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NEWS CLIPPINGS

24 July 2018

Tuesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty



Alvarez ousted; GMA is Speaker

By PAOLO ROMERO and DELON PORCALLA

As the nation waited for President Duterte to deliver his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) yesterday, a power play broke out at the House of Representatives and ended with Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez losing his seat to Pampanga congresswoman and former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

For nearly an hour, the two House members were claiming the speakership until President Duterte broke the impasse minutes before he delivered his third SONA.

This meant Alvarez was allowed to perform his last official function as Speaker when the President delivered his SONA an hour behind schedule.

Convening after the SONA last night, however, 184 House members officially voted Arroyo to the position. Twelve abstained.

The vote was a reaffirmation of a manifesto of support for Arroyo signed by more than 180 of the 292-member Congress.

House Deputy Speaker Rolando Andaya Jr., who presided over the session, said they decided to continue the proceedings despite the absence of the mace since it is the lawmakers who comprise the chamber and not any instrument or symbol.

The President arrived at the Batasang Pambansa complex on a helicopter a few minutes before his scheduled 4 p.m. SONA.

Sources said President Duterte met separately with Alvarez and Arroyo at the presidential legislative liaison office for about 30 minutes before he delivered his SONA.

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Alvarez

From Page 1

The President later held a shorter conference with Arroyo.

The President had reportedly told her to wait at least one more day, as he would ask Alvarez to immediately step down.

"Tomorrow (Tuesday), GMA (Arroyo) will be the Speaker," said one House member who voted for Alvarez's ouster. The impasse delayed the SONA for over an hour.

Alvarez and Senate President Vicente Sotto III welcomed Duterte upon his arrival at the Datasan complex.

The two congressional leaders led Duterte to the nearby presidential legislative liaison office. With Alvarez was Majority Leader Rodolfo Farinas.

Presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo confirmed Duterte's meetings with Alvarez and Arroyo. He said he did not know what was taken up. Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go told reporters Duterte also separately met with Alvarez in private.

Before the SONA, the former president took her oath of office as Alvarez's successor in an informal session.

The former president's supporters include former first lady and Ilocos Norte Rep. Imelda Romualdez Marcos.

Sources told The STAR that Marcos' eldest daughter Gov. Imee Marcos and the congresswoman's nephew former Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez attended meetings of the Arroyo camp.

The Marcoses are reportedly

demanding the replacement of Majority Leader Rodolfo Farinas, who had initiated a House investigation of Gov. Marcos' alleged misuse of tobacco funds.

The committee on good government and public accountability chaired by Surigao del Sur Rep. Johnny Pimentel has recommended the filing of criminal and administrative charges against the governor and other provincial officials. Gov. Marcos has consistently denied wrongdoing.

At least two members of the 292-member lower chamber signed a manifesto showing their shift of loyalty to the former president whom Alvarez removed as deputy speaker in mid-2017 for voting against the restoration of the death penalty.

A leadership change only needs a vote of a majority among the House members. There were 271 lawmakers who attended yesterday's SONA.

With the leadership squabble, President Duterte had to put off signing the Bangsamoro Organic Law and delay his delivery of his SONA.

Reliable sources revealed the attempt to unseat the Davao del Norte-based Alvarez started last Sunday upon the insigation of presidential daughter Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte.

Stalwarts of the PDP-Laban, Villar's Nacionalista Party, billionaire Daunting Couyangco's Nationalist People's Coalition and the multi-party National Unity Party responded to Sara's call.

Breakfast with GMA

Insiders likewise told The STAR that all the "party leaders" under the administration coalition had a breakfast at the office of Arroyo, except those from the Liberal Party.

Alvarez, now on his third year as Speaker, opened the resumption of the session in the morning and even delivered a lengthy speech about his accomplishments, although there had notably been small caucuses before the session.

But all these changed dramatically after House Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia — an ally of the Speaker — banged the gavel around lunchtime and called for "adjournment" despite calls and a formal motion by another Deputy Speaker Rolando Andaya Jr. to the contrary.

"I object," the Camarines Sur congressman, who had served as budget secretary of Arroyo, shouted repeatedly.

Before the SONA, Andaya could be seen reading a "signed manifesto" of support for Arroyo.

Her allies at the session hall first nominated Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio Florendo Jr. — a political foe of Alvarez — as speaker but the former nominated Arroyo instead.

House reporters watched events unfold from the Batasan-wide security-installed CCTV without any audio, together with a large group of lawmakers, and tried hard to listen to what Andaya was announcing.

Also seen in the video in the House media center were Rep. Marcos, former senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and socialite philanthropist Pangasinan Rep. Rosemarie Arenas.

The gathering was technically unofficial, however, as the sessions had already been adjourned.

It was also reported that the House Mace — a symbol of authority — had gone missing.

Almost half an hour later, Arroyo — in red dress — was seen taking her oath before

Rep. Dennis Laogan of party-list Ang Kabuhayan, the chamber's youngest member. She could be seen shouting or calling her supporters to join her on the podium.

An Arroyo speakership, good only for less than a year, will be marked with historical firsts — first for a woman and for an ex-president.

House Deputy Speaker Romero Quimbo — the highest LP official in the chamber — said his party decided not to join the oust-Alvarez move. Quimbo was administrator of Pag-IBIG fund during the Arroyo administration.

He said those who didn't sign the oust-Alvarez manifesto were Reps. Edcel Lag-

man (Albay), Gabriel Borciado (Camarines Sur), Tom Villarin (Akbayan), Eric Bana (Quezon City), Teddy Laguilal (Ilogaon), Kaka Bag-ac (Magat Islands), Gary Alejano (Magdalo), Jocelyn Limkai-chong (Negros Oriental) and Francis Gerald Abaya (Cavite).

Apprehensions

Earlier yesterday, Sotto said the chamber is ready to work with Arroyo if she is elected speaker. He stressed the need for harmonious relations between the Senate and the House for the speedy passage of reform legislation.

Sen. Grace Poe aired her apprehensions over an Arroyo speakership, citing various anomalies and controversies that took place during her administration.

"I don't think I have to repeat myself and remind the people about the corruption and all of the other anomalies that happened during her term in office," Poe said in an interview over ABS-CBN

News Channel before the start of SONA.

"For me, is there no one else who can probably take over the speakership?" she added.

Poe said she expects the administration and the House to push for Charter change with Arroyo at the helm of the House.

If the effort succeeds, Poe said Arroyo would be "either next in line to be the president of the country or at par with the president."

"Is this the change that we wanted? Somebody led by the former president, with her style of governance during her time? I'd rather have somebody totally different. Not from the choices that they are presenting right now," Poe said.

Poe reiterated that Charter change is not among the priorities of the public right now, as they have so many other problems to deal with.

"There are so many problems that could be addressed without charter change," she said.

— With Marvin Sy, Jess Diar-

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PROTECTED COPY

DUTERTE TO PURSUE CHILLING DRUG WAR

STORY BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO

In his State of the Nation Address, the President tells human rights defenders he won't be dissuaded from pressing his antinarcotics drive. He also warns criminals, profiteers, miners and cartels that justice will catch up with them.

FROM A1

By Christine O. Avendaño
@10avendanoINC

SONA 2018

President Duterte vowed during his State of the Nation Address (Sona) to a joint session of Congress and the Filipino people on Monday to pursue his war on drugs, saying it would be as "relentless and chilling" as before.

Mr. Duterte also warned drug lords and other criminals, profiteers, miners, cartels and even friends who would be involved in corruption that justice would catch up with them.

As promised by his officials, Mr. Duterte delivered a short speech, sticking to his prepared text.

He spoke for 46 minutes and his speech was devoid of expletives and profanities that tarnished his first two addresses to Congress.

But Mr. Duterte did not articulate the "people's desire for genuine change" as the "father of the nation," as presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said on Saturday he would.

Signature program

Mr. Duterte's speech centered on his signature program—the brutal war on drugs—as well as his fight against corruption and poverty, and issues that marked his second year in office—labor contractualization, inflation, the degradation of Boracay Island, and the dispute with China in the South China Sea.

Mr. Duterte also used the occasion to thank former Chief Justice Renato Corona and for

merit Senate President Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who were in the audience, and members of the consultative committee that wrote a draft Constitution for his planned shift to federalism.

He expressed confidence that the people would "stand behind us as we introduce this new fundamental law," noting that four administrations before his tried but failed to amend the 1987 Constitution.

In his speech, Mr. Duterte first mentioned his plan to press his war on drugs, saying seized drugs were now worth billions of pesos.

"I can only shudder at the harm that those drugs could have caused had they reached the streets of every province, city, municipality, barangay and community throughout the country," he said.

"This is why the [campaign against] illegal drugs will not be sidelined. Instead, it will be as relentless and chilling, if you will, as on the day it began," he said.

Thousands killed

Since Mr. Duterte came to power, police have killed more than 4,500 people they say were suspected drug pushers who resisted arrest.

Police say several thousand other deaths are believed to be drug-related, and in the hands of

He valued friendship, he said, but warned that friendship had limits.

He appealed to his friends whom he had appointed to public office to help me in my cause so that our friendship will endure."

TRAIN can't be stopped
Noting rising inflation, the President said the government "cannot and should not" stop the implementation of the Tar Rate 10% for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) "because this was needed for sustainable growth."

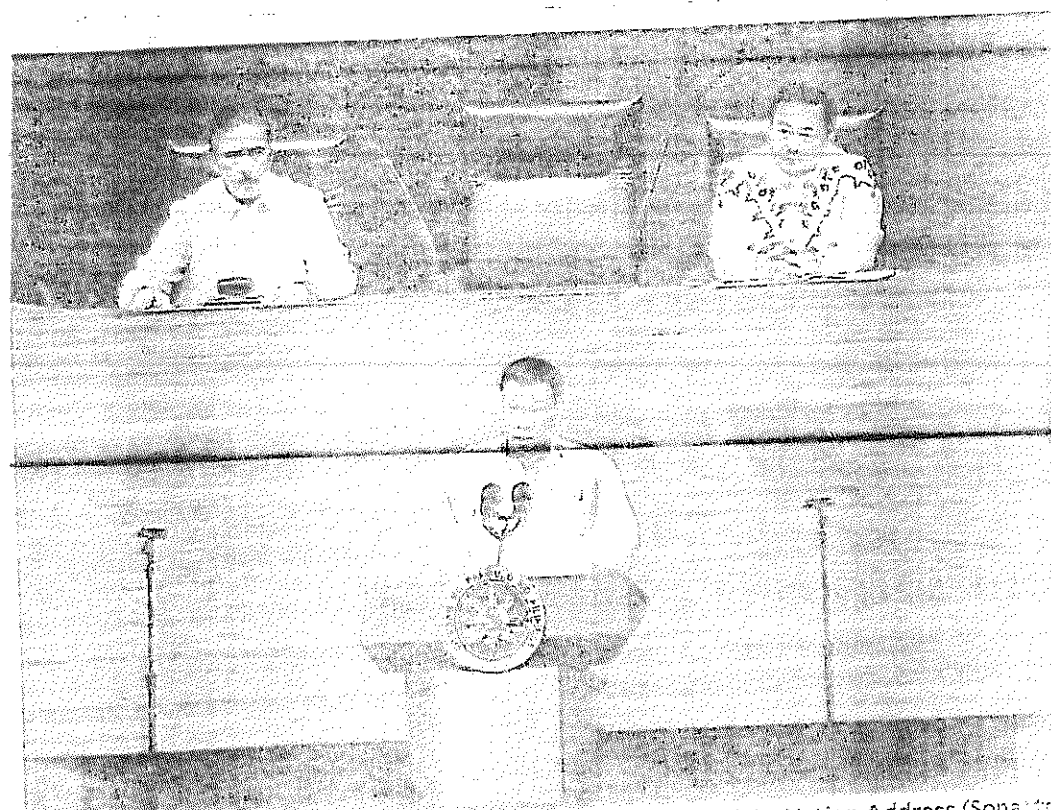
He said the government had acted to help the poor and the elderly ride out inflation by distributing unconditional cash transfers, which would help 10 million people by the end of the year.

Otherwise, he said, the government will shell out P49 billion worth of subsidies to the poor and vulnerable.

He also warned rice boarders, carers and their protectors to "stop messing the people" and said he hoped he would not have to use power "against you."

"Consider yourselves warned: Mandate you want now or the full force of the State shall be brought to bear upon you," Mr. Duterte said, directing intelligence agencies to identify the "perpetrators of this economic sabotage" and for law enforcers to go after them.

He said protecting the environment was a higher priority of his administration than using resources, and warned the mining industry "against destroying the environment or compromising our resources" and directed them to repair what they had mismanaged. —WITH A REPORT FROM REUTERS INC.



SONA DAY President Duterte delivers his much-awaited State of the Nation Address (Sona) to a joint session of Congress opened on Monday afternoon by Senate President Vicente Sotto III and then Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez. —JOAN BONDOC

vigilantes or rival gang members.

Human rights groups alarmed by the bloodshed say many of the killings were summary executions by police who were systematically exterminating drug users in the poorest communities.

The Philippine National Police vigorously rebuts those allegations.

Mr. Duterte lashed out at drug dealers, who he said were well aware of the harm they were doing, including slowly killing addicts.

But he also slammed advocates of human rights for criticizing "law enforcers and this

administration to no end."

He said he had yet to hear them and Church groups protest drug lordism, drug dealing and drug pushing as forceful and vicious as the ones directed against the alleged errant law enforcers in the fight against the social surge.

"You got it wrong" "If you think that I can be dissuaded from continuing this fight because of [your] demonstrations, your protests, which I find, by the way, misdirected, then you got it all wrong," he said.

To human rights groups, he

said: "Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives."

"Human rights to me means giving Filipinos, especially those at the society's fringes, a decent and dignified future through the social and physical infrastructures necessary to better their lives," he said.

Mr. Duterte also warned corrupt officials, saying "one day, justice will catch up with those who steal government funds."

He said he had lost friends and political supporters whom he had appointed to public office because of corruption.

INQUIRER

Arbitral court ruling 'empty victory for PH'

By Jeannette I. Andrada and Leila B. Salaverria @Team_Inquirer

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana on Monday described as an "empty victory" the arbitral tribunal ruling in 2016 favoring the Philippines' claims in the South China Sea.

Lorenzana also denied that the country had lost control over any of its territories in the West Philippine Sea to China.

In a message to reporters—in response to a Scripps Weather Station's survey, which showed that 80 percent of Filipinos wanted the country to regain control of islands occupied by China in the West Philippine Sea—Lorenzana asked, "Retake what? Did we lose any islands?"

The Chinese, he said, "never

took any of our occupied islands. They took over unoccupied reefs and turned them into islands."

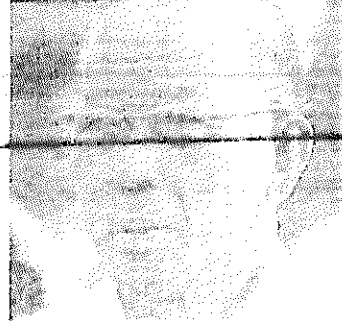
"China reclaimed several underwater reefs that are now islands," he said.

Lorenzana insisted that the military was still in control of the nine Philippines-claimed islands in the disputed region.

Aquino lost Panatag

He reiterated President Duterte's assertion that the Philippines lost Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal to the Chinese in 2015, during the administration of President Benigno Aquino III.

"No island belonging to us [was] ever lost during the time of President Duterte. While Panatag is under the effective control of the Chinese, our fish-



Delfin Lorenzana

ermen can fish in the area," Lorenzana said.

"Panatag Shoal thanks to the arbitral ruling is now the fishing ground—not exclusively of Filipinos but of Chinese, Vietnamese and Taiwanese as well," he added.

It was only through Mr.

Duterte's talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Lorenzana said, that Filipino fishermen can now fish again in Panatag Shoal and the Armed Forces to re-occupy troops on our occupied islands "without interference."

'No enforcement'

Lorenzana also claimed that the only action the Aquino administration did was to go to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), which is "not under the UN (United Nations) and does not have [an] enforcement mechanism."

"We won, but it is an empty victory. The Chinese won't leave our EEZ (exclusive economic zones) and instead [they] continue to assert [their] historical rights over the areas within the nine-dash line," the defense chief said.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III also came to the administration's defense, saying the military was doing something about China's aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea—though not everything was being made public.

"I don't know if I'm authorized to say so, but I know for a fact that the government, the Armed Forces are addressing it but they are not informing the public. It is better that we do not discuss it," he told Senate reporters.

Engaging China

According to Sotto, the government was quietly taking action to protect Philippine interests while also publicly engaging China through diplomacy.

"It's better not to have enemies. In our world now where

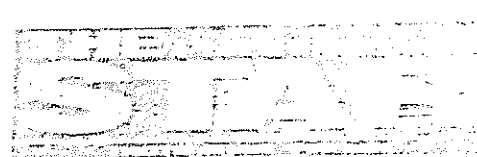
globalization is an open sea, we cannot afford to have enemies. As they say, when people talk, the guns are silent," he said.

He also said he was amenable to the call of the Senate minority for a hearing on the government's actions in the West Philippine Sea.

"But there are things that I think should be asked during an executive session," Sotto said.

Beijing has built outposts in its activities in the disputed waters despite the 2016 ruling of the PCA that junked its claims to nearly all of the strategic and resource-rich South China Sea.

Mr. Duterte has been cultivating a friendship with China and has put the decision of the arbitral tribunal on the back burner in exchange for loans and economic assistance. INC



Lorenzana on SCS survey: No islands to retake from China

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana rejected yesterday insinuations and allegations that President Duterte is guilty of inaction on the issue of the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Reacting to a survey that said nine out of 10 Filipinos want the Philippines to retake what it has lost, he said there are no islands to retake.

"What islands will we retake in the first place? Did China take any of our occupied nine islands? No. We are still in control and in occupation," Lorenzana said. "Retake what? Did we lose any islands? The Chinese never took any of our occupied islands. They

took over unoccupied reefs and turned them into islands. Had we been wiser, we could have occupied those reefs as well when we occupied the nine islands in the 70s."

He pointed out that China reclaimed several underwater reefs and that Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal was lost to the Chinese in 2012.

"No island belonging to us were ever lost during the time of President Duterte. While Panatag is under the effective control of the Chinese, our fishermen could fish in the area," Lorenzana stressed.

He pointed out that it is easy to say "Let us assert our rights and sovereignty" but it would be

an entirely different matter to resolve an issue with a regional power that is ready to defend its "interest" militarily.

"Question is how?"

But first, was there sovereignty violated? We have the sovereign right to exploit the resources but the WPS is not our sovereign territory. Panatag Shoal, thanks to the arbitral ruling, is now the fishing ground, not, each strictly of the Filipinos but of Chinese, Vietnamese and Taiwanese as well," he added. F

He claimed that the President could not be accused of inaction because after Duterte's bilateral talks with Chinese

President Xi Jinping, the Filipino fishermen were able to return to Panatag to fish, the military can resupply troops

without interference and an agreement came into effect. cannot occupy new features. war made and complicated with

Lorenzana: China did not take any WPS island

BY FRANCIS T. WAREFIELD

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana stressed yesterday that the country is still in control and in occupation of its nine islands in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), contrary to speculation that China has taken some of it.

Lorenzana made the remark following a Social Weather Stations (SWS) Survey that showed 87 percent, or about nine of 10 adult Filipinos, believe it was important to regain control of the Chinese-held islands in the West Philippine Sea.

Moreover, Lorenzana pointed out that what China reclaimed were several underwater reefs that are now islands.

"No, we are still in control and in occupation. China reclaimed several underwater reefs that are now islands. Scarborough or Panatag shoal was lost

to the Chinese in 2012. No island belonging to us were ever lost during the time of President (Rodrigo) Duterte," Lorenzana said.

"While Panatag is under the effective control of the Chinese, our fishermen could fish in the area," he added.

Lorenzana reiterated that there is nothing to retake as the country did not lose any islands in the West Philippine Sea.

"Retake what? Did we lose any islands? The Chinese never took any of our occupied islands. They took some unoccupied reefs and turned them into islands. Had we been wiser, we could have occupied those reefs as well when we occupied the nine islands in the 70s," Lorenzana said.

"I will throw the question back. How do you resolve the issue with a regional power that is ready to defend its interest militarily? Madaling magambing. It's easy to say 'let us assert our rights

and sovereignty.' Question is How?"

"But first was there sovereignty violated? We have the sovereign right to exploit the resources but the WPS is not our sovereign territory. Panatag Shoal (thanks to the arbitral ruling) is now the fishing ground not exclusively of the Philippines but of China, Vietnamese and Taiwanese as well," he added.

Lorenzana said one cannot accuse the Chief Executive of inaction because after his bilateral talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Filipino fishermen returned to Panatag to fish.

"We can resupply our troops on our islands without interference. An agreement was made that both parties can not occupy new features and none has done so far in compliance with this. And there is talk of joint development of gas and oil resources in the area. Tourism and trade has flourished especially export of agricultural products," Lorenzana said. □

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Esperon: Independent policy makes headway

By Mario J. Mallari

The independent foreign policy that balanced the country's relations with other countries was the lynchpin of President Duterte's brand of diplomacy the past two years which he was determined to pursue despite his critics' assertion the policy involved kowtowing to China.

Among the criticisms leveled at the Duterte administration is that it has failed to stop China's buildup in the disputed West Philippine Sea that is not an accurate assessment considering its continuous engagement with China to peacefully resolve the dispute in the WPS.

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said the government continued to engage China regarding its concerns in the WPS through high-level visits and meetings including the bilateral consultation mechanism.

"These efforts seek to improve the ability of both sides to manage developments in the WPS so as not to escalate tensions; to widen access of Filipino artisanal fishermen in Scarborough Shoal and to protect our environment and marine ecosystem," Esperon said.

At the same time, the National Security Adviser stressed the Duterte government is not remiss on its duty which is protecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In fact, Esperon said that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is regularly patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

“Government continued to engage China relative to our concerns in the West Philippine Sea.”

His report noted the Philippine Navy conducted naval surface patrol covering 158,000 nautical miles while the Philippine Air Force logged in 5,400 flying hours of maritime air patrol.

Esperon also cited the deployment of military personnel to occupied areas in the WPS.

"Further, the DND (Department of National Defense) began rehabilitation of structures in these islands. The construction of the beaching ramp and repair of runway in Pagasa Island are now ongoing," said Esperon.

Enhanced global engagements

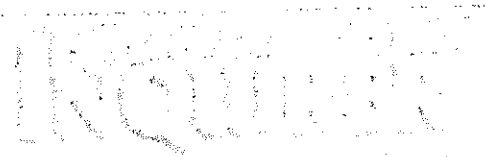
Consistent with President Duterte's independent foreign policy, the Department of Foreign Affairs actively led efforts to engage international partners to promote a stable security environment for the country's economic growth.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano stressed that the Duterte administration's policy was clear about being a "friend to all and an enemy to none."

The administration expanded ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and traditional allies while enhancing engagement of non-traditional partners such as Russia and other bilateral partners, through the conduct of a series of high-level bilateral engagements including state and official visits.

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UNITED PEOPLE'S SONA RALLIES

15,000 JOIN 'HISTORIC' MARCH ALONG COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

PROTESTS TAKE VARIOUS FORMS



They staged an umbrella rally, rang bells, delivered homilies, lay down on streets, occupied a highway and threw tomatoes at an

effigy to protest the policies of President Duterte on the day he delivered his third State of the Nation Address (Sona).

In Baguio City, activists held an umbrella rally at 11 a.m. on Monday, chanting "Rains mean nothing to a nation that continues to fight" at Igorot Park.

They marched despite intermittent rains to drum up what they described as the "true state of the nation reeling from poverty" due to new taxes imposed by the administration.

At a parish church in Quezon City, a few kilometers from the Batasan complex where Mr. Duterte gave his Sona, some administration critics gathered to say: "We are not scared of you."

Bishop Emeritus of Novaliches Antonio Tobias said in a homily the faithful would no longer be held hostage to the "climate of fear" that the administration had nurtured through a policy of killings.

Tolling of bells

Before the Mass, Senators Risa Hontiveros and Antonio Trillanes IV led the tolling of bells to commemorate the thousands of extrajudicial killings under the administration's war on drugs.

"Remember this, Mr. President. The Church and history itself were built on the blood of martyrs. As more blood flows, the forces against you will only grow stronger," Tobias said.

Thousands of people on Commonwealth Avenue sent Mr. Duterte a similar message.

The protest that stretched from St. Peter's Church to Ever

Gotesco Mall gathered representatives from opposing political colors and various religious groups, waving banners of various hues and carrying placards.

'Historic' march

Organizers described the rally as "historic," both in number and in composition. Police placed the number of protesters at 15,000.

Ousted Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno who participated in the "United People's Sona" said the rally should serve as a wake-up call for Mr. Duterte.

Sister Mary John Manangan said it was like a "miracle" seeing the people from different colors coming together.

At the rally were groups, such as Bagong Alvansang Makabayan (Bayan), Movement Against Tyranny, Babae ARC, Tindig Pilipinas, Akhayan, Rise Up, Promotion of Church People's Response, Women's Humor and

Legal Rights Bureau, and the Coalition for Justice.

Other issues raised were the proposed Charter change (Ghacha), maritime dispute in the West Philippine Sea, and unkept promises such as abolishing contractualization and the increase of wages for teachers and government workers.

Turning their backs

At San Antonio de Padua Parish Church in Quezon City, some 100 people in white turned their backs on what they called the President's "antipeople" policies in a symbolic protest.

In his homily at St. Peter's Church, Bishop Broderick Fabilito said the Church wanted to know Mr. Duterte's specific plans to give justice not only to the 23,000 victims of killings but also to their more than 100,000 orphaned relatives.

Among those who attended the Mass was Australian nun

Patricia Fox, who is facing deportation.

Groups sympathetic to Mr. Duterte, such as Tropang Bernabe and Friends of Bong Go, congregated on IBF Road, mustering a crowd of around 7,000, according to police.

Bicolandia

Members of Condo-Piston, Gabriela, Anakbayan, Bayan and Kilusang Mayo Uno and other groups converged in Iwaga City's Plaza Rizal, Legazpi City's Pinaglabanan Shrine, the Capitol in Sorsogon City, Freedom Park in Masbate City, Elevated Plaza in Daet and Freedom Park in Virac.

They demanded, among other things, a national minimum wage, land for farmers and justice for the victims of extrajudicial killings in the war on drugs.

In Legazpi, Gabriela members chanted "Duterte is afraid of women!" Some of the protesters later lay down on the

streets as expression of indignation against the administration.

The Visayas

Protesters marched on the main streets of Iloilo, Cebu, Bohol, Cebu and Alkan and Bacolod City.

In Iloilo City, they threw tomatoes at an effigy of the President driving a train and running over the poor.

Similar protests were held at the Bunga-New Washington junction in Kalibo and the Roxas City Bandstand in Capiz.

In Bacolod, groups and individuals launched a campaign dubbed "Bagting Kontra Chacha."

In Bohol, militant groups gave the President a failing grade. Groups in Cebu City also gave him a failing mark as they burned his horned image.

Separate protests were held by fishermen on Bantayan Island and by farmers' groups in Toledo City.

A group of protesters led by Sanlakas marched on Omnia Boulevard in Cebu City.

Mindanao

In Davao City, groups carried a huge streamer which read "Oust Rodrigo Duterte" and "Traktor!"

More than a hundred "lumad" and supporters occupied a highway in Koronadal City to demand the reopening of their schools.

About 300 protesters in Cagayan de Oro called for an end to martial law in Mindanao and to the oppression of the poor and indigenous peoples.

—REPORTS FROM
JHESSET O. ENANO, KRISTIA SUBINGSUBING, MATTHEW REYSIO-CRUE, JAYMERT GAMIL AND JODEF A. AGONCILLO IN MANILA; KIMBERLIE QUINTASOL, STEPHANIE M. FLORIDA, MICHAEL JAUCIAN, REY ANTHONY OSTRIA, NESTOR P. BURGOS JR., CARLA F. GOMEZ, LEO UDTOHAN, ROSALIE O. ABATAYO, JESSA MAE SOTTO, ZANA V. MACIO AND JIGGET J. JERUSALEM IN THE PROVINCES; AND FATE COLORONG AND IANNA AGUE IN

Relentless, chilling drug war to continue — Rody

By EDITH REGALADO
and ALEXIS ROMERO

The war against illegal drugs will continue and will be as "relentless and chilling" as it was the day his administration began two years ago, President Duterte stressed during his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) yesterday.

"Let me begin by putting it bluntly: the war against illegal drugs is far from over. This is why the illegal drugs war will not be sidelined. Instead, it will be as relentless and chilling, if you will, as on the day it began," Duterte said in his 48-minute speech — his shortest to date — delivered at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.

"If you think I can be dissuaded from continuing this fight because of your demonstrations, your protests, which I find, by the way, misdirected, then you got it all wrong," he added.

The President also slammed human rights advocates here and abroad, as well as Church leaders, who he said are "forceful" and "vociferous" in opposing his anti-drug campaign.

"Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives. The lives of our youth are being wasted and families are destroyed, and all because of the chemicals called shabu, cocaine, cannabis and heroine," he said.

Duterte said human rights to him means giving Filipinos, especially those at society's fringes, a decent and dignified future through social and physical infrastructure necessary to better their lives.

"The lives and freedoms and the hard-earned property of every Filipino whose condition we wish to improve shall be protected from criminals, terrorists, corrupt officials and traffickers of contraband," he said.

"You worry about the present; I am concerned (about) both the present and the future. I worry about the future because I know what crime can do to the youth of this country. If not stopped, crime can make human cesspools of succeeding generations. I will not allow it to happen. Not during my term," he added.

The anti-drug campaign, a major program of the Duterte administration, has resulted in the death of 4,354 suspects as of June 30, police data showed. A total of 182,630 anti-drug operations were conducted; 147,802 drug personalities were arrested and P21.28 billion worth of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia were seized during the period.

The Chief Executive pointed out that before the war against illegal drugs resulted only in the seizure of illegal substance worth millions of pesos and now they run into billions because of the nonstop fight of his administration.

"I can only shudder at the harm that those drugs could have caused had they reached the streets of every province, city, municipality, barangay and community throughout the country," he said.

These drug dealers, according to Duterte, know rully well that their business is against the law and that they know the consequences of their criminal acts, especially when caught in *flagrant delicto* (in blazing offense) and they violently resist arrest.

"They know that illegal drugs waste away lives, dysfunctionalize families and ruin relationships. They know that once hooked, addicts will die slowly — slow deaths. And yet, they persist in doing what they do, oblivious to the terrible harm that they cause to the people and

communities," the President said.

Duterte lamented that when illegal drug operations turn nasty and bloody, advocates of human rights lash at – and pillory – law enforcers and his administration no end.

"Sadly, I have yet to hear really howls of protest from the human rights advocates and Church leaders against drug-lordism, drug-dealing and drug-pushing as forceful and vociferous as the ones directed against the alleged errant (law) enforcers in the fight against this social scourge," he said.

Rody defends policies

Duterte also vowed to do his "very best" as the country's leader as he defended his controversial policies in his SONA.

"About two years ago, I solemnly took my oath as a worker of the national government. I was as inspired to institute real changes for the greater good of the Filipino people, as I was greatly overwhelmed then by the daunting challenges that lay ahead," the President said.

"Two years later, my solid commitment to directly and decisively address our nation's collective challenges remains. It has not wavered. In truth, it has even gotten stronger through adversity and the desire to give the people the most we can within my term in this government," he added.

Aside from his administration's war on drugs, the Chief Executive also defended the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law, which has been blamed by some sectors for the rising prices of commodities. He said the TRAIN law, which imposed new taxes on oil products, must not be suspended because it would generate revenues for key state programs.

"We cannot and should not. We need this for sustainable growth that will leave no Filipino left behind," he said.

Duterte also justified his move to seek warmer ties with China, saying the re-energized relations with the Asian superpower "led to an unprecedented level of cooperation between our nations on the war against transnational crimes."

"Our shared intelligence led to the discovery and dismantling of the clandestine shabu laboratories and the arrest of Chinese chemists (connected) with the Dragon organization, called Wu Syndicate," he said.

Duterte, who has been accused of abandoning the Philippines' maritime claims in the South China Sea in exchange for Chinese aid, said he remains committed to defending the Philippines' interests in the disputed area.

The President likewise justified his decision to close tourist destination Boracay for six months, a move seen to displace about 25,000 workers and cost the economy about P 6 billion.

"Boracay Island, widely regarded as one of our country's treasures and admired worldwide for its natural beauty, has sadly become the representation of the government's negligence including mine," he said.

"I could not allow this decay to continue. Decisive action has long been overdue... We intend to restore its environmental integrity alongside measures to alleviate those whose livelihood were momentarily affected," he added.

Duterte also vowed to sign the proposed Bangsamoro Organic Law but asked Congress to give him two days to review the measure.

- With Christina Mendez

Campaign vs illegal drugs is PRRD's most important achievement – survey

By ELLA LYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Seven in 10 Filipinos consider the eradication of illegal drugs as the most important achievement

of the Duterte administration in the past two years, the latest Pulse Asia survey results showed. This was the majority opinion in all geographic areas from 64

percent in the rest of Luzon to 77 percent in Metro Manila, and socio-economic classes from 69 percent among the "masa" or Class D to 74 percent in Class ABC.

Campaign vs illegal drugs is PRRD's...

Meanwhile, 50 percent considered the anti-crime efforts of the Duterte administration as its most significant achievement.

Most of those in Metro Manila (61 percent), Visayas (58 percent), and Classes ABC and E (53 percent and 54 percent, respectively) shared this assessment.

The nationwide survey was conducted from June 15 to 21 among 1,800 respondents.

Also considered important achievements of the administration are the salary increase for

police and military personnel (36 percent), and its fight against graft and corruption in government (28 percent).

Meanwhile, 21 percent of Filipinos said the granting of free tuition to students enrolled in public universities and colleges is the most significant achievement of the administration.

The efforts of President Duterte and his administration to create more jobs (15 percent), restore public trust in government and its officials (11 percent), improve

the state of the national economy (11 percent), and extend the validity of drivers' licenses (10 percent) comprised a fifth group of key accomplishments of the present dispensation.

The least often mentioned achievement of the Duterte administration were poverty reduction (4 percent), inflation control (4 percent), extension of the validity of passports (7 percent), no-assembly policy in hospitals (6 percent), lowering of personal income tax (6 percent), and provision of free internet

in public areas (3 percent).

Meanwhile, fewer Filipinos wanted the President to prioritize the issues of graft and corruption (16 percent), the country's territorial sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea (16 percent), federalism (5 percent), and charter change (3 percent).

Pulse Asia noted that across geographic areas and socio-economic classes, less than one in 10 Filipinos would like President Duterte to place emphasis on the issue of charter change (2 to 4 percent and 1 to 4 percent, respectively), while preference for the President focusing on federalism in his SONA did not go beyond 10 percent.

'HUMAN LIVES, NOT HUMAN RIGHTS'

Duterte vows to pursue 'chilling' fight vs drugs

BY CATHERINE S. VALENTE

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte vowed to pursue a "relentless" and "chilling" war against illegal drugs, as he laid out his plans for the remaining half of his six-year term in his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

In a 48-minute, expletive-free speech, Duterte said his two-year-old war against illegal drugs is "chilling."



was "far from over."

"Let me begin by putting it bluntly: the war against illegal drugs is far from over. Where before, the war resulted in the seizure of illegal drugs worth millions of pesos, today, they run [into] billions in peso value. I can only shudder at the harm that those drugs could have caused had they reached the streets of every province, city, municipality, barangay and community throughout the country," Duterte said.

"This is why the illegal drugs war will not be sidelined. Instead, it will be as relentless and chilling, if you will, as on the day it began," he said.

The President then slammed human rights activists who have criticized the thousands of deaths caused by the anti-drug war, calling their efforts "misdirected."

"If you think that I can be dissuaded from continuing this fight because of [your] demonstrations, your protest, which I find, by the way, misdirected, then you got it all wrong. Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives," he said.

The bloody campaign against drugs killed 4,354 people from July 3, 2016 to June 30, 2018, based on the government's Real Numbers PH.

These fatalities reportedly resisted arrest during the 102,630 legitimate police operations conducted during the period.

The anti-drug raids have also resulted in the arrest of 147,807 drug personalities, including 229 elected officials, 52 uniformed personnel and 245 government employees.

Known for his long, impromptu speeches, Duterte stuck to his prepared text except for a few adlibs. Duterte's first SONA in 2016 lasted for one hour and 32 minutes while his second SONA lasted two hours.

Duterte drew 54 applause from the audience in his third SONA.

Red tape, Bangsamoro Law

Duterte ordered government agencies to faithfully implement the law against red tape, saying some offices had a "lousy and corrupt bureaucracy."

He told government offices "with a number of red tape-related reports from the public" to make their services "truly customer-friendly."

Duterte signed Republic Act 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 in May this year.

To achieve peace and development in Mindanao, Duterte said he would sign the Bangsamoro Organic Law in

48 hours.

"When the approved version is transmitted and received by my office... The law has been passed actually and I intend to... Give me 48 hours to sign it and ratify the law," he said.

Duterte was supposed to sign the proposed measure today but this did not happen as the House adjourned its session before it could be ratified. The Senate was able to ratify the reconciled version of the bill.

Duterte, the first Philippine President from Mindanao, earlier certified the bill as urgent, prompting Congress to fast-track the passage of the draft measure. The bicameral conference committee approved the final version of the bill on July 18.

The historic law abolishes the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) established in 1989 to administer Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanan, Sultan Kudat and Tawi-Tawi provinces. The ARMM will then be replaced by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

Cha-cha

Duterte also expressed confidence the Filipinos would rally behind his administration's push for charter change.

Shifting to federalism from a unitary system is among the key campaign pledges of Duterte, who promised during the 2016 campaign to spread resources and political power to the countryside.

He thanked members of his consultative committee on charter change, particularly former chief justice keynote Puno and former Senate president Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. for working on the draft federal charter.

The President also reiterated that he did not want to stay in power beyond the end of his term in 2022 under the 1987 Constitution or any other charter.

"I have no illusions of occupying this office one day longer than what the Constitution under which I was elected, or under whatever constitution there might be, [requires]."

Sea dispute, 'endo'

In his speech, Duterte also boasted about his administration's "improved" relationship with China, but assured the public that such renewed affinity between the two countries did not mean the Philippines wavered on territorial claims in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

"Our improved relationship with China, however, does not mean that we will waver in our commitment to defend our interests in the West Philippine Sea. This is why we engage China through bilateral and multilateral platforms such as the ASEAN-China and the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism," he said.

Duterte also admitted his hands were tied on the issue of ending contractualization in the country.

"Read my lips. I understand that this does not satisfy all sectors. I share their sentiment. I truly do. Much as I would like to do the impossible, that power is not vested upon me by the Constitution. And neither will I make both ends meet even if I violate the law to achieve that purpose. Simply, it is not part of my territory," he said.

But the President renewed his call for Congress to pass legislation of ending the practice of contractualization "once and for all."

Duterte signed on May 1 Executive Order 51 prohibiting the illegal contracting and sub-contracting of workers. He said the campaign against "endo" had resulted in the regularization of 300,000 workers.

Labor groups such as the Kilusang Mayo Uno want more seeing the President should have signed an EO that bans all forms of contractualization.

Land use, Boracay, mining

The President called on the Senate to "urgently pass the National Land Use Act," which he said would address competing land requirements for food, housing, business, and environmental conservation.

"What has happened in Boracay is just an indication of the long-overdue need to rationalize in a holistic and sustainable manner the utilization, management and development of our lands," Duterte said, referring to the popular tourist destination that he shut down earlier this year for a cleanup.

He reiterated his warning to miners against destroying the environment, insisting that extractive industries "must be used for the benefit of the Filipino people, not just a select few."

"To the mining industry, I say this once again and maybe for the last time, do not destroy the environment or compromise our resources; repair what you have mismanaged. Try to change [your] management radically because the

time you will have restrictive policies. The prohibition of open pit mining is one. It is destroying my country. It is destroying the environment. It will destroy the world of tomorrow for our children," he said.

'Pass Train 2'

Duterte said tax reform would push through, adding such initiative was "incorrectly" blamed for rising consumer prices.

The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion or Train, which took effect on January 1 and raised duties on sugar-sweetened drinks, fuel and cars, has generated much-needed revenue to fund government infrastructure projects, according to Duterte.

"This year, we are giving P149 billion worth of subsidies to the poor and vulnerable. Next year, the amount will be increased to P169 billion. But no amount of subsidy can help the poor if some businesses take advantage of the situation to make more money. I ask businesses to cooperate with us in charging a fair price," he said.

Duterte then warned not hoarders, cartels and their promoters to "stop messing with the people."

"Power sometimes is not a good thing. But I hope I will not have to use it against you. Consider yourselves warned: mend your ways now or the full force of the State shall be brought to bear upon you. I am directing all intelligence agencies to unmask the perpetrators of this economic sabotage, and our law enforcement agencies to bring them to justice," he said.

Third telco

Duterte promised that the third telecommunication player to be selected soon by the government to compete with the duopoly of Globe Telecom and PLDT, should be "reliable, inexpensive and secure."

"My administration remains firm in its resolve to ensure that the country's telecommunication services are reliable, inexpensive and secure. A draft Terms of Reference for the entry of a new, major industry player is at hand," he said.

However, Duterte said the government's efforts to usher in a new major player "shall be rendered futile if we do not improve its odds of success in an industry that has long been dominated by a well-entrenched duopoly."

"We shall therefore lower inter-connection rates between all industry

players. Not only to lessen the cost to the consumers as it will also lower the costs [for the] incoming player to access existing networks, [thereby creating] a market environment that is more conducive to competition," he said.

'Defeatist speech'

Minority senator described the third SONA as a defeatist speech filled with promises already made during the 2016 election campaign.

"The promise to continue relentlessly on the war on drugs is, as has been admitted, chilling and also senseless. Because daily killings have not solved and will not solve the drug problem," said Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, president of the Liberal Party.

Sen. Ana Theresa "Risa" Hontiveros described it as a rerun. "Empty rhetoric, hollow pronouncements. No real achievements. No vision," she said.

Another opposition senator Antonio Trillanes 4th said Duterte's address was an admission of non-achievement.

"Worse, it was an admission that Duterte doesn't have a clue on how to solve the serious problems being faced by our country most of which he created in the first place," he added.

Representative Edral Lagman of Albay and Tomarite Villarín of Akbayan party-list made the same observations, but were surprised that there were no attacks on the opposition.

"The people want economic reforms to arrest poverty. Yet the President insists on the full implementation of the Train Law which has triggered the rise of inflation to 6.1 percent on food and non-alcoholic beverages, thus exacerbating food poverty, further reducing the people's purchasing power and decreasing the value of real wages," Lagman said.

Other lawmakers were positive. Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon posted on Twitter that Duterte's third SONA was clear on its objectives.

"A SONA that I wanted to hear... one w/ a legislative agenda, a statement on the president's stand on issues & a delivery that was fitting not just for his domestic audience but the international community. Regardless of one's political leanings, it was a SONA one could listen to," he tweeted.

Rep. Sherwin Tugna of the party-list Citizens' Battle Against Corruption said in a text message "We applaud the President's SONA. He stayed with his prepared speech. What our party list found the most for the benefit of the people is his mention of the National Land Use Act."

Oriental Mindanao Party List Rep. Umali agreed.

"I am happy with the SONA message because it was clear and he defined his programs, what he wants to continue. I think his message is clear that he will continue the war on criminality, on drugs and on corruption, and federalism," he said.

Sen. Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel 3rd said President Duterte was able to enumerate his priorities in his third SONA.

"He mentioned the things that I wanted to hear like ending the war on criminality, federalism and the fight against inflation," he said.

Sen. Joseph Victor "W" Dioceno however, expressed hope the President and his economic managers would reconsider their stance on the train law.

"I maintain my view that we need to consider the suspension of the excise taxes on fuels—not the entire law—in order to protect Filipino consumers from spiraling prices of goods," he said.

Rallies at Commonwealth

Militant groups mustered a crowd of 15,000 against Duterte, with about 9,000 individuals gathered on the Road to show their support for the President.

"Initial reports from our ground operatives is 15,000 (anti-Duterte rallyists). It was significantly higher compared with last year because a lot of organizations joined," Metro Manila police chief Guillermo Licauco told *The Manila Times*.

After a "Unity March" 2 p.m. anti-administration group gathered in front of the Ever Green Mall and marched off to Commonwealth Avenue in front of the St. James Parish in Quezon City for a huge mass protest dubbed as "Unity People's SONA."

Ousted chief justice Juan Lourdes Sereno, who was one of the speakers at the event, condemned the draft new constitution and called it a "document of desperation."

"We should stop charter change, and instead fight for a federal state, is free from the foreign government, and safe from violence," Sereno said.

Among the groups that attended the pro-Duterte rally were the United Nations Military, Tropang Iternabe Supporters of President Duterte, Luzon 1, Bulacan Council, Ladies Group of Taguig, and supporters from Caloocan, Valenzuela, Parañaque, and Mandaluyong.

WITH JEFFERSON ANTIPODA, BERNADETTE TAMAYO, LLANESCA T. PANTI, REINA C. TOLENTINO, ROY D.R. NARRA AND MARY GLENNIE JALEA

Drugs war a major gain

A Pulse Asia survey showed almost seven out of 10 Filipinos believe that the eradication of illegal drugs is the most important accomplishment of the Duterte administration in the first two years of his term.

The survey, which was conducted from 15 to 21 June, revealed at least 69 percent of the 1,800 respondents considering the President's anti-drug campaign as the most important achievement of the administration, while fighting criminality came in as second with 50 percent.

Also pointed out in the survey was the salary increase for police and soldiers, which took 30 percent of the total responses from the survey which had three issues to be answered.

Only 28 percent consider fighting graft and corruption — which is a campaign promise of the President — as an important achievement.

Meanwhile, 48 percent of Filipinos nationwide also cited the need to increase the pay of workers.

Also, at least one in three respondents also want Duterte to focus on reducing poverty in the country, which got 33 percent — while about a quarter of Filipinos said he should give emphasis to issues of contractualization pegged at 27 percent.

Only 26 percent of the respondents tackled on the issue of illegal drugs, while fewer Filipinos said the President should prioritize the issues of graft and corruption and the country's territorial sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea, which both got 16 percent.

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July 2018

Rody's 3rd SONA short on highlights

BY PETER TABINGO

PRESIDENT Duterte's third State of the Nation Address lasted less than 50 minutes, one of the shortest in recent memory, but it did not hold enough to keep the audience engaged.

The President breezed through his prepared piece, breaking from his habit of going off-script to extemporize in his naive dialect.

Also breaking in form, Duterte cracked not one joke and held off from the cursing that had liberally salted his two previous SONA speeches.

But against the convention caused by an 11th hour attempt to unseat Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, this year's SONA was relegated to the background.

Albay an Rep. Tom Villarin pointed out that the only surprising thing in this year's SONA was the lack of vitriol against the President's critics.

Former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo delivered the shortest SONA, doing it in about 27 minutes, in 2005.

Among Duterte's talking points that earned applause were his promise to sign the Bangsamoro Basic Law into law within 48 hours upon approval by Congress, his clarification that his government will continue to defend the country's interest in the West Philippine Sea, his appeal to lawmakers to pass a law creating the Coconut Farmers' Trust Fund, and his insistence that corruption must stop.

In all, the third SONA was applauded 50 times, although mostly half-hearted, a far cry from the 95 rounds of applause accorded his

RODY'S

first one and 77 on his second.

The President's decision to stick to his written speech caused the delivery to sag in most places as he stumbled on words he is not accustomed to using.

Duterte showed enough emotion to inject emphasis when discussing his campaign against corruption.

"I value friendship, make no mistake about it, but it has to merit. This is a tough piece I am hemming in. Do not make it longer by making the end our friendship by giving me a reason to end it," he said.

He however held off mentioning any of his appointees who were later fired from their posts or forced to resign due to allegations of corruption.

As earlier announced, former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada attended the SONA together with Vice President Leni Robredo.

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OPAV, AFP, Visayas LGUs tackle regional peace initiatives

By MINERVA BC NEWMAN

CEBU CITY – The Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Visayas (OPAV), in partnership with the local government of Negros Oriental and the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Central Command (AFP-CentCom) initiated the Local Peace Initiatives (LPI) forum dubbed as “Malasakit for Peace and Development” as a paradigm shift in dealing with the insurgency problem in the Visayas regions.

Last week, more than a hundred participants composed of the local chief executives, representatives from various government agencies and sectoral organizations joined hands with the officials of the AFP-CentCom to pursue a localized peace/development brand that is tailored for a particular local government unit.

Negros Oriental governor Roel

Degamo said the LGUs should take the lead in the localized peace talks because “we know better our constituents, their culture, and the issues they face every day”.

Degamo enjoined the participants to support the government’s Local Peace Initiative (LPI) program.

AFP-CentCom commander Lt. Gen. Paul Talay Atal, in his message presented the government’s position in dealing with the insurgents.

“President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is the President for all the Filipinos, not just to the grumbling one who fell in love to an ideology that actually failed to alleviate the lives of people in impoverished communities,” Atal said.

The Philippine Army’s 303rd Brigade presented the local security situation, while the AFP Central Command presented the local implementation of

the AFP Campaign Plan Development Support and Security Plan (DSSP) “Kapayapaan.”

According to Atal, the DSSP-Kapayapaan is an integrated peace and development program approach specific in areas identified as insurgency threatened, infiltrated and/or affected.

The AFP provides the needed security and safety of development workers on those areas as well as assist them in the technical and engineering works, when needed, he added.

Presidential Adviser for the Visayas Michael Llyod Dine presented the government’s position of building peace at the countryside.

He said the LPI forum identifies areas of concern for specific peace and development projects that will be implemented in barangays that are insurgency affected, threatened or

infiltrated.

The local barangay officials will be assisted to identify their needed development projects in their areas.

These identified projects form part of the development plan of the concerned LGU with specific funding for implementation, Dine added.

Dine said the afternoon session was devoted for the identification of activities that local government units will implement in pursuit of the local peace initiative.

Dine encouraged everyone who attended to come up with a “one-stop shop” to facilitate the delivery of the peace packages to those who will return to the folds of the law.

“We have to show them that the Government is sincere and is working hard for the well-being of every Filipino,” Dine added.

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**Military base nilusob,
27 sundalo nasawi**

MOGADISHU (Reuters) - Sinao kahawon ng grupong al-Shabaab ng Somalia na mabaso ng mga mandigma nilusob ang isang military base sa katimugan ng bansa, at pinatay ang 27 sundalo.

"We first attacked the base with a suicide car bomb and then stormed. We killed 27 soldiers and took the base. Some soldiers fled into the jungles," said Abdiasis Abu Musab, al-Shabaab military operation spokesman.

Matatagpuan ang base na 80 kilometro ang layo mula sa port city ng Mogadishu. Ito ay isang komando ang mga berseryal ng pagpapalibang sa pag-atake.

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AFP modernization bumilis kay Duterte

NIZADA DE LOS REYES

SA loob ng dalawang taong panunungkulan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ay naging mabilis ang modernization program ng Philippine Army. /Page 8



Ito ang inihayag ni Philippine Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva.

Aniya hindi lamang sa Philippine Army naging mabilis ang pag-usbong ng modernisasyon kundi sa buong Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Ramdam din aniya ng Philippine Air Force at Philippine Navy ang modernization program dahil madalaking halaga ng equipment

ang nabili para sa kanila.

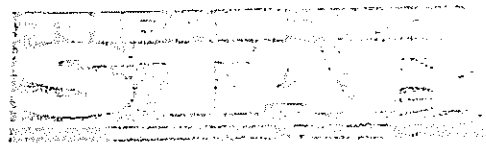
Sa pangunahin ng Philippine Army, sinabi ni Villanueva na sa kasalukuyan ay nakaprogarama na ang kanilang karagandang weapon system.

Kanilang umataw sa karaming personal armory pagbigay ng mortar, rocket, multiple grenade launcher at sniper rifle.

Kinunangin din ni Villanueva na nagagamit na rin ng mga opisyal at tauhan ng Philippine Army ang kanilang builing balistikong rifle.

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ACROSS THE COUNTRY

2 soldiers killed in Agusan Sur landmine blast

LIANGA, Surigao del Sur - Two military officers were killed in a landmine explosion in Bayugan, Agusan del Sur over the weekend.

First Lt. Tere Ingente, 4th Infantry Division information officer, identified the fatalities as First Lt. Rod Michael Aspiras and Sgt. Ruben Canoy.

Cpls. Rhuel Apura and Rocelir Guirero and Private First Class Christian Levi Penu were wounded.

Ingente said New People's Army (NPA) rebels detonated a landmine following a firefight with soldiers of the 36th Infantry Battalion in Sitio Bung-

kuan, Barangay San Juan.

Ariel Montero, spokesman for the NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee, said they detonated the landmine to send a message to President Duterte on his State of the Nation Address. 14

- Ben Serrano

'BAKWIT TACTIC'

NPA DUPING 'LUMAD' BY ACCUSING SOLDIERS OF ATROCITIES—AFP

Communist rebels are preying on indigenous people (IP) by pretending they are concerned about their plight, the military said on Monday.

Col. Noel Detoyato, public affairs office chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the New People's Army (NPA) had been duping

the IP, or "lumad," into joining the armed movement by accusing the military of atrocities in their communities.

The Communist Party of the Philippines alleged that soldiers had been imposing food, aid and information blockade in the IP's evacuation center at Barangay Diatagon,

Surigao del Sur.

But Detoyato said government services had not reached the lumad because the insurgents were blocking them.

"We all know their ... 'bakwit tactic.' They create a drama where they act concerned about their victims, the lumad," he said.—JEANNETTE LANDRADE INQ

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NPA medical officer yields in Occidental Mindoro

A New People's Army (NPA) medical officer has surrendered to the military in Occidental Mindoro months after he and six other prisoners were let loose by rebels during a raid of a Batangas jail earlier this year.

The Army's 2nd Infantry Division said Ronnie Ferrer, 42, yielded to forces of the 76th Infantry Battalion on Saturday, effectively ending his ties with the communists 15 years after he was recruited as an NPA member.

2nd ID spokesman Capt. Patrick Jay Retumban said Ferrer was the medical officer of the platoon Falcon, sub-regional military area-

4D of the NPA's Southern Tagalog regional party committee.

Ferrer was a member of the "Batangas 9," a group of nine NPA rebels who were rescued by their comrades who raided the Batangas provincial jail on January 6 this year.

"The raiding NPA broke into the cell and freed their jailed comrades and (six) other prisoners, including inmates facing drug-related cases," Retumban said.

Retumban said Ferrer was first exposed to left-leaning activities at the age of 18. He joined the NPA movement in 2003.

On his surrender, Retumban

said Ferrer abandoned the armed struggle because of the "failure of the CPP-NPA-NDF leadership to give his medical needs and the false hope given by the organization."

"He also said that he experienced starvation due to the dwindling support from the masses and continuous evasion from intensified combat operations," Retumban said.

2nd ID commander Rhoderick Parayno urged other rebels to surrender and assured them government assistance will be provided under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program.

- Victor Reyes b2

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Primer on draft Con-Com Federal Charter

Fr. Ranhilio Callangan Aquino
Con-Com 2018 Member

(8th of a series)

Q: Suffrage is to be exercised by those domiciled in the Philippines

for at least one year, and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the elections. How does "domicile" differ from "residence," a term more easily understood?

Next page

Primer...

From A1

A: A residence is where one happens to reside, and one can have multiple residences, because one can reside in one place at one time, and in another, at another time. A student who spends most of the year in Manila is a resident of Manila for purposes of his studies but is a resident of the city or town from which he comes. Domicile however means "habitual residence" and in law this requires two things: first, physical presence; second, the intention to remain there for good. So, if one is fed up with Tuguegarao City's intolerable heat, sells all his property, bids his friends a tearful farewell and announces to all his intentions of forsaking Tuguegarao for good and moves to Bongao Island where he intends to reside until the day of his departure from the world, the two requisites of domicile shall then have been fulfilled. He will be physically present in Bongao with the intent to remain there — what the law describes as "animus manendi."

Q: Why this requirement?

A: Someone who participates in elections must be serious at doing so and must

have a stake in the result of the elections to ensure his conscientious and studied participation in the political exercise. Requiring that he be a domiciliary of the country and of the place is some form of guarantee of this degree of commitment.

Q: What is meant by requiring Congress to "ensure the right to vote of persons in need of assistance"?

A: This is the draft's way of diminishing disenfranchisement on grounds that cannot be imputed to the voter, such as physical disability, illiteracy or even temporary deployment in fulfillment of legal and moral duties outside the place where one ought to vote. Since it is not for the Constitution to anticipate every possible form of disability or hindrance to participation in the elections, the draft has this generalized formulation.

Q: Why was there need for a section on political parties?

A: In fact, the draft devotes several sections to political parties, characterized as they are as "mechanisms of citizen representation and democratic governance." In other words, parties are perceived as indispensable to democracy and to the maturation of the body politic, and while one cannot compel the formation of parties, one

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can provide incentives for them to emerge. Many of these incentives are provided for by the draft. In the end, what is desired is that Filipino voters do not choose on the basis of name recall or popularity (except when the popularity arises from competence, integrity and intelligence). Rather what would be preferable would be for voters to examine programs and platforms of government advanced by contending parties and to vote according to their vision of what the country ought to be.

Q: Can the Communist Party of the Philippines win recognition as a political party?

A: For as long as the Communist Party endeavors a change in government through violence, then it will not be allowed registration as a political party. But if it seeks the overthrow of a capitalist, entrepreneurial system through the parliamentary (electoral) route, then it should be eligible for registration as a party, but this will all depend on the policy statements as well as the praxis of the CPF-NPA.

Q: What sense is there to the declaration that political parties are to be developed as "democratic public institutions"?

A: In the past, political parties were dismissed as the coming together for conven-

ience of "politicos" for the sole purpose of winning public office at elections. In the draft, they are given constitutional recognition as integral to our democracy and as public institutions. Once registered with the Federal Commission on Elections, a political party enjoys juridical personality, such personality as an institution being conferred by the Constitution itself.

Q: But parties in the Philippines have always be known to be "gangs of the rich and the powerful." What about the "poor and the helpless"? How can they ever muster the funds and the force to form parties?

A: The Constitution directs the Federal Republic to take affirmative action so that the marginalized may organize themselves into genuine political parties. Affirmative action refers to an entire gamut of supportive, helpful and favorable measures leading to the formation of political parties composed of the under-represented. This can include government social workers training fisherfolk, farmer, peasants, the urban poor in self-organization and party-formation, and so many other forms of assistance.

(To be continued)

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Mayors back Duterte on 'localized' peace talks

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. Roel Degamo and town mayors, headed by League of Municipalities-Negros Oriental chapter president Mayor Edsel Enardecido of Ayungon, are one in supporting President Rodrigo Duterte's directive to localize the conduct of peace initiatives after talks between the Philippine government and the National Democratic Front bogged down.

The expression of support came amid criticisms and claims by militant and cause-oriented groups that the localized peace initiative is bound to fail.

Degamo announced over the weekend that he is confident that genuine peace will be achieved in the province because the "government is doing its best to deliver the basic services needed by the people especially in the hinterland barangays."

The governor is of strong belief that waging war is not a solution to the insurgency problem as evidenced by the fact that it has existed for more than 40 years.

Enardecido also expressed belief that Communist Party of the Philippines leader Jose Maria Sison is not anymore in full control of the rebel movement.

"It is best that local mayors be given the authority to negotiate peace with rebels in their respective areas of jurisdictions," he said.

Enardecido, however, has apprehensions as to the so-called packages for rebel-surrenderees in the absence of clear-cut guidelines regarding fund sources.

He said until today, what is due the beneficiaries of the closure agreement on the peace talks between the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayac Brigade and the government has not been fully released.

For his part, Mayor Ernesto T. Uy of Mabinay wants a template on how to go about the localized peace initiative, including the procedure, saying that the Commission on Audit should be involved in this undertaking. *AB*

He said for the last three years, the intelligence fund of the municipality remained unutilized because of strict CoA regulations.

Uy wants CoA to make it clear where the budget for peace and security can be drawn from. *PMG*

Cops told: Remain on alert amid NPA ambush

By ALFRED DALAZON

PHILIPPINE National Police chief, Director General Oscar D. Albayalde yesterday ordered all police forces nationwide to maintain their full alert against possible New People's Army attacks in the aftermath of a rebel ambush in Taytay, Palawan which killed two policemen on Sunday.

Gen. Albayalde instructed his men to be wary of different NPA modes operandi to attack patrolling policemen or those who are returning to their stations after responding to emergencies or pursuing wanted persons or gain entry into light-guarded police outposts and other facilities.

NPA guerrillas are known for posing as policemen or soldiers by wearing PNP or Army uniforms each time they launch an offensive in the countryside.

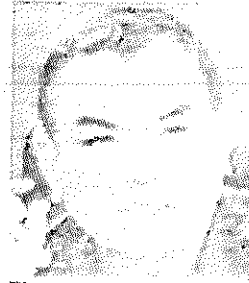
Around 10:50 a.m. last Sunday, an undetermined number of NPA gunmen killed two members of the Taytay Municipal Police Station in Palawan identified as Police Officer 3 Alexander Mimbalewag and PO2 Jupetr. Gustaham in Sitio Nagtakeyan Barangay Baw.

Police Regional Office 4-B director, Chief Superintendent Emmanuel Luis D. Licup, said that prior to the ambush, the Taytay MPS received an information regarding a vehicular accident involving a bystander and a motorcycle in Ego Baw around 8:30 in the morning.

Licup said duty investigators PO3 Mimbalewag and PO1 Gustaham, along with a team from the 401st Regional Mobile Force Company went to the site to investigate the incident. Around 10:35 a.m., the two policemen left the site on board a Mahindra patrol vehicle with PO3 Mimbalewag as the driver.

The official said the two were later ambushed and killed by the rebels. Licup said members of the 401st RMFC, the Taytay MPS and the Marines rushed to the site to retrieve the bodies of the two and track down the leftist gunmen.

"I have ordered my men to further tighten their security measures and always be vigilant each time they leave the stations to respond to any calls for assistance," Licup said.



Eleazar

Last July 1, NPA guerrillas attacked a group of Army troops using automatic weapons in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro triggering suspicion that the NPA have started their offensive against government troops in view of the stalled peace talks.

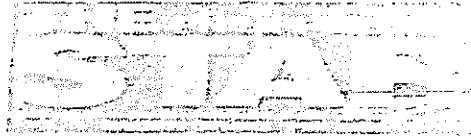
This prompted Gen. Albayalde to remind his troops to be on alert at all times.

The Palawan ambush occurred just days after the

PRO-K became the first police regional unit to conduct localized peace talks in the country amid the Duterte government's continuing program to finally

bring an end to the decades-old communist insurgency. Last week, Licup and local Army officials in Marikina reported the conduct of localized

peace talks with 20 barangay chairpersons in two municipalities in Oriental Mindoro known for a considerable presence of NPA guerrillas. §



House coup stalls signing of BOL

By JESS DIAZ

Leadership infighting at the House of Representatives derailed yesterday the expected approval of the proposed Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), which the administration and its authors claim would promote peace in Mindanao.

The House abruptly adjourned its session in the morning without approving the bicameral conference committee report on the bill just hours after the Senate ratified it.

Without ratification by the two chambers, the measure could not be presented to President Duterte as planned.

Turn to Page 10

House coup From Page 1

before his third State of the Nation Address (SONA) in the afternoon so he could sign it into law.

The adjournment of the session at about 12:30 p.m. was obviously intended to avert the impending replacement of Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez by former president and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

It was also aimed at allowing Alvarez to thresh things out with his colleagues and with his Malacañang principal, whose spokesman said he did not want to meddle in the House intramural.

It likewise allowed him to sit side by side with the President and Senate President Vicente Sotto III for Duterte's SONA.

Alvarez initially presided over the morning session and declared a recess after the House passed two resolutions informing the Senate that it has convened and invited Duterte to address a joint assembly of Congress for his third SONA.

The House was to tackle the BOL bill following the adoption of the customary resolutions.

After a break of more than one hour, it was deputy speaker and Cebu Rep. Gwer Garcia who ascended the Speaker's podium, and upon motion of deputy majority leader and Pampanga Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc, declared the session adjourned until the President's address at 4 p.m., prompting House members to leave the session hall.

Former Arroyo budget secretary and now Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. tried to object to the adjournment but Garcia ignored him.

Shortly after, Arroyo's allies were summoned to reconvene the session to pass Alvarez and to approve the BOL bill, which the conference committee chaired jointly by House Majority Leader Rodolfo Farinas and his Senate counterpart Juan Miguel Zubiri worked on day and night for more than a week.

Among those who responded were members of the Liberal Party (LP) of former president Benigno Aquino III, during whose watch Arroyo was detained for plunder in connection with the alleged

misuse of more than P300 million in Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office intelligence funds. She was released in July 2016 after nearly four years on hospital arrest.

Arroyo's supporters also circulated a manifesto on Alvarez's ouster. As of early afternoon, over a hundred members have reportedly signed.

LP member Deputy Speaker and Marikina Rep. Romero Quimbo told reporters that they were asked to return to the plenary hall to resume their session.

He refused to say who called them.

Other LP members who returned to the session hall were Edgar Erico of Caloocan City, Raul Daza of Northern Samar and Jorge Banal of Quezon City.

Others who were seen in the hall huddled with Arroyo were Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio Floirendo Jr., one of the alleged oust-Alvarez plotters, and Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles, who is appropriations committee chairman and cousin of presidential daughter and Mayor Sara Duterte, another supposed plotter.

Asked if they would vote for Arroyo, Quimbo said, "Let us see."

Erico said they would not vote for the former president.

"We just want to replace Alvarez for being unfair to us and our constituents, whom he deprived of infrastructure funds in the current budget. Even our road maintenance funds had been scrapped," he said.

Daza said the Arroyo camp would violate House rules if they proceeded to resume the adjourned proceedings.

"This will be a rump session. It's the current leadership that should reconvene us," he said.

He said the BOL bill, if approved in a "rump" session, could be questioned before the Supreme Court.

Quimbo disagreed with Daza, a veteran lawmaker from the pre-martial law days, claiming that Arroyo allies could reopen the deliberations "if that is the wish of the majority of House members."

"Any of the deputy speakers could assume the role of presiding officer while another member could act as majority leader," he said.

... so they could also approve the Bangsamoro bill and ratify it again tomorrow."

However, the rump session fizzled out, giving Alvarez another day as Speaker and the country's fourth highest-ranking official.

'Temporary setback'

Malacañang yesterday described as "unfortunate" the failure of the House to ratify the BOL before the adjournment of its session.

"We consider this as a temporary setback in the administration's goal of laying the foundation for a more genuine and lasting peace in Mindanao," presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said in a statement.

Despite the delay, the administration remains optimistic that the measure would be signed into law soon.

"We, however, remain confident that (President Duterte) will sign the BOL as soon as both houses of Congress finally ratify the bill," Roque said.

Presidential adviser on the Peace Process, Jose Dureza, said the BOL was a "collateral damage" to the issues in the House.

"The failure to ratify is unfortunate but it has nothing to do with the BOL itself. It was due to some leadership issues internal to the (House)," Dureza said in a text message.

"The BOL suffered this temporary setback as a collateral damage to an internal leadership issue in the House but I trust and expect that in due time the ratification which it deserves will take place as a matter of course," he added.

BOL ratification

The Senate ratified yesterday the proposed BOL.

The bicameral conference committee worked until late Sunday to come up with a clean copy of the BOL after both chambers last week finished reconciling their respective provisions of the landmark measure.

Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, principal sponsor of the BOL in the Senate, was gratified the chamber finally ratified the measure after three administrations have tried and failed to come up with such a law.

— With Alexis Romero, Paolo Romero, Jose Rodol Clapano

House leadership dispute delays BOL ratification

By Leila E. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

A leadership challenge in the House of Representatives on Monday delayed ratification of the proposed Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that would establish a new autonomous region for Muslims in Mindanao and, many hope, bring peace and development to the war-torn island.

The Senate unanimously ratified the conference report on the BOL but the House members adjourned their session early with-

out ratifying the act that would serve as the charter of the proposed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

No comment

Both chambers need to ratify the BOL for it to be signed into law by President Duterte, who had been expected to highlight the passage of the Bangsamoro charter in his State of the Nation Address to a joint session of Congress.

Mr. Duterte promised to sign the BOL within 48 hours of

submission by Congress.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which helped write the BOL, declined to comment on the delay.

"I don't want to comment on that. The situation is fluid," Mohager Iqbal, chair of the MILF peace panel, told the Inquirer.

Malacañang expressed disappointment.

"We find it unfortunate that the Bangsamoro Organic Law was not ratified before the adjournment of today's session of the House of Representatives."

presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri also held out hope for the ratification of the BOL in the House.

"Politically, the House is in shambles at the moment... We'll just wait tomorrow. We've waited for this for a long time. One day won't hurt," he said.

'Collateral damage'

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza also lamented the failure of the

House to ratify the measure.

"The BOL suffered this temporary setback as a collateral damage to an internal leadership issue in the House, but I trust and expect that in due time, the ratification, which it deserves, will take place as a matter of course," Dureza said.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said he had reservations about the deletion of important proposals from the Senate-House conference report.

One, he said, is the deletion of the 40-percent development

fund. Without this, he said, the money for Bangsamoro could be spent for other purposes instead of development projects.

Recto was also concerned over the deletion of the 50-50 sharing of locally generated revenue. This was increased to 75-25 in favor of Bangsamoro.

The conference report also does not require Bangsamoro to contribute anything to the national government for 10 years, he said.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JULIE M. AURELIO, GEOFFREY MAITEM, BONG SARMIENTO AND AP INQ

Bangsamoro draft casualty of House row

By Maricel V. Cruz

THE attempt to oust Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez on Monday aborted the scheduled ratification of the Bangsamoro Organic Law in time for the State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Duterte, prompting the House of Representatives to adjourn its session.

In other developments:

- President Duterte said he will sign the Bangsamoro Organic Law in 48 hours.

"I will read it before signing it because you might have inserted something in it," he said.

- Malacañang expressed disappointment after the House failed to ratify the consolidated version of the Bangsamoro Organic Law hours before President Duterte's third Sona.

Duterte was supposed to sign the bill into law before delivering his speech at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.

- Senate President Vicente Sotto III expressed hope that the House could ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law today, Tuesday, after it adjourned on Monday without ratifying the proposed measure that aims to bring peace in Mindanao. *Next page*

Bangsamoro...

From AJ

Sources said the leaders of various influential political parties, the Nacionalista Party, the National Unity Party and the Nationalist People's Coalition consolidated their forces to unseat Alvarez and install former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo as the new Speaker.

But the planned ouster fizzled out after

his camp, a House source said, reportedly made a phone call to Special Assistant to the President Bong Go and Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, informing the Speaker that the President did not give any "marching orders" on the matter.

The President's daughter, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio, was allegedly behind the Alvarez ouster plot, one of the sources claimed. Duterte-Carpio tore into Alvarez after he accused her of being part of the political opposition and said he had the power to

impeach her father. But Alvarez denied the allegations.

During the opening of the Monday session, Alvarez presided over the session attended by 271 lawmakers.

Alvarez managed to deliver his opening speech, which mentioned the House leadership's effort to push for the Duterte administration's federalism, as well as the adoption of several resolutions, including the one on convening the House and the Senate into a joint session for the Sona of the President.

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House failure to okay BOL dismays Zubiri

SENATE Majority Leader Migz Zubiri expressed disappointment after the House of Representatives failed to ratify the bicameral report of the Bangsamoro Organic Law as its session was abruptly adjourned yesterday.

But Zubiri remained positive that the BOL will still be ratified by the congressmen when the House resumes session. The BOL was earlier ratified by the Senate at the opening of the 3rd Regular Session of the Senate.

"This is not an end for BOL, it's just a temporary setback," Zubiri said.

He said that it is unfortunate that the ratification of the law was affected by the leadership squabble at the Lower House. Ever with this, Zubiri said that he still respects his counterparts in the Congress.

"Malungkor na malungkor ako na di natatagpuan ang mag-aaprubing bicam report sa House of Representative

ng BOL. Of course gusto sana namin ma-highlight ito sa SONA ng Pangulo at maging symbolic gesture of peace to our brothers in the Bangsamoro Region Jalo na sa stakeholders, the MILF and MNLF na jagang ilang dekada nilang hirintay ito," explained Zubiri.

However, Zubiri, the chairman of the Bicameral Committee, is positive that the BOL will be approved this Tuesday when session resumes. He told reporters that he sees no reason why House Minority leader Rudy Farinas will not push for the ratification of the law since he was among those who painstakingly finished the report until 11 p.m. last Sunday.

"In a way matagal na ninauap ang hirintay ito and one more day won't hurt," said Zubiri while expressing confidence that the approval of the BOL will not be affected even with the possible change in the leadership of the lower house.

Manila, Purification

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House fails to ratify Bangsamoro law

DUE to a leadership crisis, the House of Representatives failed to ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL).

The session was ad-

joined yesterday around 12:20 p.m. which prevented the lawmakers from ratifying the BOL, which is expected to be signed by President Rodrigo Duterte

during his State of the Nation Address (SONA).

About 270 lawmakers attended the opening of the session.

The opening of the 2nd

Regular Session of the 17th Congress was marred by rumors that Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez will be ousted and replaced by former President now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Many senators, from the majority block, have already confirmed the ouster move against Alvarez allegedly orchestrated or influenced by presidential daughter and Davao City Mayor Sarah Duterte.

After few approvals of the resolutions, the session was suspended for more than an hour during which lawmakers discussed the leadership change.

When the session resumed after 12 noon, Pampanga Rep. Jimmy Bondoc moved to adjourn and presiding chairman Gwei Garcia banged the gavel.

With the House's failure to pass the BOL, the president cannot sign the measure into law.

Last week, the Bicameral Conference Committee approved a final version of the BOL and agreed to ratify it at the opening of session to allow the historic signing of the bill during President Duterte's SONA. JPM

Senate ratifies Bangsamoro Organic Law

THE Senate on Monday ratified the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) abolishing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and creating instead a Bangsamoro Autonomous Region (BAR) with more powers. The 22 senators present at the opening of the third regular session of the 17th Congress did not object to a motion of Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri to ratify the bicameral conference

committee report on the clashing provisions of the BOL.

The BAR's territorial jurisdiction
➤ Ratifies A7

RATIFIES FROM A1

Senate

includes the ARMM area (Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao), six towns in Lanao del Norte, 39 *barangay* (villages) in North Cotabato, Cotabato City and Isabela City in Basilan.

The BAR will receive a yearly "block grant" of about P60 billion, which is equivalent to 5 percent of the net national internal revenue tax collection of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs from the third fiscal year immediately preceding the current fiscal year.

"After close to three administrations, we finally have reached this far and with this we'd like to put on record that we are in receipt of the bicameral conference committee report on the disagreeing provisions of Senate Bill 1717 and House Bill 6475 of the Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. We move to consider said bicameral committee report," Zubiri said.

"I believe this is the dawn of a new beginning for Mindanao: a dawn of peace followed by unhampered prosperity for our region, that I'm sure could catapult our economy to double-digit growth rates and the effects felt all throughout the country," he added.

"Many of our Filipino brothers

and sisters do not really understand the Bangsamoro Organic Law as shown by the recent SWS survey. But what the people should know is that this law may have local application in the Bangsamoro region. But the peace and prosperity we hope to achieve there in this area will be far from Batanes to Tawi-Tawi," the chairman of the Senate contingent to the committee that approved the BOL said.

Zubiri expressed hope that the proposed law would boost tourism and bring in more investments in Mindanao.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said he voted in favor of the bicameral report "essentially because what was passed is essentially the Senate version with the exception of one or two provisions."

"I do have some reservations as far as one or two provisions are concerned particularly on the 40 percent development fund which was not adopted in the bicameral version," Recto added.

"In the first three years there is a fiscal cost to the national government here. As I've mentioned during the period of amendments, our calculation is roughly P370 billion in the next three years. And that is why we put on record amendments to the Senate version then that 40 percent of this money should be spent for development projects," he said.

"The second issue, which was also deleted, was the 50-50 sharing. And I

take note that in the bicameral conference committee report for the next 10 years, the Bangsamoro region will not contribute anything to the national government, not a single cent to the national government at least in the next 10 years," Recto noted.

"The block grant shall be appropriated and released immediately. The block grant formula shall be reviewed five years after the effectivity of the BOL and every five years thereafter," he said.

The Bangsamoro Parliament, to be headed by a Chief Minister, will govern the BAR.

The Chief Minister must be elected by 80 members or representatives, of which at least 40 are party representatives.

The other half must be divided into district representatives and sectoral representatives.

Seats will be reserved for members of the non-Muslim indigenous peoples such as the Teduray-Latabangian, Dulangan Manobo, M'Laar and Higaonon.

The BOL provides that a plebiscite must be held not earlier than 90 days and no later than 150 days after the effectivity of the BOL.

The Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) should be composed of 80 members appointed by the President.

"Personnel in the education, health and social welfare offices shall be retained during the period of transition," Zubiri said.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO

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SENATE RATIFIES BANGSAMORO LAW

By Marion Purificacion

AFTER a year of tedious debates, negotiations and revisions, the Senate yesterday ratified the bicameral report on the Bangsamoro Organic Law which seeks to form a new Bangsamoro autonomous government.

The approval of the proposed law was the first act made by the 22 senators present in the opening of the 5th Regular Session of the 17th Congress.

Senate Majority Leader Migs Zubiri, chairman of the Bicameral Conference Committee, said that the Bangsamoro Organic Law is the solution to attaining lasting peace in Mindanao. He noted that the last three administrations tried to push for the approval of the law but became successful only in this administration under President Rodrigo Duterte.

Zubiri thanked his colleagues who gave their full cooperation in crafting the law, especially those who contributed their own amendments to some of the provisions.

He vowed due diligence in making sure that the law is implemented and its true intention satisfied.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto meanwhile expressed his reservation to a provision of the law which will allot at least P370 billion for three years based on the 40% development fund of the Bangsamoro government.

Recto pushed for the deletion of the provision saving the fund that will come from the national government can be used for other projects.

The senator also lamented the exclusion of his amendment for "hating kapatid" or a 50-50 wealth sharing of the Bangsamoro government and the national government. He reminded the people that the national government would not receive any tax contributions from the Bangsamoro government for 10 years based on the approved organic law.

But Recto clarified that he is one with the senators in approving the law which he said contains most of the contents of the Senate version aside from the two provisions he is contesting.

The Senate is now waiting for the House of Representatives to ratify the same organic law which will then be submitted to President Duterte to be signed into law.

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July 2015

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Bangsamoro bill collateral victim of leadership mess

BY WENDELL VIGILIA AND JP LOPEZ

THE House of Representatives yesterday failed to ratify the bicameral conference committee report on the proposed Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in time for President Duterte's State of the Nation Address (SONA) because of political wrangling for the House speakership post.

In the Senate, senators ratified the bicameral report when they resumed their session on Monday morning.

President Duterte, in his speech, asked stakeholders to allow him to review the proposed Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and sign it into law in two days.

"Give me 48 hours and I will sign the law (Bangsamoro Organic Law)," said the President.

The President said despite all that has been said against the BOL by sectoral groups, "I made a solemn commitment to never deny our Muslim brothers and sisters the basic legal tools they needed to chart their own destinies within the constitutional framework of our country."

"When the approved version is received by my office, the law has been passed, actually giving me 48 hours to sign it and ratify the law. I will take it to the next day. You may have inserted something there in the report, but that might not be the case," he said to lawmakers.

The House abruptly adjourned its session even before the ratification of the final version of the BARMM organic law, as the proposed Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) was taken up.

After an hour-long suspension, Deputy Minority floor leader Jun Pablo Bondoc moved to adjourn the session until 4 p.m., which was immediately agreed upon by Deputy Speaker Conrado Garcia despite objections from Camarines Sur Rep. Rosario Andaya Jr.

Hours before the resumption of the third

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BANGSAMORO

regular session of the 17th Congress, several congressmen confirmed an ouster plot against House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and replace him with Rep. Gloria Arroyo (PDP-Laban, Pampanga).

The ratification of both houses of Congress of the proposed BARMM organic law, or the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), is necessary in order for Duterte to sign the measure into law, which was originally set to happen before he delivered his third SONA.

Members of the bicameral conference committee approved the proposed legislation on the evening of July 18 after holding marathon meetings for two weeks to fast-track the reconciliation of the conflicting provisions of the measure. The measure has been certified as urgent by the President.

The Bangsamoro law is one of the requirements under a 2014 peace agreement between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Rep. Reynaldo Umali (PDP-Laban, Oriental Mindoro) in a radio interview said the chamber deferred the ratification of the

bill to another day.

"Definitely not today," Umali said.

Malacañang expressed disappointment over the failure of the House to ratify the measure.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque Jr. and Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza, in separate statements, said it was unfortunate the ratification did not happen in the House but they are hopeful it would happen soon to enable the President to sign it.

MILF vice chairman and spokesman Mohagher Iqbal likewise remained hopeful the measure will eventually be signed into law.

Iqbal said they were in Congress when they were informed the House session had been suspended without the BOL being ratified.

"If (failed ratification) had nothing to do at all with some substantive issues of the proposed law, The BOL suffered this temporary setback as a 'collateral damage' to an internal leadership issue in the House but I trust and expect that in due time, the ratification, which it deserves, will take place as a matter of course," Dureza said.

Roque said the President is ready to sign the BOL into law

as soon as it is ratified by both houses of Congress.

Senate majority floor leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, co-chairman of the bicameral conference committee, said he respects the decision of the House not to ratify the final report.

"We know that with the intramurals that are going on there now... we respect that. We will just patiently wait tomorrow," Zubiri said, adding he was expecting the enactment of the measure into law would be one of the highlights of the President's SONA.

SENATE RATIFICATION

During the morning session at the Senate, Zubiri said: "Now, I can have restful nights' sleep."

"I believe this is the dawn of a new beginning for Mindanao. A dawn of peace followed by unhampered prosperity for our region, that I'm sure could catapult our economy to double digit growth rates, and the effects felt all throughout the country," Zubiri also said.

"Gone will be the days of the battlefield shown in CNN and BTV, and other international news media. Hopefully, this will pave the

way for more tourism, for more investments not only in the country but especially in Mindanao. Finally, we can achieve a just and dignified peace for our brothers and sisters in Mindanao," he added.

Voting for its ratification, Senate President pro tempore Ralph Recto reiterated his reservation on the decision of the 40 percent development fund shouldered by the national government for the next three years amounting to roughly P370 billion.

"And just to mention, part of record that in the next 3 years there is a fiscal cost to the national government, not," Recto said, stressing such amount may be spent to development and jobs in the region.

He also expressed reservation in the 75-25 wealth sharing amendment from the 2010 that he proposed and was included in the Senate version.

"I take note that in the bicameral conference committee report for the second year of bangsamoro region will not contribute anything to the national government, not a single cent to the national government at least in the next 10 years," Recto said.

- With Jacelyn Montemayor

Melee stalls autonomy law

The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) or the former Bangsamoro Basic Law was the main victim of the failed leadership takeover attempt at the House of Representatives after the chamber failed to ratify it.

The House abruptly adjourned its morning session without ratifying the bicameral conference committee

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Melee stalls autonomy law

From page 1

report on the OLBARMM.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri called a "temporary setback" the delay in the House ratification of the bill.

The Senate passed the landmark law yesterday. "This is not the end for BOL; it's just a temporary setback. We are looking at maybe a one-day delay," Zubiri said.

"It could be passed. I think the intramurals with the House leadership has nothing to do with the BOL. It was a totally different problem altogether. The BOL, as far as the House is concerned, is already approved," he added.

Zubiri, however, said he was saddened the signing did not happen during President Duterte's 3rd State of the Nation Address (SoNA).

Session halted

Deputy Majority Leader Juan Pablo Bondoc moved to adjourn the session until 4 p.m. for the President's

SoNA following an hour-long suspension.

Deputy Speaker Gwendolyn Garcia immediately acted on Bondoc's motion despite objection from Camarines Sur Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr.

Majority Leader Rodolfo Fariñas earlier said the House would ratify the measure at the opening of the third regular session to pave the way for President Duterte's signing of the landmark measure on or before the SoNA.

The sudden halt in the session was the result of moves to unseat Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez by the group of Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Both chambers need to ratify the autonomy bill for it to be signed into law by Mr. Duterte, who was expected to highlight the peace deal with the largest Muslim rebel group in his annual SoNA before a joint session of Congress later Monday. The rebels didn't immediately react.

Mario J. Mallari

Arroyo power grab?

'Illegally' sworn in twice

By Mario J. Mallari

Former President and Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who was the beneficiary of the extraconstitutional Edsa 2 revolt that ousted the popularly elected President Joseph Estrada in 2001 attempted another power grab this time to become House Speaker.

In a stealthy move, Arroyo tried to take her oath as head of the chamber while Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez was waiting outside the plenary hall for President Duterte who is scheduled to deliver his State of the Nation Address.

Later on in the night, her supporters again swore in Arroyo in an apparent illegal act since it was done using an old mace taken from the House archives.

Clearly illegal

Political analyst and *Daily Tribune* columnist Chito Avecilla said the House assembly of Mrs. Arroyo's supporters was illegal.

"Any position that is not authorized by the rules is a power grab," Avecilla said.

"It is not enough that you have the number, proper procedures should be followed," he added.

As Duterte arrived on a helicopter in the heavily secured congressional complex, Arroyo, backed by dozens of allied legislators, took the main seat in the center stage of the House's plenary hall in a sign that she was taking over the post of Speaker.

Arroyo's nine year administration from 2001 to 2010 was marked with what was termed as transactional politics in which she obtains concessions from legislators and government officials by promising something in return.

A House insider said President Duterte almost walked out after being

upset by Arroyo's takeover attempt.

SoNA, BBL compromised
The *Daily Tribune* source said that Mr. Duterte was angered by Arroyo's act since it "upstaged the SoNA and sidetracked the BBL."

"If you won't maintain the status quo then I'm walking out," the source quoted the President as saying when he met with Arroyo and her group.

"It was Alvarez, along with Senate President Vicente Sotto III, who called to order the joint session of Congress."

"I want Ebo Alvarez at my side," Mr. Duterte was quoted as saying.

The Blue Governor's office ceremonial escorts of the President were shown on television

withdrawing from the House session hall which the source said was the result of Mr. Duterte's threat to forego the SoNA and walkout.

Mr. Duterte's escort however, later returned after a few minutes.

Television shots showed the President apparently upset point at someone in the hold area where members of his family were gathered at the SoNA.

Alvarez then took the seal of the Speaker at the rostrum. It was Alvarez, along with Senate President Vicente Sotto III, who called to order the joint session of Congress.

Mr. Duterte also acknowledged Alvarez as the Speaker at the start of his speech.

Speech delayed
The leadership impasse delayed Mr. Duterte's speech for more than 1 hour. Arroyo
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Arroyo power grab?

From page 1

tried to take her oath at around 3:40 p.m., minutes before the scheduled 4 p.m. SoNA of the President and while the House was not yet on official session. She was surrounded by her apparent supporters.

Arroyo tried to speak from the stage during the dramatic standoff but her microphone was turned off.

She tried to yell, apparently to explain what was happening, but later stepped away from the stage, waving at the crowd.

Alvarez, along with Senate President Vicente Sotto III, fetched Duterte and led the visibly confused leader to a holding room as the dispute over House

leadership unfolded in the chamber, which was packed with diplomats, legislators and other dignitaries for Duterte's speech.

"The ouster move against Alvarez came after a manifesto of support to endorse Arroyo

many hope will settle one of Asia's longest-raging Muslim separatist rebellion.

Deputy Speaker Miro Quimbo said the installation of Arroyo as Speaker was maceless and no roll call was held as its validity could be questioned.

Duterte's speech.

The leadership row earlier prevented the House from ratifying a Muslim autonomy deal that

"It's unprecedented. I don't recall it ever happening in the last 25 years or since the Congress was established that we've had a change in leadership or a session held not without any prior notice," Quimbo said.

The ouster move against Alvarez came after a manifesto of support to endorse Arroyo's speakership had circulated Monday morning.

Duterte's allies said the ouster move against Alvarez has the support of the President's daughter, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio, who earlier had a spat with Alvarez.

The Alvarez and Duterte-Carpio conflict allegedly started in February when the Davao City mayor formed

the regional political party *Hugpong ng Pagbabago*.

A tense situation was palpable in the session hall as lawmakers from both camps worked to get the needed 147 votes to secure the position for Alvarez or unseat him and elect Arroyo.

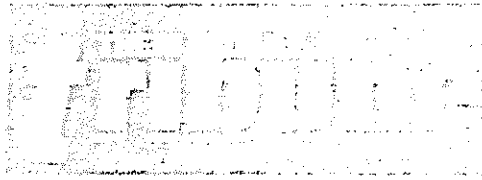
Talks about the ouster of Alvarez had been rife in recent months, particularly after his public rift with the daughter of President Rodrigo Duterte, Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio.

In the end, it was Alvarez who sat to the president's left during the joint session.

Alvarez is not giving up the speakership without a fight as he said that with what transpired yesterday he seems to be still the Speaker.

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July 2018



Rody tempers non-passage of Moro Law

By Mario J. Mallari

In his most presidential stance yet, President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday peppered his third State of the Nation Address

(SoNA) with assurances of his earlier policies and projects to make up for Congress's failure to enact the OLBARMM.

The Organic Law on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region

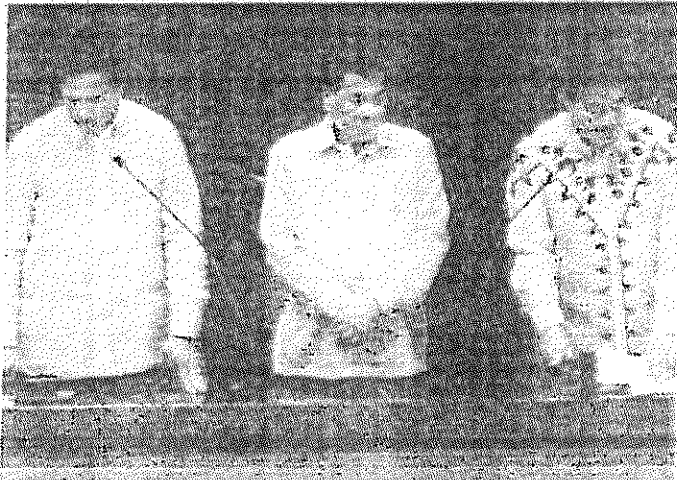
in Muslim Mindanao, which should have been the highlight of President Duterte's SoNA, was shoved by the wayside by an attempted power grab by forces who switched allegiance to the once discredited Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Arroyo mustered enough numbers to attempt to claim the House leadership from Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez but her power grab move only derailed the OLBARMM's passage.

The Chief Executive's speech lasted just 47 minutes and was applauded 21 times by the audience who had earlier saw Congress in its worse when Arroyo's crew set the tone for a leadership change despite the House session postponed earlier after it failed to pass the OLBARMM for the President's signature.

The SoNA was delayed by

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Top leaders Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, right, bangs the gavel as President Duterte, center, looks on while Senate President Vicente Sotto III prepares for the annual address. AF

Rody tempers non-passage of Moro Law

From page 1

more than an hour and the President stuck to reading the speech from a teleprompter, digressing just twice to give his personal inputs on the issues of the Bangsamoro Basic Law and labor "contractualization."

He was given a standing ovation at the end of his speech, which was not marked with any cuss word that had been used by his critics to taint his gains, inputs and policies in his past speeches.

Duterte stood firm on the implementation of the tax reform law despite the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) being unpopular.

"Some have incorrectly blamed our efforts toward a fairer tax system for all the price increases in the past months and some irresponsibly suggested to stop the TRAIN's implementation. We cannot and should not. We need this for sustainable growth that leaves no Filipino left behind," Mr. Duterte said.

The President said that with the passage and implementation of the TRAIN, beneficiaries of the government's unconditional cash transfers increased from four million to six million this year.

The President also stressed his strong stance against calls to stop his drive against illegal drugs.

"The illegal drugs war will not be sidelined. Instead, it will be as relentless and chilling if you will, as on the day it began," Mr. Duterte said. "Your concern is human rights, mine is human lives. The lives of our youth are being wasted and families are

destroyed and all because of the chemicals called shabu, cocaine, cannabis and heroine."

It was a revelation that the President said China is a partner of the Philippines in the campaign to curb the manufacture and distribution of illegal drugs.

"Our re-energized relations with China has also led to an unprecedented level of cooperation between our nations on the war against transnational crimes," Mr. Duterte said.

"Our shared intelligence led to the discovery and dismantling of the clandestine shabu laboratories and the arrest of Chinese chemists [connected] with the Dragon organization called the Wu Syndicate," he added.

He also stressed to keep his

relentless campaign against corruption saying that while he values friendship, he will not hesitate to sack any member of his administration to be linked to corruption.

Previously, the President had asked Interior and Local Government Secretary Ismael Sueno and National Irrigation Administration Administrator Poe Larina to resign after they were accused of corrupt practices in office.

He warned agencies to stop red tape and start being customer-friendly.

"I value friendship, make no

mistake about it. But it has its limits," said Mr. Duterte.

Also, the Commander in Chief vowed not to waiver on defending the country's territory but cited the much-improved relationship between Manila and Beijing, tainted only by the standoff at Panayag Shoal off Zambales in 2012.

"Our improved relationship with China, however, does not mean that we will waiver in our commitment to defend our interests in the West Philippine Sea," said the President, seeking applause from the audience.

"This is why we engage China through bilateral and multilateral platforms such as the ASEAN-China and the Philippines-China Bilateral Consultation Mechanism," he added.

The President said that such engagement with China yielded positive results.

BOL hindi naratipikahan

Nabigong maratipikahan ng House of Representatives ang Bangsamoro Organic Law dahil sa pag-adjourned ng session nito kahapon ng umaga.

Ayon kay Akbayan Rep. Tom Villarin, ang hindi pag-apruba sa BOL ay bunsod ng kudeta kay Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez at nasaknapisyo ang panukala dahil sa intramurals o hindi pagkakasundo ng mga miyembro ng supermajority sa usapin tungkol

sa umang'y ouster n Speaker. Paliwanag din ni Villarin, hindi ngavon ang supermajority kaya ang BOL ang naging casualty sa gusot sa administration party.

Ikinalungkot ng Kiaicahang ang pagkabigo ng Kongreso na maratipikahan nito ang BOL na nakatakdang sanang lagdaan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte bilang batas sa kanyang ikatlong State of the Nation Address (SONA), ayon kay Presidential

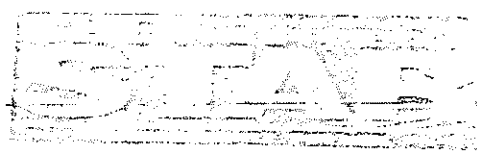
Spokesman Harry Roque.

Gayunman, niratipikahan ng Senado kanapon ang BOL na magiging daan para sa paglikha ng Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) na papalit naman sa ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao).

Ikinalungkot naman ni Senator Juan Miguel Zubiri na hindi naratipikahan sa House of Representatives ang panukala.

Naniniwala si Zubiri na isa ang BOL sa dapat naging highlight sa State of the Nation Address.

Pero naratipikahan sa Zubiri na maratipikahan din sa House ang panukala na binaghi-lapaw din umang' ng mga congressmen na naging kinatawan sa bicameral conference committee. (Ruay Arda at Maria Escudero)



POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

House revolt bares crack in leadership

THE BLITZKRIEG that nearly toppled Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez yesterday before the opening joint session of the 17th Congress to listen to the State of the Nation Address of President Rodrigo Duterte exposed a crack in the administration power structure.



The unexpected turn of events puts pressure on Duterte to take a firmer hold of his political allies. The revolt in the House of Representatives could spread to other sectors propping up his two-year-old presidency.

But there is also a view that instead of shattering Duterte's political base, the attempt to replace Alvarez before the SONA with Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo may even consolidate, in reaction, the President's control of the political structure.

As we write this at 5:17 p.m., Alvarez is back at his assigned place standing with Senate President Tito Sotto and President Duterte between them for the singing of the national anthem and, later, his SONA that was set to start at 6 p.m.

The big question that lurks in our mind is on whose side is Duterte - for Arroyo or Alvarez? There is talk that Alvarez was just allowed to carry out his ceremonial task yesterday, but would continue to be challenged as Speaker.

Duterte reported on his accomplishments. He reaffirmed his resolve to step up his anti-illegal drug campaign that he said is aimed at benefiting the greater number. His critics, he said, are worried of the present while he is more concerned with the future.

Communication Secretary Martin Andanar had given a foretaste or *Yos-Tube* of the same accomplishments listed by the President: the drug war; end of contracting out workers; OFW welfare; 9-1-1 and 8888 citizens' hotlines; extension of passports and drivers' licenses; PNP-AFP benefits; agrarian reform; free irrigation; clearing of lake fishpens; diplomatic handling of China issues; peace talks with rebels; the Bangsamoro law; and the rebuilding of Marawi.

The rest of Andanar's report segued to what looked like a dazzling Duterte vision, including ambitious projects presented with the use of slick slides of architecture and engineering drawings. A sample is the dream New Clark City rising at the Pampanga-Tarlac boundary.

Andanar's preview of the SONA was all positive, none of it giving a hint of the critical comments about what had been done or left undone by the administration during the period under review.

Delivering his 88-minute SONA yesterday after a delay occasioned by the attempted coup against Alvarez, Duterte managed somehow to project the image of a leader with a heart. His speech was more restrained than his SONA last year that was peppered with expletives.

Duterte's heart, by the way, was pronounced in good running condition over the weekend by specialists at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center who gave him a thorough checkup.

As expected, the President sounded like going back to campaign mode - reciting once more with feeling the exhortation against drugs and crime that convinced 15 million-plus voters in 2016 to elevate him from the Davao city mayoralty to the presidency.

We expect many Filipinos, disposed to looking up to a forceful tribal chief, to hang on to his renewed promises of a better life. Optimism runs through the melodrama of this nation of more than 100 million - never mind that 40 percent of them (11.1 million families) now consider themselves poor.

Still, the people would have to touch the ground to feel the true state of the nation, which after all is how the common man feels it in his gut.

Not a few people see these as indicators of the true state of the nation: Rising prices; falling real wages; growing joblessness; runaway crime and corruption; investor bypassing us; a Red Dragon gobbling up maritime areas; plus talk of a debt trap waiting at the end of a building-borrowing frenzy.

More than reiterating its still unfulfilled promises, the administration should address immediately the deadly combination of natural and man-made disasters bedeviling the nation.

Number of poor Pinyos rises to 48%

IN THE LATEST (June 27, 30) nationwide survey, the Social Weather Stations found the number of respondents who said their families were poor has increased by 1.3 million just three months after they were asked the same question.

The SWS second quarter survey showed that self-rated poverty rose to 48 percent from 42 percent in March. This translates to an increase from an estimated 9.8 million to 11.1 million families.

It was the highest self-rated poverty figure in the country, released Friday, since the 50 percent obtained in the SWS survey in March 2017.

The only place where the self-rated poverty number went down was in Balabac, Luzon (Luzon outside Metro Manila), where it dropped from 40 percent in March to 27 percent in June.

The places where the number of Filipinos saying their families were poor went up were Metro Manila, by 15 points (from 30 percent to 45 percent); the Visayas, by 13 points (from 35 percent to 47 percent); and Mindanao, by 15 points (from 42 percent to 57 percent).

The survey showed that the self-rated poverty threshold, or the monthly amount needed by a family of five for them to not consider themselves poor, increased in March from P10,000 to P15,000.

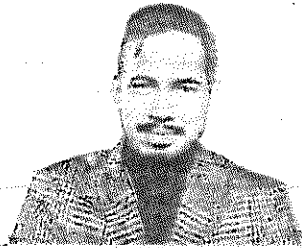
Those who considered their families poor said they needed P6,000 every month on the average for them to reach the poverty threshold. It was the highest recorded value for the self-rated poverty gap since first surveyed in 2010.

The number of Filipinos who said their families were "1000-poor" - or those who rated themselves as poor based on the food that they eat - increased to 34 percent, or 7.1 million families, compared to 29 percent, or 6.7 million families, in March.

The minimum daily wage for non-agricultural workers for each region is: NCR, P475-P512; CAR, P270-P300; Reg-1, P250-P310; Reg-2, P340; Reg-3, P329-P380; Reg-4A, P317-P400; Reg-4B, P259-P300; Reg-5, P280-P290; Reg-6, P295-P365; Reg-7, P308-P366; Reg-8, P305; Reg-9, P296; Reg-10, P336-P358; Reg-11, P340; Reg-12, P310; CARAGA, P305; and ARMM, P280.

ROUTED

What Duterte got right



HORIZONS

RICHARD HEYDARIAN

Much has been said about President Duterte's shortcomings. Despite his promise to behave more "statesman-like," the President has defied every single convention in favor of an all-consuming cult of action, which has shaken the foundations of our fragile democracy.

His "independent" foreign policy is increasingly looking like a China-friendly strategic catechism. His war on drugs has sparked international outrage and deepened the country's isolation. And his ubiquitous unpredictability has rattled enthusiastic investors and seasoned economic managers alike.

Thousands of deaths are still under investigation, further exacerbating the climate of impunity. A man of many firsts, Mr. Duterte has launched an emerging imperial presidency that will likely define the Philippines for generations to come.

As he enters his third year in office, the question is: What has he got right? What explains his enduring charisma and popularity among Filipinos?

In my view, the President got at least four things right in his first two years in office.

The first was to place the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in charge of his war on drugs. From the very beginning, and countless other experts have emphasized the necessity for a methodical, surgical and calibrated response to the drug menace in this country.

The Philippine National Police was not designed for a Duterte-style drug war. And, gladly, the Armed Forces of the Philippines kept a healthy distance from the whole affair, instead focusing on its primary duty of protecting our territorial integrity.

Once the PDEA took the lead in the drug war in late 2017, there was an immediate and massive decline in the number of reported

extrajudicial killings. Crucially, the efficacy of the counternarcotics operations seemingly improved under the less lethal approach.

Unfortunately, however, it took widespread public outrage following the gruesome murder of innocent teenagers such as Kian delos Santos for the President to revisit the wisdom of his drug war. His public apology to Kian's family was noteworthy, though justice has yet to be found for such cases.

Second, paradoxically, it took the Duterte administration to pass the historic Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), the supposed signature national security accomplishment of the previous administration. The President rightly certified the bill as urgent, leveraging his political capital to hammer out differences and nudge Congress and the bill's stakeholders toward a mutually satisfactory compromise.

Thanks to the BBL, there is now a roadmap toward lasting peace in Mindanao. For sure, it will take more than just a legal framework to address the profound grievances that have driven the decades-long conflict in the South. But, at least, Mr. Duterte oversaw the nation taking a leap of

faith in the right direction.

Third, Mr. Duterte has come under fire and rightly so, for his acquiescent posturing toward China. From his call for a "meek" and "humble" diplomacy in exchange for China's "mercy," to his refusal to assert our arbitration award and even quipping about the Philippines becoming a "province of China," the President has risked making the country look like China's newest regional client state.

In international politics, perception matters, and the rhetoric of heads of state accordingly carries serious strategic implications. As one senior Western military official told me, "We can't want to fight for Scarborough Shoal more than your own president." This isn't provincial politics anymore.

Yet, it was under this administration, and particularly thanks to actions such as Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, that we are finally upgrading our deprecit facilities in Pag-asa and other features in the Kalayaan Group of Islands.

Lastly, the Duterte administration should be credited for its ambitious infrastructure vision, which, even if only partly successful, will redefine the country's economic future. From the accelerated completion of Mactan-Cebu International Airport to the launch of other big-ticket projects in Clark (airport expansion) and Metro Manila (subway), there are reasons to be optimistic about the coming infrastructure landscape of the country.

Years from now, we may also thank Mr. Duterte for temporarily shutting down Boracay, though his timing and methods were definitely far from optimal. How I wish he would also pay attention to the impending environmental disaster in other places, including in my hometown of Baguio.

jrheydarian@gmail.com

Cut the umbilical cord

DURING and after his campaign for the presidency, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte aka Digong promised to rid the country of foreign troops.

"I really hate it. I don't want it. We don't need it. The US should not treat the Philippines like a 'dog with a leash'," he said.

Then, in early October 2016, Digong vowed to review the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which would allow US troops to be stationed on rotational basis in Philippine military bases.

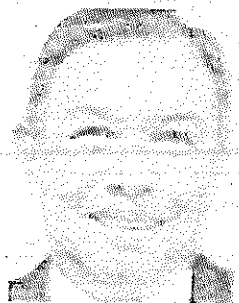
Digong also said the bilateral military exercises between the Philippines and US would end within his term.

The Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) paved the way in 1998 for the resumption of the military exercises which ended after the Senate denied the extension of the military bases agreement in 1991. The US had to leave Clark Air Base, Subic Naval Base and other strategic bases.

As a former member of our Foreign Service, the years 1991 to 1998 were, to me, the glory years of our foreign policy. We were able to make decisions with only the national interest as the determining factor, particularly in international affairs, without undue interference or dictation from the US.

Yet we survived - with our national pride and dignity intact and gained the respect of other countries to boot!

Those years ended when ex-President Fidel Ramos initiated the forging of the VFA which was subsequently approved in 1998 by ex-President Joseph Estrada who was, ironically, a member of the



CROSSHAIRS
RIZO ARCELA

Military dependence on the US brought us nothing but that - dependence on the US - where she really wants us to remain!

so-called "Magnificent Twelve" in the then Senate that terminated the military bases agreement with the US.

In a speech I delivered before the Malaya Rotary Club shortly after the VFA was approved by the Senate, I referred to it as the "Second Coming." The Rotarians thought at first I was going to speak on something religious but that's another story.

At the point, I would like to address myself to our military establishment. The time to cut the umbilical cord with the US military is long overdue. Look where it has taken us after seven long decades of dependence on the US. We now have one of the weakest armed forces in the region where once we were next only to Japan. Doesn't that tell you something? Dependence on the US brought us nothing but that - dependence on the US - where she really wants us to remain!

As I wrote in an earlier piece, I believe Digong is sincere in his promise but he should no longer

delay in keeping it. He is now into his third year in office. The longer he waits, the more difficult and even dangerous for him to achieve his objective for reasons of which I'm sure, he is aware.

The big question now is does Digong have the gumption to give substance and meaning to his promise? If he has, and I think he does, I say abrogating the VFA and the EDCA would be good time to start.

Would denying ourselves of the supposed security blanket that US troop presence gives us not tempt China to take over our country?

No. We would still have the Mutual Defense Treaty with the US... unless, of course, she decides not to honor it which, at the end of the day, would not be in her national interest.

US PLEDGES

The US Government, through its Embassy in Manila, has lately been bandying about her pledge

to provide \$265 million over the next two years to assist our counterterrorism efforts.

"The assistance will include training, equipment, and other support to build comprehensive law enforcement capacity within a rule of law framework to deny terrorists operations, funding and movement," the US Embassy said.

At first glance the "equipment" referred to would presumably comprise of weapons appropriate for our "comprehensive law enforcement capacity."

However, the Embassy was quick to point out that "with support for non-kinetic rule of law approaches to addressing terrorism threat will complement our sustained commitment to building the counterterrorism capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines."

In other words, the provision of weapons that we need to fight terrorism is ruled out, consistent I suppose, with Washington's policy not to provide us with such weapons "that may be used to violate the human rights of our people in the context of the government's non-legal anti-terror campaign."

The US Embassy Ekwes made it a point to mention in its statement that in 2010, the US Government also gave us \$32 million in training and services to Philippine law enforcement.

I believe it is incumbent upon our government to let our people know if the \$26 million will actually given.

Just an accounting of what they want us to do would also be in order. This is to prevent our people

CUT

from swallowing hook, line and sinker what the US claims without confirmation from the authorities concerned.

US SANCTIONS VS. RUSSIA

Certain quarters assert that the planned purchase of grenade launchers by our government from the Russian arms company Rosoboronexport may result in sanctions by the US.

Rosoboronexport is one of the Russian companies blacklisted by the US after Russia's annexation of Crimea in early 2014.

Presidential spokesman Dmitry Rogozin said he does "not know how they can enforce a US domestic legislation on a sovereign state, on a transaction that will not occur on US soil."

I think the US can, if she chooses, in many different ways. But will it be in accordance with international law? I doubt it.

If the sanctions against Russia were imposed by the United

Nations Security Council in line with Chapter VII of the UN Charter (unlikely because of the Russian veto), then every member of the world body would be obliged to comply with the sanctions.

Rogozin said the government "will study the matter" of purchasing the grenade launchers from Rosoboronexport. What for? We need them, we buy them, especially if it will further strengthen our relations with Russia. We then simply face squarely whatever sanctions the US, our "true and reliable ally," may impose upon us.

REMINDERS

This segment is intended to remind the Duterte administration of some of its yet unfulfilled promises and matters that need attention and/or follow-up action. More importantly, the people are entitled to know what's being done about them.

1. Duterte's promise to rid the country of foreign troops. This, of course, necessitates abrogating

the lopsided VFA and the EDCA with the US.

2. Reciprocal visa arrangements with the US and other countries. What is the DFA doing about this? Our embassy in Washington?

3. The retrieval of the Balangiga bells. (Sources say the return of the bells is now awaiting a certification of some kind from the US Defense Department to be submitted to the US Congress. Is our embassy in Washington on top of this?)

4. The return of the Canadian warship. (Sources say the DOJ has filed a motion before the proper court for the importer to return the warship to Canada. No decision yet. No word about what Canada is doing.)

Today is the 87th day of the twelfth year of the enforced disappearance of Jonas Burgos, son of the late press icon and founder of this newspaper, Joe Burgos.

After the acquittal of Maio Florio Balaguera, the only person formally charged with Jonas' kidnap-

ping, I guess what happens next is now up to Divine Providence.

From an internet friend:

I was sitting at a bar one time when I noticed that, next to me, an old drunk was hassling one of the biggest, toughest guys I'd ever seen.

The old guy was clearly blasted, and kept getting in the tough guy's face, saying "I slept with your mother."

Despite being huge and jacked, the tough guy just kept shrugging it off. The old guy laughed in the tough guy's face, saying it again. "Hey, I slept with your mother."

Then, the old man even poked him, and repeated himself. "Not seriously, I slept with your mother."

At this point, finally, the tough guy had had enough. He grabbed the old man by his jacket and began to pull him out of the bar, yelling, "That's it. We're going home. Dad. You're drunk."

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/arnoldpaulin954/>

Peace path remains open

66
The Muslim rebels are clinging on President Rody Duterte's promise to deliver the law.

The Bangsamoro autonomy law which is equated to bringing lasting peace in Mindanao highlighted Congress' opening yesterday despite a momentary setback.

Credit for the impending passage of the law remains with Congress since it was through the hard work of the members of the two chambers that made it possible.

The Organic Law for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, or OLBARMM, went through the toughest debates until the day of its approval in the bicameral conference committee. The contentious issues focused mainly on the territorial scope of the autonomous region.

It encountered a slight deviation from the plan to have it approved yesterday due to the leadership dispute but the intent and will among legislators to pass it remain.

Long-term peace is the promise of the law since it will require the gradual disarmament and eventual disbandment of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

MILF vice chair Ghuzali Jaafar said the OLBARMM covers "88 to 90 percent" of what was pledged to the rebels in the Comprehensive Agreement of the Bangsamoro signed under former President Noynoy Aquino but Jaafar said it remained acceptable to them.

The Muslim rebels are clinging on President Rody Duterte's promise to deliver the law with his deep understanding of the problems in Mindanao being a native of the region.

Rody, who claims to be of Moro lineage, promised to establish the Bangsamoro region immediately after taking power in 2016.

Mindanao's potential remains largely untapped due to the unfair perceptions of instability which resides in small parts of the second biggest island of the country.



Unlocking the promises of Mindanao is seen as the next leap of progress for the country as Luzon and the Visayas continue to progress.

Portions of Mindanao covered by the OLBARMM are among the poorest in the country.

Jaafar said: "God willing, now that we have this government, we can improve the lives of our people" to expound on the promises of the law.

The law is Rodry's legacy to Filipinos since it took 22 years of negotiations between the MILF and the government to have it approved.

The MILF first negotiated with the government in 1993 under President Fidel Ramos. When President Joseph Estrada took office, he declared an "all-out war" against the group.

Negotiations restarted in 2001 under President Gloria Arroyo after the EDSA 2 revolt that ousted Estrada.

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*Mindanao's
potential
remains
largely
untapped.*

A peace deal was signed between the MILF and President Noynoy Aquino in October 2012 which paved the way for a 'comprehensive agreement' in March 2014.

The Bangsamoro Basic Law was under deliberation in Congress when the Marasapang tragedy transpired in January 2017 in which a police mission to arrest Malaysian terrorist Marwan resulted in a firefight with MILF fighters that led to the death of 44 Special Action Force commandos. Legislators dropped the BBL as a priority as a result of the tragedy.

The quest for peace remains as the organic law will be subjected to a plebiscite that may take place this year in provinces to be included in the autonomous territory.

The danger remains that the failure to pass the law may prompt the forming of a splinter group, similar to the MILF separating from the Moro National Liberation Front, which originally launched the campaign for a Moro state to secede from the country.

The creation of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao under an agreement with the MNLF resulted in the MILF breaking off that is not impossible to happen again in the case of the MILF.

A lingering worry is that if the law passes and is still rejected, discontent may ensue in the Bangsamoro region with Islamic extremists waging in the wings.

Security managers said the Islamic State, which held hostage Marawi City for five months last year, remains active in Mindanao mostly in the hinterlands.

Rodry said the law seeks to correct the historical injustices committed against Filipino Muslims or the Moros and have them part of the country's success story. 4

The quest for peace in Mindanao remains perilous but the road to it has been opened with the imminent passage of the law.

Tatak ng Pagbabago:

The true State of the Nation

“
In the two years since the President took office, his dedication to rid the country of its ills – including the proliferation of illegal drugs, criminality, corruption in government and poverty – remains the same.”

President Rodrigo Duterte delivered his third State of the Nation Address (SoNA) yesterday. The President's 2018 SoNA is a continuation of his two previous SoNAs as he once again articulated the Filipino people's desire for genuine and meaningful change.

The SoNA is a much-awaited public event in the country. It is a venue where the President reports on the status of the nation as mandated by Article VII, Section 23 of the 1987 Constitution stating that "the President shall address the Congress at the opening of its regular session." The President, before delivering the SoNA, may also present to Congress some proposals or particular legislations deemed important.

President Duterte arrived at the Batasang Pambansa around 3 p.m. onwards. Upon reaching the Batasang



BRIEFING ROOM
Harry Roque

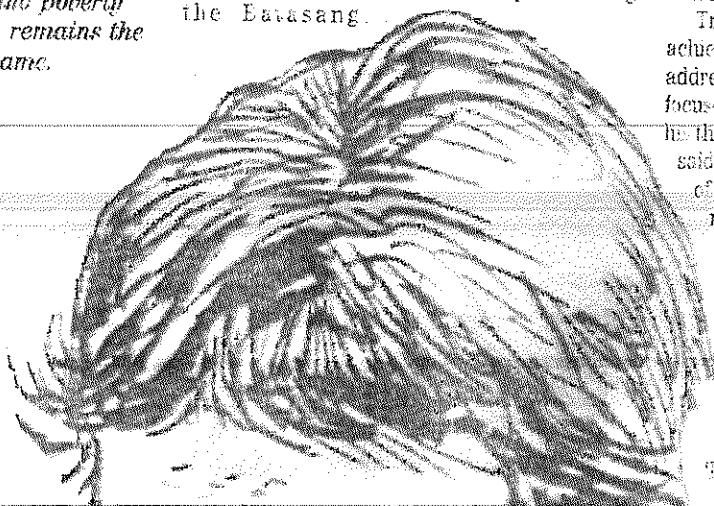
Pambansa, the President was given arrival honors led by the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief-of-staff, as well as by the sergeants-at-arms of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines.

A Welcoming Committee led by the Senate President, the Senate Majority Leader, the House Speaker, the

House Majority Leader and the secretaries general of both chambers, greeted the President, and escorted him to the Legislator's Lounge. From the Legislator's Lounge, the President finally proceeded to the Batasang Plenary Hall and delivered his speech.

Traditionally, the SoNA is a highlight of achievements of the previous year but in his address to the nation this year, the President focused on the essentials he intended to do in his third year in office. As director Joyce Bernad said she wanted the people to feel the message of the President, for them to understand the message of genuine and meaningful change – that they are part of that change.

Indeed, aside from the change in directors, what set yesterday's SoNA apart from the all the previous SoNAs is the holding of a three-part series pre-SoNA Forum, "Tatak ng Pagbabago" in which the Duterte administration's accomplishments were enumerated. The pre-SoNA Forum highlighted the



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*Justice
will catch up
with those
who steal
government
funds.*

cornerstones of this administration, including law and order, lasting peace and prosperity for all, with the end goal of making every Filipino's life better. And we have more than a few good news that were reported during the forum.

Much has been done in the last two years. His administration has spearheaded initiatives such as protecting the welfare of overseas Filipino workers, ending 'contractualization,' reforming the country's tax system, establishing *Malasakit* Centers throughout the country and many more landmark measures seeking to safeguard the present and the future generations of Filipinos.

Much more, however, needs to be done to make these changes sustained. In this year's SoNA, the Chief Executive reiterated his strong commitment to eradicate corruption, which he likened to a leech that bleeds the government of funds and brings "horrible consequences" to innocent Filipinos. The President has warned anew: "Justice will catch up with those who steal government funds." We in government live by this order.

The President has also made clear that the cries for change of our brothers and sisters in Mindanao have been heard as his administration is now in the process of significantly increasing the region's budget. The President hopes to see this promise fulfilled by the end of this term.

On the Bangsamoro Organic Law, we find it unfortunate that the BOL was not ratified before

the adjournment of yesterday's session of the House of Representatives. We consider this as a temporary setback in the administration's goal of laying the foundation for a more genuine and lasting peace in Mindanao. We, however, remain confident in the President's own words that he would sign the BOL at the soonest possible time.

On the West Philippine Sea, the President underscored that he will not waver in our commitment to defend our interests in the West Philippine Sea even as he mentioned our improved relationship with China, which led to positive developments that include renewed access by Filipino fishermen in the areas in the WPS.

Overall, President Duterte's commitment to making Filipinos' lives safer and more comfortable remains resolute, as evident in his third SoNA. His words reflected his strong political will and served as an inspiration to his fellow government workers, encouraging them to do their jobs as servants of the people. For one, the President has pushed the passage of several measures aimed at protecting the public's well-being. These include measures establishing the Coconut Farmers' Trust Fund, the Department of Disaster Management, the National Land Use Act as well as the Universal Health Care Bill that was authored by yours truly when I was a member of Congress.

In the two years since the President took office, his dedication to rid the country of its ills – including the proliferation of illegal drugs, criminality, corruption in government, and poverty – remains the same. With the Filipino people's support, genuine and meaningful change is within reach.

24

24

State of the nation's anger



WE ARE a divided country. This we saw yesterday. Outside the Batasan building, supporters of President Rodrigo Duterte converged to cheer him as he delivers his third State of the Nation Address (Sona) during a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Representatives and Senators, and their guests, came in their Filipiniana best, stood and applauded politely at the right lines. Standing out for me were the Makabayan legislators with their beautiful protest barongs and gowns. I would have emulated them if I were in those halls.

Overshadowing the usual pomp of the Sona, former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her allies made a move to replace Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez just before the

President delivered his speech. I have no love lost for the Speaker as he has done many objectionable political decisions himself. Some would say he got what he deserved, with several saying his ouster was political karma. But the spectacle yesterday was ugly and at the expense of an important piece of legislation—the Bangsamoro Organic Law which was supposed to be dramatically signed before or during the Sona.

That bill, while imperfect, is a product of a united country—the work of four administrations (Ramos, Arroyo, Aquino, and Duterte) and was shaped by a bipartisan group of legislators—Zubiri and Drilon stood

out in the Senate. Fariñas, Sema, and Lobregat were crucial in the House with the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and even indigenous peoples from Mindanao advocating their interests. That would have been a good moment for the country but politics stole it from us.

What is the state of the nation? In an attempt at crowdsourcing, I asked my Facebook and Twitter friends to suggest what the “A” could stand for. I said I would like a word that would capture the broadest number of the people, one that could describe both the pro and anti Duterte Filipino. I got interesting suggestions. I had many suggestions, including “State of National Agony”, “State of National Anger”, “State of National Abomination”, “State of

National Anathema”, “State of National Absurdity”, “State of National Apathy”, “State of National Animosity”, “State of National Away”, “State of National Abandonment”, “State of National Away”, “State

of National Ambivalence”, “State of National Atonement”, “State of National Affliction”, “State of National Affront”, and “State of National Adversity.”

Originally, I was attracted to choose a more neutral term to describe the national mood, thus the original title of this column was “State of national anxiety” but upon reflection, applying judgment, I think it is best to call the situation as accurately as possible: the country is in a state of national anger. Adversity rules the day, we are in a state of “away” to use Ateneo School of Government Dean Ronald Mendoza suggested word.

AS

Turn to A5

echo the voices heard in the People's Sona.

State...

From AG

For sure, the Duterte supporters are constantly on edge, have been angry from the start of his presidency as they feel they have to defend the president they voted for from what they consider unrelenting attacks on a leader who is just being authentic and wants nothing but the good of the country. Duterte critics, on the other hand, have become more intensely angry at a president who they believe is killing thousands of poor people, selling our territory to China, intends to be a dictator, and badmouths women and God.

It is ironic that the objective of this year's Sona is the portrayal of the President as the "Father of the nation". Immediately, when Joyce Bernal, this year's Sona director said this, the images that came to my mind right away were that of Althea Barbon (4 years old) from Guhulingan City, Negros Oriental, Danica May Gracia (5 years old) from Dagupan, Pangasinan, Francis Mañosa (5 years old) from Pasay City, San Niño Batican (7 years old) from Consojacion, Cebu, and Kimberly Sailog (12 years old) from Laguna—all of whom, according to Rappler and Inquirer reports, were killed by stray bullets in anti-drug operations. In my mind also were the high-profile murders of Kian de los Santos (18 years old), Carl Arnaiz (19 years old), and Reynaldo de Guzman (34 years old), all killed in Metro Manila in 2017 allegedly by policemen.

I agree with the assessment of Rowena Legaspi of the Children's Legal Rights and Development Center (CLRDC), during the War on Drugs: Looking Behind the Numbers forum held last April 5, 2018: Children in Duterte's war against drugs "are no longer collateral damage, they are seen as targets."

How can one not be angry at this

killing of children, at the massacre of the poor? Crimes against humanity are being perpetuated in our neighborhoods egged on by speeches of Joyce Bernal's father of the nation. And he made it clear yesterday: his war on the poor will continue without mercy, wrongly opposing human rights and human life.

How can one not be angry at the continuing poverty of our people? The latest SWS survey on self-rated poverty shows again an uptick, and this is likely because of increasing inflation.

The promise to end contractualization has remained just that: in fact, companies who have been ordered to stop contractualization have been having a heyday in firing many of its so-called contractuals, defying the orders of the Department of Labor and Employment. Duterte's executive order, which he proudly talked about yesterday, has been more of a bane than a boon for workers. How can one not be angry with such social injustice?

How can one not be angry at the failure of the President to acknowledge the grave mistakes of his administration's foreign policy with respect to defending our national territory from Chinese incursions? Generations of Filipinos will pay the cost for such a mistake.

How can one not be angry at the vulgar statements and actions against women, the Catholic Church, and against God Himself? I think that the words of the President are from his heart and we should take them seriously. And make it clear to him that his language and actions are unacceptable.

Finally, how can one not be angry at the politics that this administration has fostered as we saw also yesterday in the way the politics of the House of Representatives played out? How can we trust these politicians to change our constitution?

Yesterday, as expected, the President called for constitutional change

and asked Congress to convene as a constituent assembly.

My advice to the Senate: Absolutely, absolutely do not consider convening into a constituent assembly even if the House agreed on separate voting. On principle, for changing a constitution, a constitutional convention is the only good way forward. For targeted amendments, ConAss can work but not for a wholesale revision or adoption of a new constitution. An agreement on separate voting is not going to work as well because it can be questioned in the Supreme Court and the numbers are not there to uphold the interpretation that voting must be separate.

The Senate agreeing to convene as a constituent assembly is a sure path to charter change and it will not be the Juno draft but a very bad version, without anti-dynasty provisions for example, that will be approved.

When the nation is in a state of anger, anxiety, and adversity, it is not time to change our Constitution. We need to be united for such a whole of country project. Let's work on that unity first.

At the same time as the Sona yesterday, less than a kilometer away in Commonwealth Avenue, activist and citizen groups converged to hear the Unified People's Sona. The Sona protest this year is historic as for the first time, groups of different (even opposing) political tendencies came together to one to stand united against the Duterte government. More than 40,000 participated the biggest Sona protest ever.

I echo the voices heard in the People's Sona: No to charter change through constituent assembly! No to dictatorship! No to giving up territory to China! No to EJKs! No to endo! No to misogyny! No to blasphemy! No to an angry and divided nation! Yes to human rights! Yes to democracy! Yes to social justice! Yes to a united Philippines!

Facebook: [tanvlav](#) Twitter: [tanvlav](#)



**PAGTANAW
AT
PANTANAW**
Bert de Guzman

Sara, hindi tatakbo sa pagka-senador

LACIN C kasama sa listahan ng Leticia de Guzman ang pangalan ni Davac City Mayor Sara Duterte, anak ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte (PRRD), na iboboto ng mga tao bilang senador sa 2019 midterm elections. Gayundam hindi pala siya tatalbo sa pagka-senador, ayon sa kanyang ama. Hindi raw dapat panawalan si Incey Sara dahil tulad niya, "Incey lang n'ya ang puny" umang magalingang ang

mga mamamayan.

Ipinasigang Bureau of Immigration (BI) na ipatapon si Sister Patricia Fox matapos ang mahigit isang buwang pakikipaglaban niyang marauti sa Pilipinas, na 27 taon na niyang pinaghihirapan bilang isang missionary. Samakatuwid, babalik sa bansang Australia ang 72-angos na madre na pinaghihirapan ng Duterte administration na nanghuhukayat sa mga tao para labanan ang gobyerno. Iinanggi ito ni Fox at sinabing ang tanging lawamin niya ay tumulong sa mga katutubo (Indigenous People) mahihirap at sa mga taong nasa lapawar ng lipunan.

Salungat si Miano Digong na ipagpalibar ang halalan sa 2019. Gusto ng kanyang kasayado at kaibigang Speaker Pantaleon "Bibet" Alvarez na ipagpalibar ang eleksyon upang tumana'y matutunan ng mga senador

at kongresista ang Charter Change (Con-Char) o ang pagpapalitay sa isang federal system of government kasalungat ng utos ng presidential form.

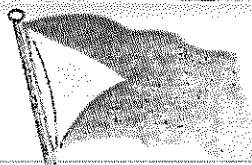
Peri-aba ang takbo ng isip ng kaibigang Leticia de Guzman. Alvarez na magkaroon ng eleksyon dahil ang looban sa kanyang distrito sa Davac ay ang kanyang amaang. Suportado raw ang ganang-pala Mayor Sara Davac de Guzman Representative Antonio Floriano at Governor Del Rosario Villanang dahil na maalaala Alvarez.

Sinabi na presidential spokesman Mark Roque na bagama't kontra sa PRRD, sa election post-employment hindi tumatao din pangalan ng pangulo sa Speaker Isador at ang Speaker Maricris sa Kamara na isulong ang populist initiative upang bawalan ang mga taong magpapasalita sa mga nanghuhukayat at magkaroon ng

federalismo. People's initiative ng babae o Alvarez' initiative? Iinanggi ka, Sen. Ralph Recto.

Sa kabila ng malalang pagtatatag ng FDU30 sa United States at paglalit sa China at Russia, magkakaibon pa rin ang US na \$26 milyon bilang counter-terrorism assistance sa Pilipinas. Ayon sa US embassy, kaibigang sa apud ang mga kagamitan, pagsasagay, at iba pang support programs na maglalayong mapalakap sa law enforcement capacity ng Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Ganito ang pahayag ng US Embassy: "The United States is a proud ally of the Philippines and will continue to provide whole-of-government support and assistance to Philippine counterterrorism efforts as we work together to address shared threats to the peace and security of both of our countries."



**LET US UNITE THE NATION
AND MOVE FORWARD
TO ACHIEVE PEACE,
PROSPERITY AND PROGRESS
FOR ONE COUNTRY AND PEOPLE**

Naiisip siguro ng US na magpang magkaibigang ang US at PH cum kaya patuloy na tutulong. B sa pagsa. Naiisip din siguro ni Uncle Sam na hindi maiamig ang pakikipaglaban. PH na, sila maglulubay sa pakikipaglaban sa Pina sa pagkatapos na lahat ang mga ang administrasyon. Duterte ang patuloy ang ayuda at pagtatatag.



BULONG AT SIGAW

Ric Valmonte

Ang pagtrato sa SONA ni DU30

HUNGRAS sa bayan si Pangulong Duterte para sa kanyang State of The Nation Address (SONA). Bukod sa pag-ulat niya sa kanyang mga nagawa sa loob ng tatlong taon ng kanyang pamanungkulan, binanggit niya ang kanyang mga pinatag na prioridad para sa susunod na isang taon. Walaang nawala

sa mamamayan kung pinakabigat lang nila ang Pangulo, pero kung manawala at umasa silang awa sa kanyang ipinangako, hindi ang kaniyang pagkadiemaya.

Ipinangako ng Pangulo na ipaglalaban niya ang karapatan ng bansa na balido at kumpirmado ng International Arbitral Tribunal sa Hague. Matapang niyang sinabi na personal niyang itatanim ang benew ng bansa sa West Philippine Sea. Ngayon, bukod sa inuudyok ng sambayanan ang Pangulo na hindi na niya ang polisiyang kanyang pinatili sa isyung ito, pinababaw na sa kanya ang mga bahagi ng teritoryong ginakop na ng China. Kasi sa kanyang sariling dahilan,

hindi kanyang makinagdigmaan ng bansa sa China kung iugnay nito ang naparaluman niyang karapatan sa teritoryo. Distintang itinatag na nasa sa China ang sinakop nito. Pinatayuan pa nito na mga eskwadrang pandigmaan. **Puwera lang kasi ang alam ng Pangulo** na lulutas dito na siyang kanyang bawat sa pagtatag ng problema ng bansa na siyang ginamit niya sa malahang pagtatag ng kanyang pamamaraan sa Davao.

Nangako rin noon na itatag niya ang problema sa ilegal na droga. Itinatag rin dito ang pagdaga ng krimen. Tungkol rin ang kanyang sariling pagtatag ng mga problema ng bansa. Itinatag rin ang mga problema ng ito sa isyung ito. Itinatag rin ang mga

ong droga. Sa show-up na pamamaraan ng pagpapalit, ito, bumaha ang bansa ng dupe at luha. Napakarani ang napalat, na halo ay mga dulha, na kuluha ng kaniyang mga naulila. Sa habla nito, nagkakat pa rin ang droga, ang krimen ay hindi pa rin masasakit. Binirala ang krimen ang inuudyok ng awtoridad sa droga dahil pambalala na ang pamamaraan ng pagpapalit at ang mga biktima ay hindi masasakit sangkot sa droga.

Hindi na rin ng Pangulo ang kanyang pagpapalit ng mga kaso, ang kontrolyado ayon na ang pagpapalit niyang wawalasan sa mga krimen na buwat paglalaro niva.

Sa ganitong konteksto, natin tratuhang SONA ng Pangulo, Ganti

rin ang mga, ang krimen ni Manila Auxiliary Bishop Broderick Paulie nang pagpapalit ng SONA ng Pangulo. "Gusto kong naidigga ang SONA ni Duterte dahil sa kanyang pagpapalit sa bansa, kasi ang mayroon nava sa mataas na implem, maaari na presya, marami pang pagpapalit, pagpapalit ng krimen sa. Lima baka ay paglalaro pa ng karapatang paratag. Itinatag naman na United Church of Christ in the Philippine Council sa Davao ang mga biktima ng krimen, hindi ito ang pagpapalit ng krimen, hindi ito ang krimen sa mga komunidad, grupo at ang anim na buwat paglalaro, pagpapalit ng ilegal na droga sa bansa."

ONLINE NEWS

24 JULY 2018

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Military: New BIFF bombers out in Central Mindanao

THE Daesh-inspired Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) recently completed the training of dozens of new bombers in Central Mindanao, a ranking military official disclosed yesterday.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the newly-trained fighters are behind the series of bombings in Central Mindanao, including the July 11 bombing at the Datu Paglas town public market in Maguindanao.

"Our information indicated they completed their training about two months ago and are now practicing their capability, their knowledge, in the Maguindanao area," the source said of the new BIFF bombers.

The official said the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao is on the lookout for more possible bombing attempts by the newly-trained BIFF bombers, which he said number to about 20 to 30.

The official said the BIFF is plotting more bombings to avenge their recently losses against the military. About 70 BIFF members have been killed in the military's intensified campaign against the group since June 1.

"They are angry because of what happened and they also want to show the ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) that they are already capable, they are already ready as an organization because they want to be recognized by ISIS," he said.

The BIFF, along with the Maute Group and the Abu Sayyaf Group, has pledged allegiance with the ISIS a few years back. The three groups are classified by the Armed Forces as terrorist organizations.

The BIFF has about 300 to 400 members, mostly former members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. It was established in 2010 by former MILF commander Ameril Umbra Kato, who died of heart attack in 2015.



407 Army trainees hurdle basic military, jungle warfare training

At least 407 army trainees hurdled their 16-week basic military and jungle warfare training to become members of the Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division (ID).

Capt. Jerry Lamosao, spokesperson of the 10th ID, said on Sunday the new graduates will be deployed to different units in the Davao region, parts of North Cotabato, and Sarangani.

Of the 407 new graduates, 244 are members of Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) "Dalitan" Class 540 and 163 of "Mabanquis" Class 542-2018. They received their certificates on Friday at the 10th ID Camp Sgt. Demerin in Tuburan, Mawab, Compostela Valley.

Lamosao said there are four brigades organic to the 10th ID and one under its operational control.

The new soldiers began training after passing the Armed Forces of the Philippines Service Aptitude Test (AFPSAT) and the routine Physical Fitness Test (PFT), neuro-psychological examination, general physical exam, board interview and final deliberation.

Major Gen. Noel Clement, 10th ID commander, said the division is committed to train and hone the potentials of the young generation of soldiers.

Clement said the training included subjects on weapons training, jungle warfare and mountaineering, military tactics-techniques-procedures, combat standard operating procedure, intelligence, civil-military operations, and lectures that emphasized on respect of human rights, international humanitarian law, rule of law, and essence of the honor code.

NPA medical officer in Mindoro surrenders

CAMP GEN. MATEO CAPINPIN, Tanay, Rizal – **A medical officer of the communist New People's Army (NPA) voluntarily surrendered to joint elements of the 76th Infantry Battalion (76IB) and the 402nd Mobile Police Company based in Occidental Mindoro on Saturday.**

In a report reaching here on Sunday, Lieutenant Colonel Mario Lito I. Retirva, acting 76 IB Commanding Officer, identified the surrenderer as Ronnie J. Ferrer, alias "Jack", 42, who joined the communist terrorist group's armed struggle against the government since he was 27 years old.

Retirva disclosed that Ferrer was a medical officer of the Platoon Falcon, formerly known as Kiusero, Larangang Guerilla "Yam-ay", Sub-Regional Military Area-4D, Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee (STRPC).

He also said that Ferrer was identified as one of the fugitives known as "Batangas 9. A group composed of about 20 NPA rebels raided the Batangas Provincial City Jail that resulted in a jail break for their detained comrades and other inmates facing drug-related cases on January 6, 2006.

Following his surrender, Ferrer divulged in an interview that he was recruited at the age of 18 by a left-leaning youth organization, which forced the recruits to attend mass rallies and protests.

"Ako ay na recruit nila sa pamamagitan ng pag-pasok sa Samahan ng mga Kabataan hanggang maugnayan na ako ng mga kasamang nagsasagawa ng gawaing masa (I was recruited through the Youth League until I was involved in the members' activities on mass actions)," Ferrer admitted.

He said his fellow members have been brainwashed to hate the government through social and political issues in the province.

The surrendered rebel also told government troops that the failure of the CPP-NPA-NDF leadership to give his medical needs and the false hope of the organization caused him to decide to abandon his armed struggle and return to a normal life.

He added he experienced starvation due to the dwindling support from the masses and continuous evasion from intensified combat operations.

Ferrer confirmed reports that the CPP-NPA-NDF in Mindoro is continuously recruiting Indigenous Peoples (IPs) because they believed that Mangyans are easier to convince and manipulate.

"Yung mga katutubo, dahil sila ang nasa tilib na lugar. sila yung pangunahing nirerekruit ng kilusan at madali silang mahikayat (the indigenous peoples who are in the remote areas are the primary target for recruitment because they can easily be convinced)," he added.

According to Retirva, the 76IB, together with the Philippine National Police (PNP) units in the area, had been working together for Ferrer's surrender as early as May this year after the military troops received his surrender feelers.

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

Meanwhile, **Major General Rhoderick M. Parayno, Commander of the 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division (2ID)** has commended efforts of the 761B and the PNP in

Mindoro with Ferrer's surrender, which added to the list of two other rebels who gave up to the 761B last June 22 this year.

Parayno stressed that the continuous surrender of the NPA in the area are clear indications that "our call for the NPAs to go back to the folds of the law is being heard."

"Rest assured that the 2ID is always open for NPA members who will decide to surrender and embraced the path to peace. We will help them get the benefits due them and link them to the different government programs to facilitate their return to normal and productive lives," he said.

Parayno also assured that immediate and livelihood cash assistance are allotted to them under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) of the government.