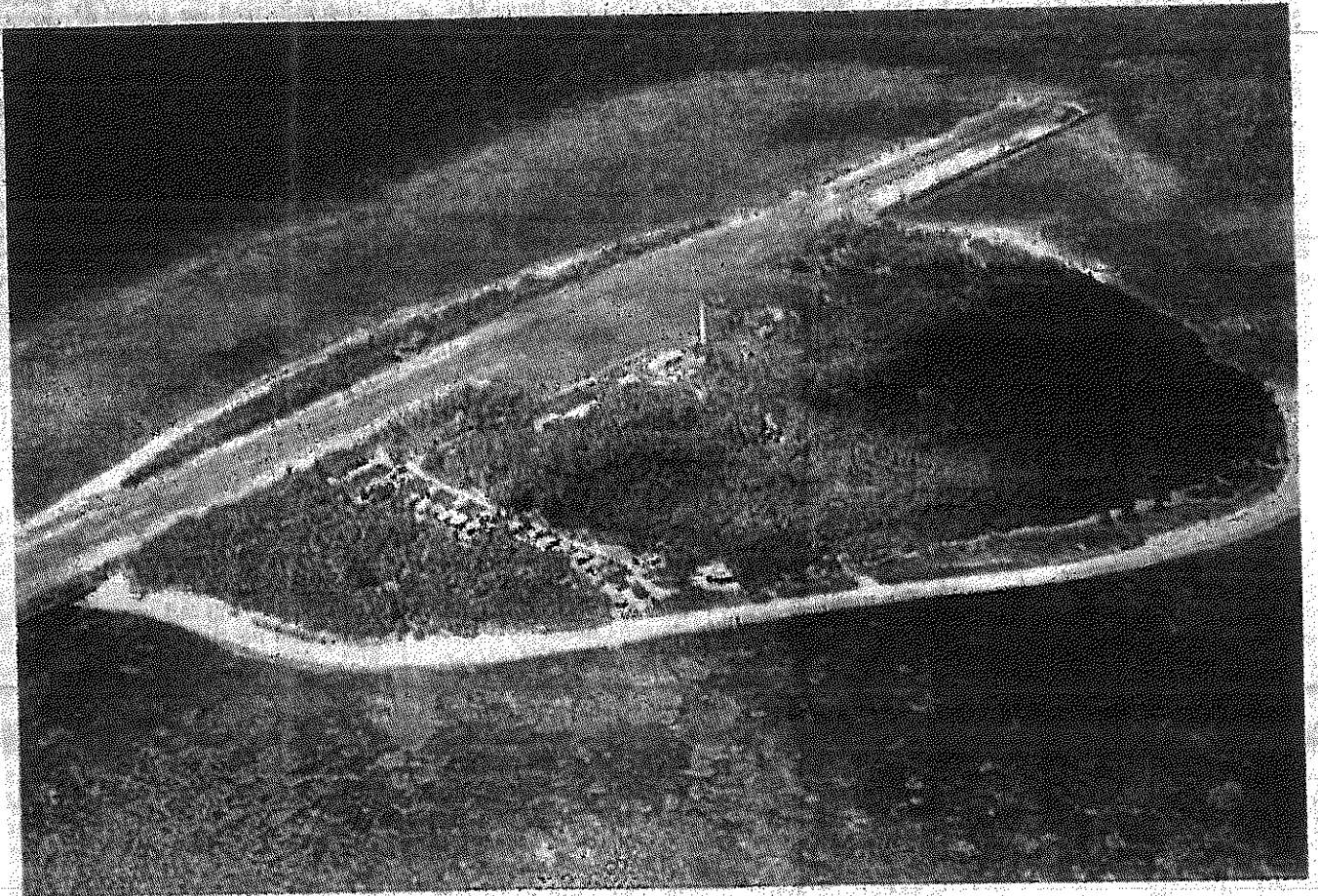
"The point is, has there been a breach of Chinese commitment not to reclaim any new islands or shoals in the area? None. The good faith we're relying on is the commitment of China not to embark on new reclamations," he added.

Roque agreed with Lorenzana that filing a diplomatic protest was the proper remedy.

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ISLANDS IN THE SUN. The Philippine government, which has allotted funding for the rehabilitation of a runway at the country's-held Pagasa Island near Puerto Princesa, will follow the lead of China and Vietnam and develop islands under its control in the disputed South China Sea, according to defense authorities Tuesday, short of disclosing technical details.

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10 January 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 12

• **BIFF attack**

MAGUINDANAO – Two militiamen were injured in a roadside bomb attack staged Monday by members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters in Datu Hofer town, Maguindanao. Capt. John Encinas, spokesperson of the Sixth Infantry Division, identified the victims as Michael Dayo and Freddie Lupos, both members of the civilian active auxiliary under the 38th Infantry Battalion. He said the government troops were conducting security patrol in the area when an improvised explosive device went off near the highway. Dayo was wounded in the leg, while Lupos was hit in the arm. The victims, who are recuperating in military hospital, were already declared out of danger. (Joseph Jubelag)

10 January 2018



Page: 3

2 hurt in Maguindanao roadside blast

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao — Suspected IS-inspired armed militants set off a roadside bomb on a Maguindanao highway Monday, wounding two militiamen conducting road security patrol. Elements of the 25th Maguindanao Civilian Armed Auxiliary of the 38th Infantry Battalion were conducting foot patrol and road security along the national highway Barangay Labo-Labo 2, Datu Hofer, Maguindanao, when the homemade bomb fashioned from black powder with cut nails as trigger mechanism went off at around 6:40 a.m. The explosion hit Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit members Freddie Lupos on his right arm, and Michael Dayo on the right upper leg. The Army's 6th Infantry Division here, in a statement, said that the two militiamen were now safe after receiving medical treatment at its battalion headquarters. Overnight, it had been quiet in the battlefield between government forces and BIFF. **PNA**

10 January 2018

POLICE FILES

Page. 2

NPA naka-5 atake nung Disyembre: 24 sundalo patay

DAVAO CITY - Ipinagmayabang ng New People's Army (NPA) na nakapagsagawa sila ng lumang pag-atake sa tropa ng pamahalaan sa Davao Oriental mula December 28 - 30, kungsaan 24 sundalo at isang rebelde ang nasawi at 2 sundalo ang sugatan.

Pero pinabulaanan ng militar ang natirang bilang ng mga napatay sa tropa ng gobyerno.

Sa kanilang statement na pinalabas, sinabi ni NPA spokesperson Rigoberto F. Sanchez na ang kamlang combatants ay nakagawa ng tatlong pag-atake noong December 28 laban sa 28th

Infantry Battalion at Scout Rangers Company sa Sifios Gibaan at Bato-Bato sa Barangay Tubanon, Tartagona municipality kungsaan 16 sundalo aniya ang napatay at 2 ang sugatan.

Pero ayon kay Maj Ezra Balagtey, public information officer ng Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMindCom), tanging dalawang sundalo lamang ang nasugatan sa natirang engkuentro.

Sinabi ni Sanchez na pagkalipas ng dalawang araw, napasabak uli ang NPA sa govt forces sa Siho Madian, sa Barangay Tubanon, kungsaan 8 sundalo at isang rebelde umano ang nasawi.

Ngunit sahi ni Balagtey dalawang sundalo lang ang napatay at dalawa ang nasugatan.

Sa Barangay Marayag sa Lupon, sinabi ni Sanchez na matake nila ang military ng tanghaling tapat noong December 29.

Sinabi niyang ikinulong ng military sa loob ng tatlong araw ang 10 magsasaka na inabuso "physically and psychologically."

Ang NPA at Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) ay tinaguriang terrorist organizations sa Proclamation No. 374 ni Presidente Rodrigo Roa-Duterte noong December 5.

10 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: A2

Military verifying presence of foreign terrorists in PH

BY DEMPSEY REYES

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is verifying reports from neighboring countries that foreign Islamic State (IS) terrorists have entered the southern part of the Philippines, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Tuesday.

"That is what we have been finding out for now and we are trying to confirm reports that there are foreign terrorists inside the country especially in Mindanao," Lorenzana said in a news conference after the traditional joint defense and military New Year's Call at Camp Aguinaldo

in Quezon City.

He revealed that Malaysia and Indonesia have been sending reports to the Philippines about the "increase" in foreign terrorists entering the southern back door of the country, including the provinces of Tawi-tawi and Sulu.

"[Our monitoring] is ongoing.

We are intensifying our monitoring there in the south and as of now, we cannot confirm the presence of the foreign terrorists. But there are homegrown terrorists there in the south, we are sure of that," Lorenzana explained.

"We are trying to verify that up to now and for now, we cannot confirm it yet. Our intelligence gathering has been continuous," he added.

The Defense chief came up with the statement months after he disclosed that the government was closely monitoring returning IS fighters from Iraq and Syria and preparing for the arrests of the terrorists.

During the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defense Ministers' Meeting in October, Lo-

renzana confirmed he had received a list of names of terrorists who went to the Middle East.

But Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the AFP's Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), downplayed the possibility of foreign terrorists entering the country.

"I think they have already seen the result of the Marawi siege. So, it's a stern warning for them not to go here," Galvez told reporters in a separate interview.

Galvez's area of command, WestMinCom, was the lead unit in the fight with the IS-linked Maute terrorists in Marawi City, which lasted for five months last year.

It resulted in the deaths of more than 1,000 people, including terrorists, soldiers and civilians.

10 January 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B1

AFP goals for 2018: Reduce NPA strength, defeat Sayyaf and BIFF

BY VICTOR REYES

THE military is targeting to cut the strength of the communist New People's Army by half this year. It is also aiming to defeat the Abu Sayyaf Group and the Bangsamoro Islamic Liberation Front within the year.

The three are being considered by government as terrorist groups. The NPA has about 3,700 fight-

ers. The Abu Sayyaf has 300 to 400 men, operating mostly in Sulu and Basilan while the BIFF has some 200 to 300 members operating mainly in Central Mindanao.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero yesterday said he has given directives to all military commanders "to sustain the momentum" of the opera-

See AFP ► Page B6

Army

AFP

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF

tions against the all threat groups, including the NPA which has been pursuing the armed struggle for nearly 50 years now.

"Their (NPA's) manpower is about 3,7000. We intend to reduce that number by half for 2018," Guerrero said in an ambush interview after traditional joint Department of Defense-Armed Forces New Year's call in Camp Aguinaldo.

Incidentally, Guerrero is due to retire in April this year after President Duterte extended his term for four months.

President Duterte formally terminated peace talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines-NPA-National Democratic Front last November because of continued NPA attacks even while peace negotiations were ongoing. He later said the CPP and NPA will be declared terrorist groups.

Asked to assess the military's operations against the NPA last year, Guerrero said: "We have been successful as we were able to significantly reduce their strength, firearms and affected barangays." He did not give figures.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said finishing the communist insurgency problem within the year may be impossible.

"We have a plan to degrade (the NPA)... To finish the communist terrorist is far-fetched. It's a tall order and we may not be able to do it," said Lorenzana.

"What we are trying to do is to degrade their capability to conduct large-scale attacks. So our operations will be a combination of combat operations plus development in the countryside," said Lorenzana.

On the possibility of resuming peace talks between the government and the communists, Lorenzana said "there is always a chance for peace talks... for as long as we will have an enabling environment."

"If the environment is good and there is trust from both sides, and we're not hiding information from one another and we're not fooling one another, it's still possible," he said.

Nevertheless, Lorenzana said President Duterte is "not very keen" on resuming the peace talks with the communists.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, chief of the Western Mindanao Command, said he considers the Abu Sayyaf and the BIFF as the biggest security threats in the Western Mindanao area.

"That is our goal for the year.

We will do it, it can be done," he said on the target to defeat the Abu Sayyaf and BIFF before the end of the year *pride*

"That's our challenge. We will push our capabilities to accomplish this," he added.

Galvez noted a recent feat against the BIFF in Maguindanao, which he said left 10 group members dead. The military stepped up operations against the BIFF in August last year, in collaboration with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"We will sustain our operations to rescue the villages because they are trying to create havoc in the villages," said Galvez of the BIFF members who are mostly former MILF fighters.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu, said defeating the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu this year is "very doable." About 300 ASG men are operating in Sulu where the group is holding three Filipino and six foreign hostages, he said.

"We want it done as soon as possible. We are exerting our best efforts. We are trying to get their leadership because we have proven in the past that neutralization of their leaders led to surrender (of members) because they are no longer being led," said Sobejana.

"Our priority now is getting their leaders, neutralizing their leaders to really fast track the defeat of the ASG problem... We strong believe that that's (ending ASG) very doable," Sobejana said.

Duterte in August 2016 ordered the military to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf. Former AFP chief Ricardo Visaya, who assumed the top AFP post in July 2016, set a deadline of defeating the Abu Sayyaf by before his retirement in December 2016. Visaya's successor, Eduardo Año, set a deadline of ending the Abu Sayyaf and other terror groups within the first six months of 2017. He retired in October last year and is now officer in charge of the interior department.

Meanwhile, Lorenzana said the defense and military establishments are verifying reports about the entry of an undetermined number of foreign terrorists in Mindanao.

"There are reports coming from other countries like Malaysia and Indonesia that there an increase of foreign terrorists, entering through our southern backdoor," Lorenzana told reporters.

"But we are trying to verify that. Up to now, we have yet to confirm. Our intelligence gathering is continuous," he said. *nd.*

845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

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845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

10 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: A8

Tiamzons under tight watch – Lorenzana

BY DEMPSEY REYES

THE government knows the whereabouts of Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, top leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-New People's Army (NPA), and security officials are only waiting for President Rodrigo Duterte to issue the order for their arrest, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Tuesday.

Lorenzana refused to disclose the location of the couple.

"We are monitoring them. We will wait for the order of the

President. If he orders their arrest, then we are going to arrest them," Lorenzana said in a news conference after the joint defense and military New Year's Call at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

The Tiamzons, who are facing criminal charges on court, were released in 2016 to participate in the peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the political arm of the CPP.

The president called off peace talks last year after the CPP ordered communist guerillas to intensify their attacks on government troops. Lorenzana said the peace ne-

gotiations may resume "if the environment is good and there is trust from both sides."

"But as of now, I think you also have been hearing the President. He is not very keen on starting the talks now," he added.

Lorenzana said the military is exerting efforts to encourage communist rebels to return to the fold of the law.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero last week vowed to reduce the number of communist fighters nationwide by half this year.

He estimated that there were 3,700 NPA members, mostly in

eastern Mindanao.

"We intend to reduce that number by half for 2018," the military chief told reporters in an interview.

Guerrero claimed that the military has been successful in containing insurgency in the past two years.

"We were able to significantly reduce their strength, their firearms and the number of affected barangay (villages) by the NPA," he said.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), downplayed the number of communist rebels in his area of responsibility.

"The number of NPA in my area

is somehow small and we believe that we will be able to fight them and of course, we were able to contain them," Galvez said.

Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat, commander of the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), meanwhile said the military in Luzon will continue its "parallel efforts" in fighting communist insurgency.

He confirmed reports that the NPA has been recruiting in Cagayan, Cordillera and Abra.

"We have been doing several deployment [of troops]. We will address this problem within the minimal forces that we have [in Nolcom]," he said.

OFFICE OF

15, 5295

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

10 January 2018



Page: 3

Military eyes to reduce NPA strength by half

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is targeting to reduce by half the armed strength of the communist New People's Army (NPA) throughout the country this year.

Thus, said AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero who declared 2017 as a banner year for the 125,000-strong military against the NPA.

"So far, we've been successful as we're able to significantly reduce their strength and firearms and the affected barangays," said Guerrero after the traditional New Year's Call yesterday in Camp Aguinaldo.

The military chief estimated the current strength of the NPA at 3,700 fighters spread throughout the country.

"We intend to reduce that number by half for 2018," said Guerrero, who will only be at the helm of the AFP until April when the extension of his tour of duty given by President Duterte expires.

In opening the year, Guerrero said he ordered military field commanders to "sustain the momentum against all threat groups."

Guerrero said that details of the AFP targets for 2018 would be discussed during a command conference scheduled yesterday.

Meanwhile, the AFP-Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) is not bothered by the NPA operating within its jurisdiction – stressing that the terrorist Abu Sayyaf and the Bangsamoro Islamic

Freedom Fighters (BIFF) are the priority groups in the area.

"We were able to contain them, we still see the BIFF and the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu (as the biggest threat groups)," said Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of Wesmincom.

Galvez cited the ongoing military operations against the BIFF in Maguindanao wherein at least 10 rebels had already been killed.

"They (BIFF) are trying to wreak havoc in the villages," Galvez said.

Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II yesterday ordered the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to conduct a probe on the missing firearms of the Philippine National Police sold to the New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Mindanao.

Aguirre issued the order after the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte to investigate the reported 1,004 missing firearms at the PNP headquarters which were later found out to have been sold to the members of the NPA in Mindanao.

He stressed that the new probe would be an offshoot of the earlier Ombudsman investigation, which led to the indictment of top police officials in the Sandiganbayan and would focus on private individuals involved.

"We must always remember that as public servants, we are accountable to the people and must discharge our mandate with outmost fidelity and integrity," Aguirre said in a statement.

With PNA

16 January 2018



Page. 12

AFP vows to reduce NPA strength by half

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Rey Leonardo Guerrero yesterday said they intend to reduce the number of New People's Army (NPA) rebels by half in 2018.

Guerrero made the assurance during an interview shortly after the traditional New Year's Call by the Department of National Defense (DND) and AFP held at the Tejeros Hall of the AFP Commissioned Officers' Club at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Guerrero vowed to sustain in 2018 the momentum of all its operations against all threats, especially the NPA that was recently declared by the Duterte administration as a terror group.

"At present, the total strength of the CPP-NPA is 3,700. We intend to reduce that number by half for 2018," Guerrero told reporters.

"As to the number of barangays (to be cleared), let's leave it for later because we will still have the command conference to thresh out the details of our targets," he added.

Guerrero said in 2016 and 2017, the AFP has been successful in the campaign of significantly reducing their strength, including their firearms.

"With regards to manpower, we reduce it by 40 percent. The firearms about that number," he said. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

10 January 2018

Manila
Standard

Page. A1

Joma: I'm Pinoy, not Dutch; says yarn 'fake news'

THE founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, denied Tuesday a claim by Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque that he has already become a Dutch citizen, dismissing it as fake news.

"I have never applied for Dutch citizenship and have never been naturalized as a Dutch citizen. The legitimate mass media or any respectable person can verify this fact from the Dutch authorities in The Hague or the Dutch embassy in Manila," Sison said in a statement.

Sison was reacting to a video posted on social media showing Roque talking to reporters and claiming that he [Sison] had already taken Dutch citizenship.

Sison said the Duterte administration was spreading "fake news" about himself and other leftist leaders such as Teddy Casiño and Renato Reyes to divert public attention from its "monstrous crimes," such as the extrajudicial killings in the war on drugs and the destruction of Marawi City.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, meanwhile, said it was "far-fetched" that the Armed Forces could finish off the communist rebels in Mindanao within the year martial law is in effect.

President Rodrigo Duterte had declared martial law in Mindanao to deal with the occupation of Marawi City by Maute Group terrorists. Congress gave him several extensions to the original

Next page

Joma:...

From A1

60-day period specified by the Constitution, including a one-year extension starting this year.

Duterte has said he would use the year to go after the communist New People's Army as well.

"To finish the communist terrorists in one year is far-fetched. It's a tall order and we may not be able to do it," Lorenzana said. The goal instead was to degrade their ability to conduct large-scale attacks, he added.

He would not speculate if another extension to martial law would be required.

Also on Tuesday, the Justice department said it would reopen an investigation into an anomaly during the previous administration where firearms from the Philippine National Police were sold to the NPA.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct the new probe that had previously been investigated by the Office of the Ombudsman.

Aguirre said the reinvestigation of the reported 1,004 missing high-powered firearms was upon the order of President Duterte.

The earlier Ombudsman investigation led to the in-

dictment of top police officials before the Sandiganbayan. The new investigation will focus on private individuals involved, the Justice secretary said.

Aguirre said they have received information that more private individuals were involved in the anomaly but were not covered by the Ombudsman probe.

"With this, we are confident that those individuals who are responsible for this felonious act will be held accountable," he said, in a statement.

In 2014, it was found that over 1,000 high-powered firearms of PNP worth P52 million had been sold to NPA since 2011 with the unwitting assistance of 19 senior police officials at Camp Crame.

The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group discovered the irregularity after it was found that a cache of AK-47 assault rifles disappeared while papers were being processed by the PNP.

The CIDG had found that a certain Isidro Lozada, owner of a security agency based in Caraga region in Mindanao, bought the firearms.

Lozada bought all the 1,004 AK-47 from gun supply firm Twin Pines using his security agency and also used the names of other security agencies.

Rey E. Requejo

10 January 2018



Pahina. 2

NPA terrorists malabong matuldukan sa 1-year Martial Law extension

Inamin kahapon ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na malabong matuldukan ang mga teroristang Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) sa ilalim ng pinalawig na isang taong martial law sa rehiyon ng Mindanao.

"To finish the communist terrorists in one year is far-fetched. It's a tall order and we may not be able to do it," pahayag ni Lorenzana.

Kabilang ang NPA sa mga target ng pagpapalawig pa ng isang taon ng martial law sa Mindanao Region. Ang malaking bilang ng NPA terrorists ay namumugad sa Davao-Compostela Valley gayundin sa CARAGA.

Nang matanong kung posibleng mapalawig pa ang martial law sa Mindanao matapos ang 2018, sinabi ni Lorenzana na hindi pa ito masasabi sa kasalukuyan lalo pa nga at nagsisimula pa ang taon.

Kaugnay nito, sinabi naman ni AFP Chief of Staff

Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero na posibleng lumalang gulo sa Mindanao Region kung pawawalang bisa ng Mataas na Hukuman ang 1 taong ekstensyon ng martial law.

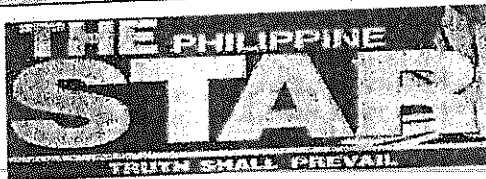
Ito'y sa gitna na rin ng petisyon sa Supreme Court ng Makabayan bloc solons na tanggalin ang ekstensyon dahil labag umano ito sa Kontitusyon.

Determinado naman

ang AFP na malipol ang kalahati o 1,850 mga miyembro at opisyal ng teroristang New People's Army (NPA) mula sa kabuuang 3,700 puwersa nito sa bansa sa taong 2018.

Dekada 70 sa panahon ng martial law sa ilalim ng rehimeng Marcos ay nasa 25,000 ang kabuuang puwersa ng NPA communists terrorist sa bansa. (Joy Cantos)

10 January 2018



Page: 12

Sayyaf bomb maker arrested

ZAMBOANGA CITY – A suspected bomb maker of the Abu Sayyaf was arrested in a raid on a pension house in Barangay Putik in this city on Monday night.

Benjar Idarus Engeng, alias Ben Akmad, a native of Isabela, Basilan, was collared at about 10:30 p.m. by operatives of the Zamboanga City police, regional police, Philip-

pine Coast Guard, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Center for Transnational Crime and 84th Special Action Company.

The raid was based on a search warrant issued by a local court.

An improvised explosive device (IED) was allegedly recovered from the suspect.

"The type of the IED shows the expertise of

this person...he has a lot of experience," Senior Superintendent Vince Neri Ignacio, Zamboanga City police chief, said.

However, Engeng said he only yielded a replica of an IED. He said his companion he identified only as Amilhasan made the IED to take its photo and send it to their contact in Bongao town in

exchange for P30,000.

"There is no explosive chemical inside. I did not make it...I was only tasked to fix the wirings using glue. It will not explode," he said.

Engeng also denied he is an Abu Sayyaf bandit. He said he is a former member of the Moro National Liberation Front based in Basilan.

– Roel Pareño

10 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: K7

Police arrest Abu Sayyaf bomber in Zamboanga

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Philippine authorities arrested a suspected Abu Sayyaf Group bomber inside his rented room at a pension house in the southern port city of Zamboanga where security forces seized an improvised explosive device, officials said on Tuesday.

Benjar Engeng, alias Ben Akmad, according to the officials, checked in at the Serenity

Pension House in Putik village where he assembled the improvised explosive.

Engeng is a native of Basilan but temporarily residing at Maharlika Village in Taguig City in Metro Manila.

Policemen and soldiers also seized ammonium nitrate and other components used in the manufacture of homemade bombs, including an electronic timer and cellular phones.

"Recovered from the room was a completely assembled improvised explosive device," Chief Insp. Helen Galvez, the regional police spokesman, said.

Engeng is being interrogated to determine whether he is a member of the Abu Sayyaf Group or other rebel groups planning an attack on Zamboanga City.

It was unclear how Engeng managed to sneak into and assemble the improvised explosive in the hotel.

Galvez said bomb experts detonated the bomb in the area.

Abu Sayyaf terrorists previously bombed civilian targets in the largely Catholic city of Zamboanga.

10 January 2018



Page: 3

ASG explosive expert captured

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Joint police and military operatives arrested an alleged explosive expert of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in this city, an official announced yesterday. Senior Supt. Vincent Neri Ignacio, Zamboanga City Police Office (ZCPO) director, identified the suspect as Benjar Engeng alias Ben Akmad, a native of Basilan province and temporarily residing at Maharlika Village in Taguig City. Ignacio said Engeng was arrested in a law-enforcement operation by way of serving search warrant at around 10:45 p.m. Monday at a pension house in Barangay Divisoria, this city. Ignacio said the arresting team recovered an improvised bomb concealed in a black bag and placed inside the cabinet of Engeng's room.

PNA

10 January 2018



Pahina. 6

Abu Sayyaf Bomber, nasakote

NORTH COTABATO - Arestado ang itinuturing na bomber ng teroristang Abu Sayyaf Group sa inilatag na operasyon ng mga awtoridad sa tinutuluyan nitong pension house sa Barangay Divisoria sa Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur noong Lunes ng gabi.

Isinailalim sa tactical interrogation ang suspek na si Banjar Idarus Engeng na may aliyas Ben Akmad na tubong Basilan subalit nakatira ito sa Maharlika Village, Taguig City.

Base sa police report, nakatanggap ng impormasyon ang mga operatiba ng Zamboanga City Police na naka-check in sa pension house inn ang suspek na may misyong pambobomba.

Sa bisa ng search warrant, sinalakay ng mga tauhan ng Explosive Ordnance Division (EOD) ng pulisya ang

kuwarto ng Serenity Pension House kung saan nadakip ang suspek.

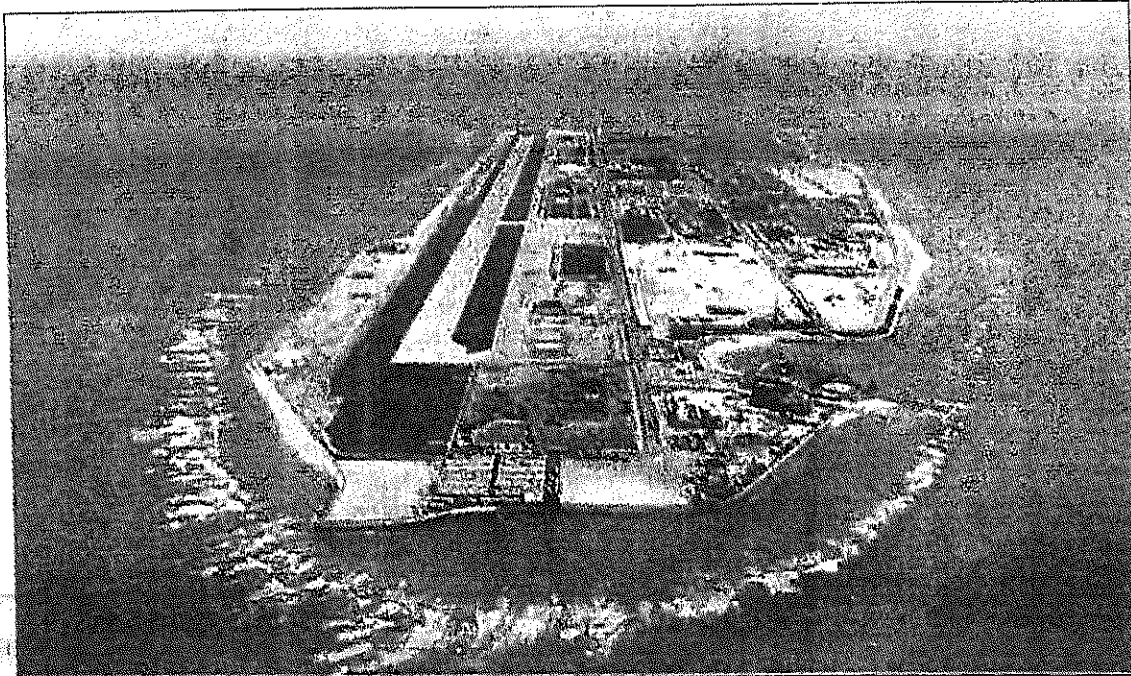
Kaagad namang na-detonnate ng mga EOD ang dalawang bomba na nakalagay sa bag na itinago sa drawer.

Inaalam pa ng mga awtoridad kung kabilang si Akmad sa grupo ng mga terorista na unang naaresto sa Maynila na may plano rin na pambobomba. **Rhoderick Beñez**

10 January 2018



Page: 1



An image aired by China Central Television last Dec. 30 shows the completed construction of facilities on Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef, one of Beijing's artificial islands in the Spratlys.

Lorenzana: Phl to protest China airbase on Kagitingan

The Philippines will file a diplomatic protest against China for the latter's reneging on its promise not to militarize artificial islands in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea, defense chief Delfin Lorenzana said on Monday.

Lorenzana's comment followed a Dec. 30 broadcast of aerial footage by the official *China Central Television (CCTV)* showing Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef transformed into an airbase.

At Malacañang, however,

presidential spokesman Harry Roque said there's no need for such protest as China's promise of "good faith" concerns only land reclamation and not the setting up of structures – including military facilities

Turn to Page 2

OFFICE OF THE

Local: 5285, 5295

Lorenzana From Page 1

— on artificial islands Chinese forces already occupy.

The United States has criticized China's build-up of military facilities on the artificial islands and is concerned they could be used to restrict free movement along the key trade route.

"The Chinese government said some time ago that they were not going to militarize those reclaimed islands," Lorenzana told reporters, adding that the protest would be made through the foreign ministry.

"If it is true and we can prove that they have been putting soldiers and even weapons systems, that will be a violation of what they said," he said.

Asked about the planned protest, China's foreign

ministry spokesman said the construction was on the country's territory and was intended to aid peace in the region, as well as maritime safety and disaster prevention.

"Of course, China also needs to construct necessary defense equipment for its territory," ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing yesterday. "The relevant equipment is not directed at any particular country."

China and the Philippines have long sparred over the South China Sea and West Philippine Sea, but relations have improved considerably under President Duterte, who has been courting Beijing in hopes of winning business and investment.

China has assured the Philippines it will not occupy new features or territory in the South China Sea, under a new "status quo" brokered by Manila as both sides try to strengthen their relations.

Reports about China militarizing reclaimed islands were not new, Roque told a regular news briefing.

"We have always been against the militarization of the area," he added. "It is certainly not OK, because it constitutes a further threat to peace and security in area."

China has denied US charges that it is militarizing the South China Sea, which also is claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Chinese structures on Kagitingan Reef include a hospital with more than 50 doctors, high-speed mobile connections and an airport with a runway of 3,160 meters to serve what Beijing calls a "weather station" equipped with radar, Chinese state media say.

In the last 27 years, China's navy has sent more than 1,000 soldiers to guard the reef, state media have said.

Roque downplayed the reports. He rebutted a reporter who asked if Manila would continue to rely on China's "good faith."

"You know, that's a misplaced question. When we say we are relying on China's good faith, it is because China has committed not to embark on new reclamations," he said.

"Kagitingan is one of the islands that it had already reclaimed," he said, referring to China. "And this is also one of the islands subject of the arbitral tribunal's decision that it is within the Philippine economic zone," he said.

"So when China — when we invoke the

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good faith of China, it is against making further reclamations and not making further works on islands that it had already reclaimed," he pointed out.

"I hope that is very clear. So the good faith we're relying on is the commitment of China not to embark on new reclamations," he added.

Told about Lorenzana's pronouncement, Roque said it is within the purview of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to file the protest "Of course, that's the proper remedy. But that's something that the Department of Foreign Affairs will have to address," he said.

Still no breach

"But all I'm saying is that there is still no breach of the good faith obligation for as long as China has not embarked on new reclamations"

Roque, a self-proclaimed international law expert, admitted it would not be good if the Chinese would continue developing their military capability in the South China Sea through fortification of artificial islands

"But the point is, has there been a breach of Chinese commitment not to reclaim any new islands or shoals in the area?" he said.

"For as long as there is none, then we continue to respect that they are true to their commitment not to do so. But I think, from the very beginning China, we knew, was militarizing the area by reclaiming these areas and by using them as military bases," Roque added.

China's military buildup in disputed waters, he stressed, was "not news" anymore.

"The fact that they are actually using it now as military bases, as far as I'm concerned, is not new. It's not news because we've always been against the militarization of the area. But the good faith commitment is not to reclaim new islands. I hope that's very clear," he said.

He maintained that the ruling of a UN-backed arbitral court in July 2016 invalidating China's massive maritime claim would be enough to compel the Asian power to scrap its plan to deploy nuclear platforms before 2020 on artificial islands.

"Well, the tribunal says that if these infrastructure are within our EEZ, only the coastal state, the Philippines, has the right to make these installations in these artificial islands," he said.

"I think, without doing anything,

the tribunal already articulated the correct legal position of the country and the correct legal principle that it is the Philippines as a coastal state that should exercise sovereign rights within its exclusive economic zone," he said.

The Philippines, he pointed out, may file a separate protest against China's nuclear plans "That would be probably the subject of a separate protest as contrary to the sovereign rights of the Philippines," he said. – **Christina Mendez, Reuters**

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10 January 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: 82

Palace on China: No breach in commitment

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENTIAL spokesman Harry Roque yesterday said he does not see a breach in China's "good faith" and "commitment" in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea despite a recent report that China has fortified its air base in the disputed Kagitingan Reef, also known as Fiery Cross Reef.

Roque said China's commitment is clear – that it will not conduct any new reclamation activity. He said fortifying an existing installation in an occupied or reclaimed area is not a new reclamation.

"Kagitingan is one of the islands that it had already reclaimed. And this is also one of the islands subject of the arbitral tribunal's decision that it is within the Philippine economic zone... So, when we invoke the good faith of China, it is against making further reclamations and not making further

works on islands that it had already reclaimed. So I hope that is very clear. So the good faith we're relying on is the commitment of China not to embark on new reclamations," he said.

Chinese state-run China Central Television earlier released images of Kagitingan Reef, showing a fortified air base. The Hong Kong-based Asia Times also reported that the reef now has a 3,125-meter runway, radars, weapon systems, and other military facilities, with about 200 soldiers stationed there.

On Monday, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said government will file a diplomatic protest against China for allegedly militarizing Kagitingan Reef. He noted China "said some time ago that they are not going to militarize those reclaimed islands."

Roque said that if the reports were true, "(it is) certainly not okay because, of course, it consti-

tutes a further threat to peace and security in the area."

"But the point is, has there been a breach of Chinese commitment not to reclaim any new islands or shoals in the area? For as long as there is none, then we continue to respect that they are true to their commitment not to do so... The good faith commitment is not to reclaim new islands," he said.

He added that from the beginning, China had been known for militarizing its reclaimed areas and "the fact that they are actually using it now as military bases, as far as I'm concerned, is not new, new. It's not news."

Roque also said filing a diplomatic protest is the proper thing to do.

Asked about the protest, China's foreign ministry spokesman said the construction was on the country's territory and was intended to aid peace in the region, as well as maritime safety and disaster pre-

vention.

"Of course, China also needs to construct necessary defense equipment for its territory," the spokesman, Lu Kang, told a regular briefing on Tuesday. "The relevant equipment is not directed at any particular country."

China and the Philippines have long sparred over the South China Sea, but relations have improved considerably under President Duterte who has been courting Beijing in hopes of winning business and investment.

China has assured the Philippines it will not occupy new features or territory in the South China Sea, under a new "status quo" brokered by Manila as both sides try to strengthen their relations.

Roque said the Philippines remains committed to recovering areas that are within its exclusive economic zone that may have now been occupied by China, but declined to elaborate. – *With Reuters*

10 January 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B1

Salaries of soldiers, cops hiked

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte has approved a 100 percent increase in the base pay of all uniformed personnel – soldiers, police and coast guard personnel – which takes effect this month.

The President, last January 1, signed Joint Resolution 1 into law, which was initially passed by the House of Representatives as House Joint Resolution 18 in September and adopted by the Senate as an amendment to Joint Senate Resolution 11 in December.

In approving the salary hike, Duterte said there is a “need to adjust

SALARIES

the compensation package of MUP (military and uniformed personnel) in order to make it more commensurate with their critical role in maintaining national security and peace and order, taking into consideration their exposure to high-risk environments in the performance of their duties.”

Before signing the joint resolution, Duterte had repeatedly promised to double the salaries of members of the Armed Forces and the PNP whenever he visited various military and police camps.

He also promised that the increased base pay would also apply to the members of the Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Bureau of Fire Protection and National Mapping and Resource Information Authority.

The increased base pay will be implemented

See SALARIES > Page B3

in the next two years.

Under the Joint Resolution, a candidate soldier and candidate coast guard will receive a monthly base pay of P18,587; while a soldier with a rank of private, a police with the rank of Police Officer 1, jail officer with the rank of Jail Officer 1, fireman with the rank of Fire Officer 1 and apprentice of the PCG and NAMRIA will receive a monthly base pay of P29,668.

A four-star general of the AFP and the PNP Director General will receive a monthly salary of P149,785.

All MUPs will also receive a fixed P540 hazard pay monthly.

The joint resolution also provides that the Provisional and Officers' Allowances will no longer be part of the MUP's compensation, starting January 1 this year, since these are granted as an interim measure pending the modification of the base pay schedule.

It also suspends the indexation of the pension to base pay pending a review of the MUP pension system. The current pension would still be based on the base pay stated under Presidential Decree 1638 issued in 1979, until the suspension is lifted.

The budget for the adjusted base pay schedule of MUP would be sourced from the Miscellaneous Personnel Benefits Fund and from any available allotment in the respective budgets of concerned agencies.

Duterte also ordered the Department of Budget and Management to determine how the salaries of public school teachers could be increased.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said the President issued the directive during the 21st Cabinet meeting in Malacanang on Monday.

Roque said the increase in the teacher's salary may be the same as the hike in the base pay of soldiers and police.

“He did not say how much but he says that they will have to be tangible results of any implementation of the second tax reform package and he said that that should be the increase in teachers' salary. But judging by what he wanted for the PNP and the AFP, it could be that he is also aiming to double the entry salary for teachers,” Roque said.

10 January 2018

POLICE FILES

Page. 2

**'Joint reso' sa
increase ng
AFP at
uniformed
personnel,
pirmado na ni
Pres. Duterte**

INAPRUBAHAN ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang Joint Resolution Number 1 ng 17th Congress na nagtatakda ng umento sa base pay ng military at uniformed personnel.

Saklaw ng base pay increase ang mga miyembro ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), mga uniformed personnel sa ilalim ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) tulad ng PNP, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) at Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), gayundin ang miyembro ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA).

Epektibo sa Enero 1 ngayong 2018 ang pagpapatupad ng umento sa sahod ng mga nabanggit na uniformed personnel.

Ang mga may ranggong private sa AFP, Jail at Fire Officer I, Police Officer I, Apprentice Seaman o Seaman Third Class ng PCG at NAMRIA ay tatanggap na ng buwanang sahod na P29,668.

10 January 2018

The Manila Times

Page: 48

Año assumes DILG post

FORMER Armed Forces chief Eduardo Año assumed his post as officer-in-charge of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Tuesday as his predecessor Catalino Cuy left the department to take his new post as Dangerous Drugs Board chairman.

Cuy thanked the employees for their help and cooperation. Under his leadership, 448 local government units were given the seal of good governance, a 27-percent increase compared in 2016.

DILG Undersecretary Austere Panadero and Assistant Secretary Jonathan Malaya commended Cuy for his professionalism and "silent leadership."

"You are the epitome of quiet leadership. It is the leadership of low profile but very effective," Malaya said.

Cuy, in his speech, pushed federalism.

"DILG is very much involved in federalism. We believe in the advocacy," he said.

Año admitted that he had "big shoes to fill," and vowed to push programs that aim to curb the use of illegal drugs, curb corruption, crime and extremism.

"I acknowledge that I have 'big shoes to fill' as my predecessor has accomplished much during his tenure, but I am up to the task, knowing that I have the support of the entire DILG workforce in doing my job," Año said.

He also announced that President Rodrigo Duterte has approved the procurement of P1 billion worth of firefighting equipment for the Bureau of Fire and Protection.

ROY NARRA

10 January 2018

Manila
Standard

Page. A 2

Palace eyes drafting 4k Maranaos to AFP, PNP

THE Palace is studying the proposals to draft the more than 4,000 Maranaos affected by the Marawi siege to join the military and the police, a senior Cabinet official said Tuesday.

“[The President] instructed the Presidential Adviser on Mindanao Affairs, Tesda, the Presidential Adviser on OFW to study ways and means to conscript into the AFP and the PNP at least 4,000 Maranaos affected by the fighting in Marawi and other areas where the Maranaos have settled,” Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque told reporters.

He did not provide details as to how the conscription would take place.

He made his statement even as Armed Forces Chief Leonardo Guerrero predicted a significant negative effect on the ongoing military operations against the threat of terrorism in Mindanao if martial law was lifted.

Guerrero said stopping the one-year extension of martial law in Mindanao would affect the military operations against terrorist elements in Mindanao.

“We expect that there will be a significant effects considering the bulk of military operations we have in Mindanao, and we will be relying and depending on some of the martial law powers,” Guerrero said in Camp Aguinaldo.

Meanwhile, the United States Agency for International Development has allocated an additional P330 million (\$6.6 million) to support the vulnerable populations affected by the conflict in Marawi City and surrounding areas.

In a statement, the US Embassy said the fresh assistance would provide opportunities for young women and men to enhance their job skills to find livelihoods and help stimulate the economy.

“This new funding will support some of the most vulnerable populations affected by the conflict,” US Ambassador to Manila Sung Kim said.

The 17th Congress in December extended the declaration of martial law in Mindanao until the end of 2018. **John Paolo Bencito, Francisco Tuyay and Sara Susanne D. Fabunan**

10 January 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B2

No restlessness in the Navy: AFP chief

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero yesterday sought to dismiss reports of restiveness in the Navy due to last month's unceremonious relief of Vice Adm. Ronaldo Joseph Mercado as Navy chief.

Interviewed after a joint DND-AFP New Year's call in Camp Aguinaldo, Guerrero said Navy officials are not reporting any problem in the 30,000-strong Navy.

"Restlessness? I do not see any restlessness in the Navy," said Guerrero. It was Guerrero who implemented Mercado's relief on December 19.

The Navy is now headed in an acting capacity by Rear Adm. Robert Empedrad, AFP deputy chief of staff for reservists and retirees affairs.

Military officials earlier said there are "rumblings" in the Navy over Mercado's unceremonious relief. One of them said Mercado did not deserve such treatment from the leadership of the defense department and the military because he was merely after installing the best equipment for two frigates being built by Hyundai Heavy Industries of Korea

for the Philippine Navy.

It was Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana who recommended to President Duterte Mercado's relief for his insisting the installation of a combat management system produced by a French company.

On Monday, Lorenzana said he has met with former Navy chiefs who have expressed their disappointment over Mercado's relief. He said he requested the meeting to explain why Mercado was sacked. Lorenzana said the former Navy chiefs claimed he violated the "long-honored tradition of retirement, parade, and everything" of a Navy chief.

Lorenzana said there was no "formal turnover" ceremony "because the situation was fluid" at that time. He said the former Navy chiefs "understood" his explanation.

Guerrero said there is no problem with those in active service.

"As far as I am concerned, I've been in contact with our Navy officers, in the active service, and we don't have any problem," Guerrero said.

Mercado is on "special studies" at Guerrero's office. Guerrero said Mercado is regularly reporting to his office.

10 January 2018



Pahina. 2

Walang nag-aalburoto sa Phl Navy

Walang nag-aalburoto sa hanay ng mga opisyal at tauhan ng Philippine Navy kaugnay ng pagkakasibak sa puwesto kay Philippine Navy Flag Officer in Command Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado.

"I do not see that there is restlessness in the Navy. As for Admiral Mercado, he regularly reports in my office," pahayag ni Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero sa gitna ng mga kumakalat na balita na nahahati umano ang marami sa mga opisyal at tauhan ng Philippine Navy sa nasabing isyu na pinangangambahang maging mitsa ng pag-aaklas.

Una nang kinausap ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana ang mga retiradong opisyal ng Navy at ipinaliwanag kung bakit sinibak sa puwesto na hindi man lamang binigyan ng maayos na retirement ceremony si Mercado.

Si Mercado ay sinibak ni Lorenzana nitong Disyembre 2017 dahil umano sa pagsalungat sa pagbili ng mga opisyal ng Defense Acquisition team ng frigates o barkong pandigma ng Philippine Navy. (Joy Cantos)

10 January 2018



Page: 1

Traslacion more orderly, peaceful

By REY GALUPO and EVELYN MACAIRAN

A sea of heaving, towel-waving humanity swarmed the statue of the Black Nazarene in Manila yesterday as the Catholic faithful joined one of the nation's largest religious festivals under tight security.

Despite the frenzied display of religious fervor, the procession was more orderly than in previous years, according to organizers of the event.

Manila Police District (MPD) spokesman Supt. Erwin Margarejo said the procession moved relatively faster than

in the past years and they expected the image to be back in Quiapo Church shortly after midnight.

As of 5:15 p.m. yesterday, the police estimated the crowd who joined the *Traslacion* at 2.5 million.

"With the police leading the way and driving away people who were blocking the road, it was easier for the organizers to maneuver the carriage," Margarejo said.

Quiapo Church parochial

Turn to Page 10

Traslacion From Page 1

vicar Fr. Douglas Badong said he was almost moved to tears by the sight of the praying and orderly start of the *Traslacion*.

Unlike previous years when some devotees were unruly and disrespectful, this year they waited patiently, praying on their knees until the image was properly placed on the *andas* (carriage) before they made a mad dash to get hold of the rope.

In recent years, the start of the annual *Traslacion* has always been attended by mayhem, with impatient devotees crashing through iron fences and forcing an abrupt end to mass or morning prayers.

Yesterday, some were amazed by the discipline and patience of the thousands of devotees as they listened to instructions of the organizers.

They knelt during the praying of the "Our Father" and waved their white handkerchiefs when they were told. Only a few were seen attempting to advance toward the stage, but they were immediately told to wait.

The *andas* left the stage at the Quirino Grandstand at exactly 5 a.m. without any hitches.

Police said some 300,000 devotees initially went with the procession.

A greater number waited along the route and the crowd began to swell by the thousands as the *andas* crawled through its 10-kilometer journey to Quiapo Church.

Security officials said they were also concerned with possible stampedes in a dawn-to-midnight event that some say could draw millions.

Officials estimated the crowd went up to four million by late afternoon.

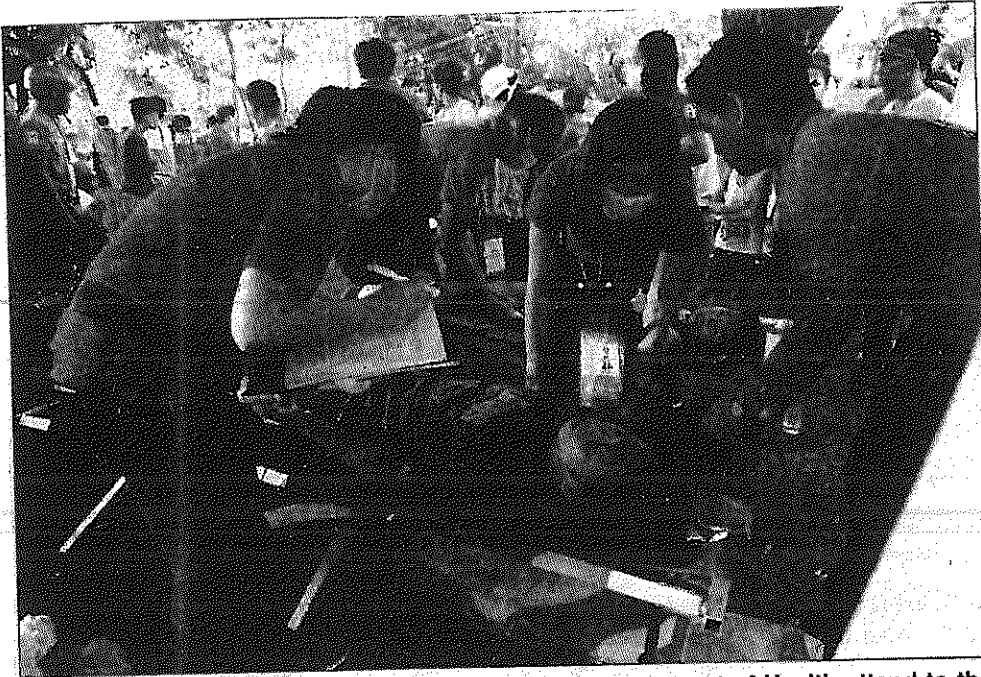
The statue will pass through the streets of old Manila as it is taken to its home in Quiapo Church.

"It was more orderly now, compared to the past procession of the Black Nazarene in previous years. Very few were reported hurt," Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada said.

"I'm happy that none of that incident happened in this year's *Traslacion*. The devotees are more orderly and disciplined this year. It is an indication of their high discipline and the organizers, the police, the city government departments have executed well-planned measures," he said.

Test of faith

Devotees jostled dangerously around the *andas* and threw small towels at volunteers on the carriage to wipe parts of the cross and the statue in the belief that



Red Cross, fire volunteers and doctors from the Department of Health attend to the medical needs of the devotees who joined yesterday's *Traslacion* in a first aid station in Intramuros, Manila.

GEREMY PINTOLO

the Nazarene's mystical powers will cure ailments, foster good health and good fortune.

However, a number of devotees ended up injured. One faithful suffered a spinal cord injury that necessitated his immediate transfer to hospital.

Officials said a total of 951 devotees were treated for bruises, difficulty in breathing, high blood pressure and wounds as they walked barefoot.

Four of them, including the one that suffered a spinal injury, had to be transported to a hospital. Three of the devotees sustained fractures, according to medical volunteers of the Philippine Red Cross.

"It is really tough climbing to get to the Nazarene. I get squished, and people step on my face. But I have a devotion," Honey Pescante, a 24-year-old housewife from Bataan, said.

Ronald Malaguinio, a 38-year-old worker from Tondo, joined the procession to pray for his son recovering from a heart ailment.

"If the doctor says your son has a 50-50 chance of surviving, where will you go?" Malaguinio asked. "If money can't cure diseases, the only other option is prayers. Ours have been heard and we're here to thank the Nazarene."

Another devotee, Jeffrey Nolasco, said he joined the procession for the fifth year to pray that his four children would finish school, his impoverished family could eat three times a day and he could overcome a bad habit.

"I'm a drunkard," said Nolasco, who walked barefoot on the hot pavement

and carried a small statue of the cross-carrying Nazarene.

Despite the risk of getting injured, devotees see the Black Nazarene procession as a test and challenge of faith.

"Filipinos who come to Quiapo... get a sense of being near the Lord, of the Lord touching them and of the Lord accompanying them... through difficult challenges," Quiapo church parochial vicar Father Marvin Cruz said.

A devotee for 30 years, 61-year-old Julio Castillo watched from the sidelines of the procession after both his feet were fractured in a motorcycle accident last month, leaving him in a wheelchair.

"I came here because this is my devotion. I hope my family will have good health and a prosperous life, that we will have no illness and I will heal," he said.

The life-size statue of the Black Nazarene, crowned with thorns and bearing a cross, is believed to have been brought from Mexico to Manila on a galleon in 1606 by Spanish missionaries.

The ship that carried it caught fire, but the charred statue survived. Some believe the statue's endurance, from fires and earthquakes through the centuries and intense bombings during World War II, is a testament to its mystical powers.

The spectacle reflects the unique brand of Catholicism, which includes folk superstitions, in Asia's largest Catholic nation. Dozens of Filipinos have themselves nailed to crosses on Good Friday in another tradition to emulate Christ's suffering that draws huge crowds each year. — Jose Rodel Clapano, Ghio Ong, Sheila Crisostomo, AP, AFP

10 January 2018



Page: 6

IS regrouping

The terrorist Islamic State (IS) group has taken a different tack in reforming its line for likely another shot at establishing a caliphate in the country as it has taken its recruitment efforts outside of the country.

The change in tack should be a credit to the Armed Forces since it has pushed the IS ringleaders out of the country and to Malaysia where they are reportedly in the heat of recruitment.

Malaysian papers report recruitment for terrorist activities go on in Malaysia. Malaysia's police counter terrorism chief Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay said the recruitment of foreign fighters for the IS efforts in southern Philippines would not end soon.

"This issue is not over, I think it will keep on going," Ayob said in an international counter terrorism dialog in Malaysia.

He cited attempts of IS fighters to go to Mindanao while intelligence reports stated recruitment of fighters is going on.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had estimated that some 80 foreign fighters, mostly Malaysians and Indonesians, have fought in the five-month conflict in Marawi city.

Think tank Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) said more than 30 Malaysian militants were believed involved in the Marawi siege based on data accumulated from pro-IS communication channels.

Apart from Malaysia and Indonesia, foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Chechnya and Singapore, were reported to have been fighting for pro-IS groups in Marawi.

Chinese Uighurs and Africans were also reported to have been possibly involved in the five-month war that started on May 23, according to TRAC.

More than 1,100 consisting mostly of IS militants were killed during the Marawi City crisis.

A disturbing finding of the TRAC stated that foreign fighter remnants of the Marawi City siege have also stayed on in different parts of Mindanao.

Many Malaysian fighters including Sabahan Amin Baco, now touted to be one of several candidates vying for IS regional leadership after the death of its emir, Isnilon Hapilon, are believed to have stayed in Mindanao.

After meeting requirements for allegiance, such as establishing a shura council, structure of command, unified leadership and gathering the groups who are likely to join them, IS checks the capability of the leadership of a *wilayat* for the Southeast Asian region that would have Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines in it.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

We have had many cases in which IS central intervened and established the best possible leadership they could find in the area, either via their envoys or experienced jihadists, such as Isnilon Hapilon in East Asia, supported by Malaysian Mahmud Ahmad whose body was found in the aftermath of the Marawi siege and confirmed by former hostages and the military, TRAC said.

TRAC noted there were at least three cases where IS directly changed or demanded some stability, most notably in Nigeria, Yemen and Afghanistan.

IS has lost its strongholds in Iraq and Syria but it is believed the terror group will relocate and reestablish contact with their overseas regions.

TRAC said Amin now has the perfect history and experience to be the new leader.

“Amin Baco has the perfect history and experience to be emir as he was a major contributor to the tri-country (Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines) jihadist network linked to (Indonesian group) Jemaah Islamiyah and Al-Qaeda,” it added.

“He was high-profile and most wanted, well before he helped fund and execute the Marawi siege.”

Even after the end of the Marawi battle on Oct. 23, Malaysians were still trying to join terror groups entering through Sabah.

Last December, several men were taken into custody in Sandakan after allegedly trying to join the IS campaign in southern Philippines.

Local authorities have also picked up Indonesians trying to enter Mindanao after the Marawi battle.

Malaysian authorities were also investigating reports that a group of more than 100 militants, including “Caucasian-looking foreigners” and fighters from Malaysia and Indonesia, had arrived in southern Philippines after having trained in Indonesia.

“Rumors about a huge flow of jihadists trained in Malaysia and Indonesia were going around everyday,” said TRAC.

It added that around last August or September, in skirmishes in south-west of Lanao del Sur province, there were reports about a new group, consisting of Malaysians and Filipinos, who may have a totally new and unknown emir.

TRAC said that IS central holds the main wheel when it comes to appointing its leadership in overseas *wilayats* or regions.

By all indications, the terror threat is far from over as what Rody had foretold of which fortunately the AFP and the administration are fully aware.

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16 January 2018

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: 134

Martial law lapses

SENATORS and representatives who opposed the extension of martial law in Mindanao miserably failed to point out in their argument the inability of our security forces to properly implement it.

The executive department had the gall to ask Congress for a whole-year extension of martial law in the southern island of Mindanao even as their police and military forces are unable to enforce the gun ban or contain the Muslim clan wars.

Policemen are being investigated for participating as shooting elements and/or passive witnesses remiss in their duty in preventing these clan wars called “rido.”

Either way, this proves the futility of martial law in Mindanao, and the extension granted by Congress becomes a big embarrassment for the military and the police.

‘Martial law needs to show its teeth and its fangs for people to fear it and to follow, especially rich and powerful Muslim clans who scoff at martial law because they can hold on to their firearms anyway...’

The latest “rido” occurred in the town of Bacolod-Kalawi in Lanao del Sur last week involving armed elements of warring clans, some of them policemen.

Chief Supt. Graciano Mijares, the chief of police of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), said he is coordinating with the military for a “focused operation” against members of the warring clans involved in the armed clashes.

Meanwhile, Col. Romeo Brawner, Jr., deputy chief of the anti-crime Joint Task Force Ranao, said police and military follow-up operations in Bacolod-Kalawi yielded high-powered firearms and ammunition.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., commander of the Western Mindanao Command, said his soldiers seized nine firearms from the warring Muslims - three M-14 assault rifles, three M-16 assault rifles, two M-653 assault rifles and a .22 caliber rifle, more bullets and magazines.

Galvez, Brawner and Mijares, generals all, should be ashamed of the stars on their shoulders. What they displayed is a passive, defeatist, and reactive martial law implementation in Mindanao.

These officers allowed “rido” to take place by not collecting all the firearms that can be collected from these areas. Now they are gathering evidence and filing cases in court. What do they need martial law for if their tools and tactics are the same as other places in the Philippines where martial law is not a declared emergency dispensation?

Martial law needs to show its teeth and its fangs for people to fear it and to follow, especially rich and powerful Muslim clans who scoff at martial law because they can hold on to their firearms anyway, and in that part of the country, political power goes the way of whoever holds the gun.

If these residents, Muslims or not, can have firearms and are allowed to illegally act as they do which is outside the law, whether martial or civilian, what would stop them from occupying Marawi again or any other southern city?

ONLINE NEWS

10 JANUARY 2018

3 more NPA rebels yield to Army in Sultan Kudarat

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 9):

BAGUMBAYAN, Sultan Kudarat -- Three more communist rebels, whom the New People's Army (NPA) promised to provide with agricultural inputs and free education, decided to surrender to the Army's 33rd Infantry Battalion in a remote village here.

Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, 33rd Infantry Battalion (IB) commander, received the three surrenderees while his unit, in partnership with a Church-run relief organization, distributed food and non-food supplies to Manobo-Dulangan tribesmen displaced by hostilities last December.

On Monday, the three NPA members, identified as Ryan Mama, 24, and his brother Daniel, 25, together with cousin Ruben Pagiloy, 21, descended from their mountain lair here to formally surrender to the government.

Ryan said that **"Ka Yoyo," the Visayan NPA commander**, had not fulfilled his promise.

"He swore to provide my family with fertilizer and seedlings which did not come," Ryan said adding that the NPA leader also promised him and his brother they would be sent to school.

"We never saw school in the mountains," said Ryan, a young father of three children, in vernacular.

Pagiloy told Cabunoc that he was really interested to finish education.

"I never set foot in a government-run school. I grabbed the opportunity of widening my understanding about the world, especially the problems confronted by the tribe today," said Pagiloy in Ilonggo.

Cabunoc said all three surrenderees would be absorbed to the Alternative Learning System offered by the Department of Education.

He said that the natives were obviously duped by communist rebel leaders operating in nearby Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, into joining the useless fight against the government.

He said the land conflict between the Dulangan Manobo tribe claimants and Consunji logging firm in the area was used by the NPAs to convince indigenous peoples into joining them.

"Visayan communist recruiters penetrated the Lumad communities using left leaning organizations. They indoctrinated the people to hate the government, prompting many of them to join the armed group," said Cabunoc.

"About 90 percent of the members of the NPA Guerilla Front 73 here in Sultan Kudarat are indigenous people. This is reflected by the fact that 100 percent of last year's 94 surrenderees belong to the Dulangan Manobo and T'boli tribe."

He said the 33rd IB had combined combat operations and community support operations in its counterinsurgency campaign in its area of jurisdiction.

"The decisive terrain in an insurgency is human terrain. We need to dominate in the battle of opinion, in touching the hearts of the populace, and in getting the support of the people for the government," Cabunoc said.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

40

Army braces for BIFF retaliatory attacks in Maguindanao

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 9):



CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao -- The military is bracing for possible retaliatory attacks by IS-inspired armed groups in Maguindanao following the death of members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

Major General Arnel dela Vega, Army's 6th Infantry Division (6ID) chief and head of Joint Task Force Central, said while the military had neutralized some lawless elements in its focused and surgical operation against the BIFF, the AFP would continue its operations against them.

"Our operation will continue without let-up because we do not want a repeat of an incident where the terrorists harass civilians," Dela Vega told reporters.

Citing intelligence reports, he said that two of the three factions of the BIFF had reunified in an effort to regain control of Mt. Firis, a sacred ground for Teduray tribesmen.

Dela Vega said the military under his command was always ready to use its might against the BIFF.

Army intelligence reports said the BIFF groups of Commanders Bungos and Karialan had reunited in the mountains of Maguindanao.

The Army also said that 10 BIFF were killed since the lawless group's harassment started on Christmas Day.

Lt. Colonel Gerry Besana, chief of 6ID civil military operations, said four of the slain members of IS inspired BIFF were recovered by government forces while six others were taken by their retreating comrades.

The BIFF suffered losses in a close quarter firefight in the midnight of Jan. 6 after they failed to overrun an Army station at Sitio Firis, Barangay Maitumaig, Datu Unsay, Maguindanao.

Besana identified the BIFF whose remains were turned over to local officials for immediate burial as Buna Awba, Mando Guiamal, Mokamad Sagkupan and Roy Alik.

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

Also killed but were hauled by retreating lawless elements under Commander Bungos were a certain Sallahudin alias Salah, a bomb expert trained under Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, Abu Omar, Magui Datem, Mhads Mangibra, Aladin Rajah Pandalat and Fahad Tungao.

Besana said two other BIFF members, named Daryl Mando and his brother Theng Mando, were wounded in the clashes covered by air strikes.

Four high-powered firearms were also recovered.

Dela Vega also reiterated his directive to all government forces in Maguindanao to maintain road security day in and day out along Maguindanao highways to thwart any diversionary operations by the BIFF.

Two militiamen were hurt when the BIFF set off a roadside bomb on national highway, Barangay Labo-Labo, Datu Hofer, Maguindanao on Monday, which the Army believed was an effort by the terrorists to ease military operations in the municipal tri-boundaries of Datu Hofer, Datu Unsay and Datu Saudi.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

ASG explosive expert captured (Photo)

From the Philippine News Agency (Jan 9):



Joint police and military operatives arrested an alleged explosive expert of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in this city, an official announced Tuesday.

Senior Supt. Vincent Neri Ignacio, Zamboanga City Police Office (ZCPO) director, identified the suspect as Benjar Engeng alias Ben Akmad, a native of Basilan province and temporarily residing at Maharlika Village in Taguig City.

Ignacio said Engeng was arrested in a law enforcement operation by way of serving search warrant at around 10:45 p.m. Monday at a pension house in Barangay Divisoria, this city.

Ignacio said the arresting team recovered an improvised bomb concealed in a black bag and placed inside the cabinet of Engeng's room.

He said the Explosive Ordnance Demolition (EOD) Rendered Safe Procedure to disrupt the recovered improvised bomb.

"The type of IED (Improvised Explosive Device) shows the expertise of this person, meaning he has gone a lot of experience," he said.

He said Engeng, who is an alleged bomb expert and trainer, is a follower of Imam Intong Mandan, one of the ASG leaders.

But Engeng denied he was an ASG member and a bomb expert of the bandit group.

Engeng claimed he just assisted his cousin, who assembled the improvised bomb that was recovered inside the cabinet.

He identified his cousin only as a certain Amilhassan.

"Actually, it will not explode," Engeng said citing it was just a bomb replica. He added that Amilhassan was contracted by a resident of Bongao, Tawi-Tawi to assemble the bomb replica.

He said they would be paid Php30,000 once they send the picture of the bomb replica to the person who contracted Amilhassan.

Amilhassan was not around when the lawmen swooped down the pension and arrested Engeng. Engeng suspected he was framed up by his cousin.

Ignacio said that charges for illegal possession of explosive would be filed against Engeng, who was detained at the ZCPO headquarters.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph>

SIGNIFICANT GAINS | SND Traditional New Year's Call

by Alvin Santiago

AFPCOC, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City (DWDD) –Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenza led the Traditional New Year's Call at the AFP Commissioned Officers Club at Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

The Secretary was joined by other officials of the Defense Department; Officers, Enlisted Personnel and Civilian Employees of the Armed Forces of the Philippines led by AFP Chief of Staff Gen Rey Leonardo B Guerrero; Defense-Armed Forces Attaches; Foreign Armed Forces Attaches; Presidents of Financial Institutions; and various stakeholders.

In his speech, Sec Lorenzana reiterated that 2017 was a challenging year, but insisted that they would remain focus on the lessons learned and the good things that last year provided.

The Defence Department mad significant gains in its reform and transformation agenda, like:

1. The completion of the AFP Modernization Projects for 2017, thus making the AFP more stronger and credible;
2. Improvement of our Civil Defense Preparedness through the approval of various Guidelines in the allocation of National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Funds to expedite the processing and release of funds to member agencies and recipient communities;
3. The work towards the attainment of a self-reliant posture with the development of the Government Arsenal Defense Industrial Estate into a Strategic Resource and Center for the Production of High-Quality Defense Articles to support the requirement of our Law Enforcement Agencies;
4. Ensured the Welfare and Well-being of our Veterans and their families with the distribution of P 9.06-B worth of Pension benefitting an average of 208,159 Pension Accounts, and provision of other benefits like Educational Assistance and Hospitalization; and,
5. The strengthening of our Defense Partnership with other countries through International Defense and Security Engagements, like the hosting of various activities in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN); among others.

But apart from these gains, they were also tested with series of challenges that served as reminders that we should work for solutions as one nation. **AES/MCAG**

SAVORING PEACE | NPA Terrorist Group Member Surrender in Kalinga

By [Alvin Santiago](#) | [alvin.santiago@army.gov.ph](#) | [alvin.santiago@army.gov.ph](#)

CAMP SERVILLANO AQUINO, Tarlac City (DWDD) – A member of the New People's Army (NPA) in the province of Kalinga voluntarily surrendered to the 50th Infantry Battalion (50IB) of the 5th Infantry Division, Philippine Army at 10:20 in the morning of January 8, 2018.

The former NPA member, Noel Omang Y Mamawag alias Incha, 22 years old, was accompanied by his parents and Barangay Chairman Andrew B Cos-ogon of Bagumbayan, Tabuk City, Kalinga when he surrendered to the NOLCOM troopers.

Alias Incha was designated as member of Squad Tres, MDC, KLG "BAGGAS", Ilocos-Cordillera Regional Committee (ICRC) of the New People's Army (NPA) operating in Kalinga and adjacent provinces. He is also listed as # 35 in the Periodic Status Report (PSR) for the 3rd Quarter of 2017.

With these positive developments, NOLCOM Commander, Lt Gen Emmanuel B Salamat AFP extended his gratitude to the parents, Philippine National Police and the Local Government Unit's who supported and facilitated the surrender of the former NPA member. The collaborative efforts made by all stakeholders would finally lead the nation to achieve a lasting peace and attain a sustainable development. **PIO NOLCOM / MCAG**

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

COMMUNITY RELATIONS | 546th ECB conducts 5-Day Medical Mission (Day 5)

Alvin Santiago

BRGY ANONANG, Bogo City, Cebu (DWDD) – *“Everything must come to an end, but it’s not the end of the long journey, instead it is the beginning to a stronger friendship between different organizations.”*

With this, The Last day of the Hope For Kidz International Foundations Medical Mission was held at Barangay Anonang Sur, Bogo City, Cebu together with Northern Cebu Pastor’s Fellowship, Association for Righteous Movement, Bless Our Cops and Soldiers Movement and Grace Driven Church with this event the Engineer Support Battalion once again provided transportation and security assistance to the Medical Mission. **546ECB/MCAG**

DAY 5



TOWARDS PEACEFUL LIVES | 7 Former Rebels Receive Financial Assistance

Alvin Sanjago

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan (DWDD) – The City Government of Puerto Princesa through the City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Western Command (WESCOM) successfully conducted the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) Awarding to seven (7) former rebels composed of six (6) males and one (1) female held on January 05, 2018 at Puerto Princesa City Hall.



The seven former rebels from the terrorist New People's Army (NPA) received financial assistance from CLIP for their livelihood assistance, services and support. Each CLIP beneficiary availed a total amount of Sixty five thousand pesos (P 65,000.00), alienated as Php50,000 for livelihood assistance and Php15,000 as immediate assistance.

At the beginning of year 2018, the immediate rise of NPA surrenders in Palawan shows the local government's earnestness and partnership with WESCOM in attaining peace and order through the implementation of CLIP for reconciliation and reintegration into the society. This is also a manifestation of their desire and hope for new beginnings and a better future. **WESCOM/MCAG**

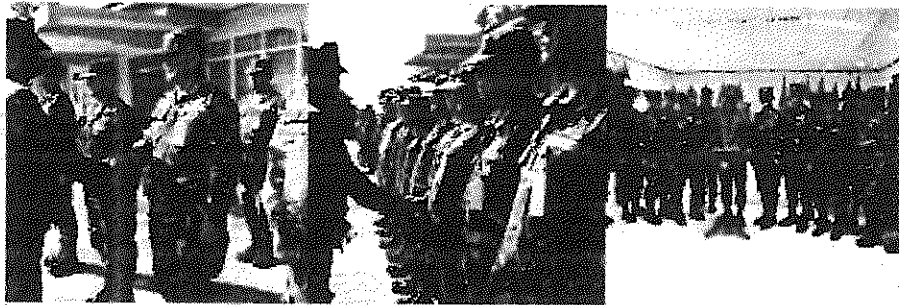
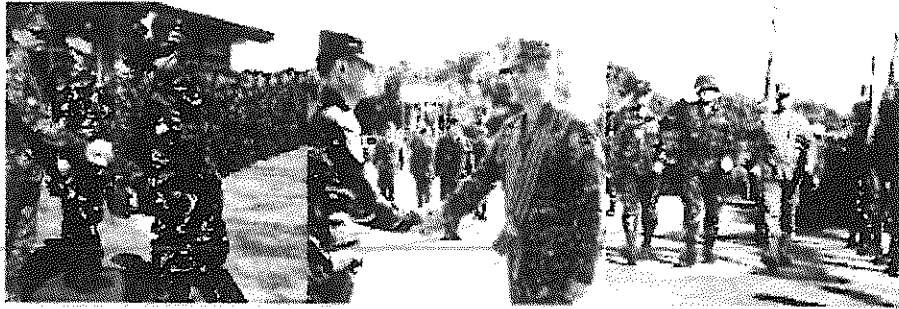
CHANGE OF COMMAND | Com, NOLCOM at 5th Infantry Division Ceremony

Alvin Santiago

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Upi, Gamu, Isabela (DWDD) — Lt Gen Emmanuel B-Salamat, AFP, Commander, AFP Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) during the Change of Command Ceremony at the 5th Infantry Star Division, Philippine Army at Camp Melchor F Dela Cruz, Upi, Gamu Isabela. **PIO NOLCOM/MCAG**



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



49

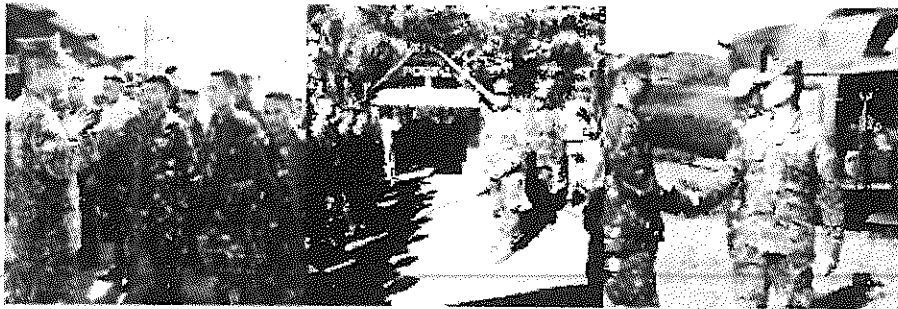
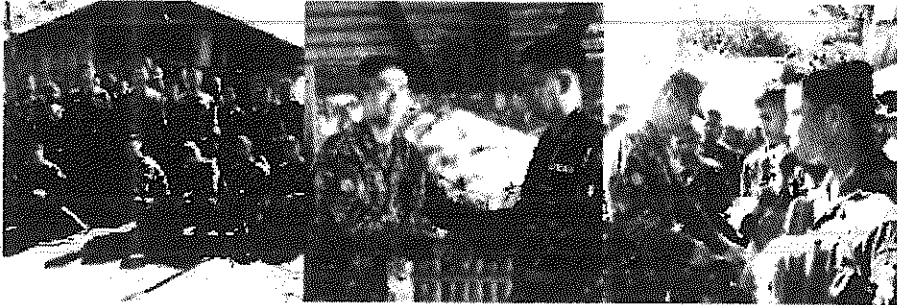
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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

TROOP VISIT | Com, NOLCOM at 77IB

Alvin Santiago

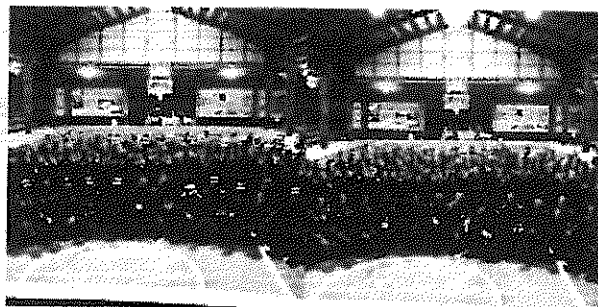
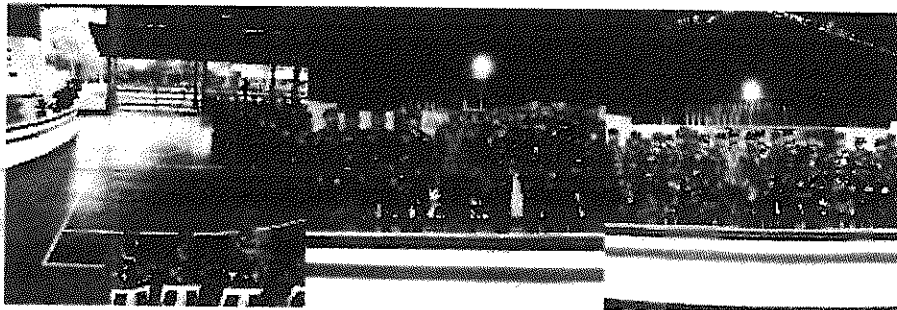
CAMP SERVILLANO AQUINO, Tarlac (DWDD) – Lt Gen Emmanuel B Salamat, AFP, Commander, AFP Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) during his visit at CAFGU Active Auxiliary Detachment under the 77th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Star Division, Philippine Army, **PIO NOLCOM/MCAG**



TALK TO MEN | Com, NOLCOM at 5th Infantry Division

[Alvin Santiago](#) | [11/20/2023](#) | [10:00 AM](#) | [10:00 AM](#)

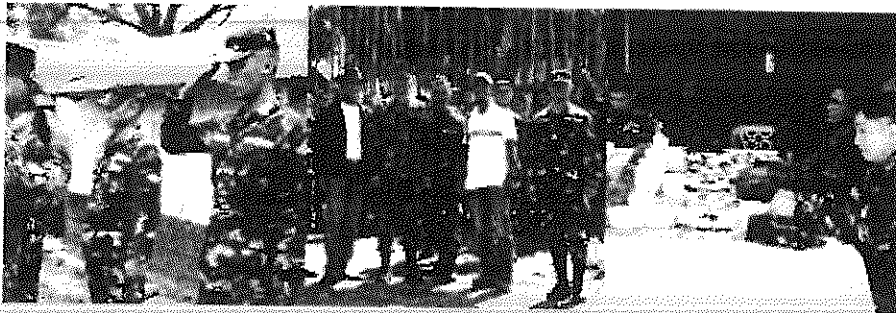
CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Upi, Gamu, Isabela (DWDD) – Lt Gen Emmanuel B Salamat, AFP, Commander, AFP Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) during his Talk to the Men with Star Troopers Division, 5th Infantry Star Division, Philippine Army at Camp Melchor F Dela Cruz, Upi, Gamu Isabela. PIO NOLCOM/MCAG



TROOP VISIT | Com, NOLCOM at 86IB

Alvin Santiago

CAMP SERVILLANO AQUINO, Tarlac (DWDD) – Li Gen Emmanuel B Salamat, AFP, Commander, AFP Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) during his visit at 86th Infantry "Highlander" Battalion, 5ID, Philippine Army. PIO NOLCOM/MCAG



CRUMBLING MOVEMENT | NPA's Organizer Leads Members to Surrender

Alvin Santiago

MAWAB, Compostela Valley (DWDD) – A total of 6 members of Underground Mass Organization (UGMO) of Guerilla Front 2, SMRC led by alias JIAN (not her true name), Komiteng Tig-Organisa (KTO) chairperson voluntarily surrendered to Headquarters 71st Infantry Battalion, Purok 8, Brgy Nueva Visayas, Mawab, Compostela Valley Province on January 6, 2018 at 10:00 in the morning.



KTO is the 2nd level of NPA's organizing in the barangay with series of indoctrination and lectures to the members in order to prepare them for another stage until their shadow government will be realized and rule their own revolutionary administration in their guerilla bases.

According to alias JIAN, they [mass base] are pin-pointed only by members of the NPA and were given different tasks such as to expand their organized mass base, monitor presence of soldiers, and collect extortion money as revolutionary taxes.

"Nag surrender mi kay wala man mi kasabot sa ilang mga balaod. Dili man gyud mi gusto sa ilang mga ginapabuhay sa amoa batok sa gobyerno. Wala lang mi mabuhay kay ginahadlok man mi sa mga NPA mao nang midawat mi sa posisyon nga wala mi kabalo nga mabutang diay mi sa alaot", said aka JIAN, KTO Chairperson of Brgy Malamodao, Maco, Compostela Valley Province.



In the absence of mass supporters, the armed group will lose their access to the brgy and cut access toward financial and logistical resources.

"This Underground Mass Organizations or UGMOs are the breathing space of the NPA terrorists. Cutting off the mass support will deter them from entering their former comfort zone [brgy] and will definitely degrade the NPAs expansion program and decrease numbers of armed group recruits", said Lieutenant Colonel Esteveyn E Ducusin, the Commanding Officer of Army's 71st Infantry (Kaibigan) Battalion.

"Massive surrender of mass supporters from guerilla bases connotes that the NPA ideology and senseless struggle is failing and that the community already realized its baseless fight against the government." Ducusin added.

As the new year begins, the 71IB thanked the people of Compostela Valley Province for the trust and confidence given to your Kaibigan troopers. Rest assured that we'll remain steadfast and committed in performing our mandated task to deliver genuine peace in our area of operation. **ARMY.MIL.PH/MCAG**

CHANGE OF COMMAND | New Leadership at SOCOM and FSRR 3

By Alvin Santiago

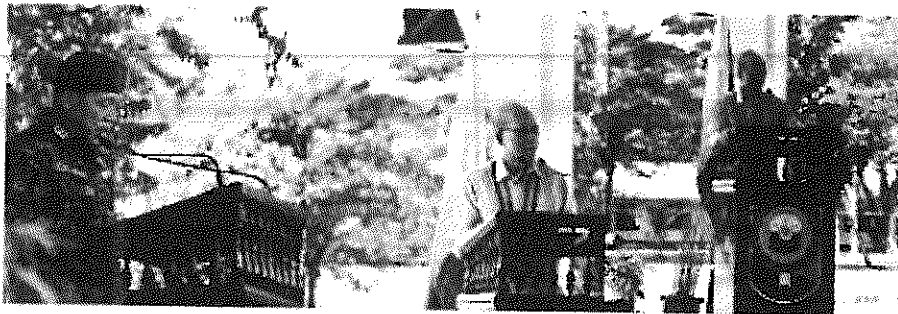
FORT RAMON MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija (DWDD) – A Joint Change of Command Ceremony was held for the Special Operations Command and First Scout Ranger Regiment at the Parade Grounds of the Special Operations Command, Fort Ramon Magsaysay, Palayan City, Nueva Ecija.

Lt Gen Rolando Joselito D Bautista, Commanding General, Philippine Army, was the Presiding Officer for the ceremony while Defense Secretary Delfin N Lorenzana, served as the Guest of Honor and Speaker.

Honors were feted outgoing Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Commander Major General Danilo G Pamonag, AFP and First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSRR) Regiment Commander Brigadier General Rene Glen Paje, AFP.

The programme involved the Presentation of Award and Command Plaque to the outgoing commanders, followed by the Reading of Relief and Relinquishment of Command and the Lowering of their Personal Flag.

This was followed by the Assumption of Command and Receiving of the Command Symbol by the incoming SOCOM Commander MGen Ronnie Evangelista and Incoming FSRR Commander Col William N Gonzales. **AES / Photos and Report by LQG**



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