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11 June 2018

Monday



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CAYETANO: DFA ACTING ON SHOAL HARASSMENT

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS

The foreign secretary says he and his deputy have talked with the Chinese ambassador, who has promised that the law will be 'very harshly' applied to the 'violators.'

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FROM A1

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

The Duterte administration is "taking all diplomatic action" in dealing with the reported harassment of Filipino fishermen by Chinese Coast Guard personnel at Panatag Shoal, according to Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano.

Cayetano on Sunday thanked GMA Network for its report, with a video showing Filipino fishermen, who had spent days fishing at Panatag, watching helplessly as two Chinese coast guards make off with their prime catch.

"[It's] important for us that our fishermen are able to report complaints like this so that we can act on it right away," he told reporters in an interview at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, where he welcomed distressed Filipino workers returning from the United Arab Emirates.

"We are assuring you that we are taking all diplomatic action. Look at the results, not just the steps taken," he said.

"Why do you do protest? Why do you do diplomatic ac-

tion? Because you want results. This administration is focusing on the results," he added.

What action?

Cayetano, however, did not specify the diplomatic action the government was taking following the report of the harassment, which the fishermen said had been happening for some time.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan II on Sunday urged the government to verify the report and protest the harassment.

He said President Duterte and Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jinhua could take up the matter with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

But Senate President Vicente Sotto III said the acts of Chinese coast guards were not those of the Chinese president.

A diplomatic protest may not be called for, Sotto said.

"We can have a dialogue. Like, if pirates were the ones who attacked, where would we take [our complaint]? It's not that easy to protest every little thing," he said.

Sotto also said it was foolhardy to quarrel with China, considering it "controls" the national power grid, referring to the 40-percent stake of State Grid Corp. of China in the Na-



Alan Peter Cayetano

tional Grid Corp. of the Philippines.

But Sen. Richard Gordon said the government should lodge a protest with China, as the Chinese coast guards were "preying on the helpless fishermen who are merely trying to make a living."

Zhao's assurance

Cayetano said he and Foreign Undersecretary Ernesto Abella had already spoken separately with Zhao regarding the matter, which acting Chief Justice Antonio Carpio said should prompt the Philippines to lodge another case against China in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

But Cayetano seemed to be content with the assurance given by Zhao.

"We were assured by the Chinese ambassador that they will apply the law very harshly against the violators," he said, without explaining which law had been violated.

"We already had an agreement with them that the fishermen should be able to freely fish there. The only exception [is] the protected areas," he added.

Cayetano said the lagoon at Panatag—internationally known as Scarborough Shoal—was the spawning ground for various species of fish and giant clams.

"If there are Filipino, Chinese or Vietnamese fishermen there, they will be apprehended," he said.

Complaint system

According to Cayetano, both Beijing and Manila were considering setting up a "complaint system" to handle reports of harassment committed by the Chinese Coast Guard against Filipino fishermen.

While the Filipino fishermen interviewed by GMA News reporter Jun Veneracion accused the Chinese Coast Guard of seizing their catch, Cayetano said some local fishermen were

actually known to sell their catch or exchange their fish for other goods with the Chinese.

The foreign secretary also blasted Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano for claiming that President Duterte had directed the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea "because nothing will happen anyway."

Alejano said on Saturday that he received the information from sources in the military and that Mr. Duterte gave the order last year.

The military protested, saying it would be remiss in its duty to protect Philippine sovereignty if it stopped patrolling Philippine waters, Alejano said. **AB**

A compromise was struck, however, allowing for one patrol a month, but this has been hardly carried out, he added.

'Blatant lie'

"This is a blatant lie," Cayetano said on Sunday. "I don't know if he fell for a bum steer or if he was just misleading us so he will be in the news after he announced his plan to run as senator," Cayetano said.

He said military officials had denied the supposed order from Mr. Duterte. —WITH REPORTS FROM DJ YAP AND ANTHONY Q. ESGUERRA INQ

'Gov't cleared Chinese military plane landing'

By ALEXIS ROMERO
and EDITH REGALADO

The refueling of a Chinese military aircraft in Davao City last week was cleared by the Philippine government following coordination with aviation authorities, Malacañang announced yesterday.

Citing records of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the Chinese plane made a brief technical stop at the Davao City International Airport for refueling on June 8.

Photos of the aircraft on social media fueled speculation that it was one of the planes used to patrol the South China Sea, including areas over which the Philippines has been awarded sovereign rights.

But security officials said the plane was on its way back to China from Australia.

"Relevant government agencies closely coordinated

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Gov't From Page 1

for the aircraft's refueling, which followed established procedures," Roque said in a statement.

President Duterte's special assistant Christopher "Bong" Go confirmed that the Chinese plane's request to land was received, processed and cleared by Philippine government agencies.

The landing was requested for the purpose of refueling and was granted with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party, Go said.

The aircraft, identified as an IL-76 military transport plane, cannot fly more than

3,000 kilometers without refueling if carrying a full load. The aircraft is designed to conduct tactical and strategic airlift missions, transport of troops and evacuation.

Roque said the Chinese plane used local handler Transnational Aviation Support Service to arrange the requirements for the permit. The flight was given an entry and exit permit like any other private flight.

"As verified and reported by the CAAP, no movement of passengers was made outside the terminal building," the presidential spokesman said.

"The same courtesy is extended to Philippine government aircraft when technical stops need to be undertaken in other countries," Roque added.

Photos of the Chinese aircraft landing in Davao City circulated on social networking sites on Saturday.

According to Go, the Departments of National Defense and Foreign Affairs as well as the CAAP worked together to ensure that the requesting party complied with domestic procedures.

The military was apparently kept out of the loop on the landing of the Chinese military plane.

But Armed Forces Eastern Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Benjamin Madrigal confirmed that the Chinese aircraft made a brief stopover in Davao for refueling on its way back to China from Australia.

CHINESE EXTORTION AT PANATAG SHOAL

ZAMBALES FISHERMEN URGE ROQUE:

By **Gabriel Cardinoza**
@gabrielcardinozaINQ

DAGUPAN CITY—Fishermen in Infanta town are inviting back the lawyer who helped draw attention to Chinese abuses at Panatag Shoal in the United Nations human rights office in 2015.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque helped file the first appeal in the UN office for China to respect the rights of Filipinos in their traditional fishing ground at Panatag, said Charlito Maniago, chief of Barangay Cato where many of the fishermen live.

Last week, Roque said the government would need written testimonies from the fishermen before it could file a formal protest against the Chinese Coast Guard for stealing the high-value catch of Filipinos who fished at Panatag Shoal in the West Philippine Sea. *MB*

Internationally known as Scarborough Shoal, Panatag is a rich fishing ground off the coast of Zambales province in the West Philippine Sea, waters within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

China, which claims nearly all of the South Sea, seized Panatag in 2012, prompting the Philippines to seek UN arbitration.

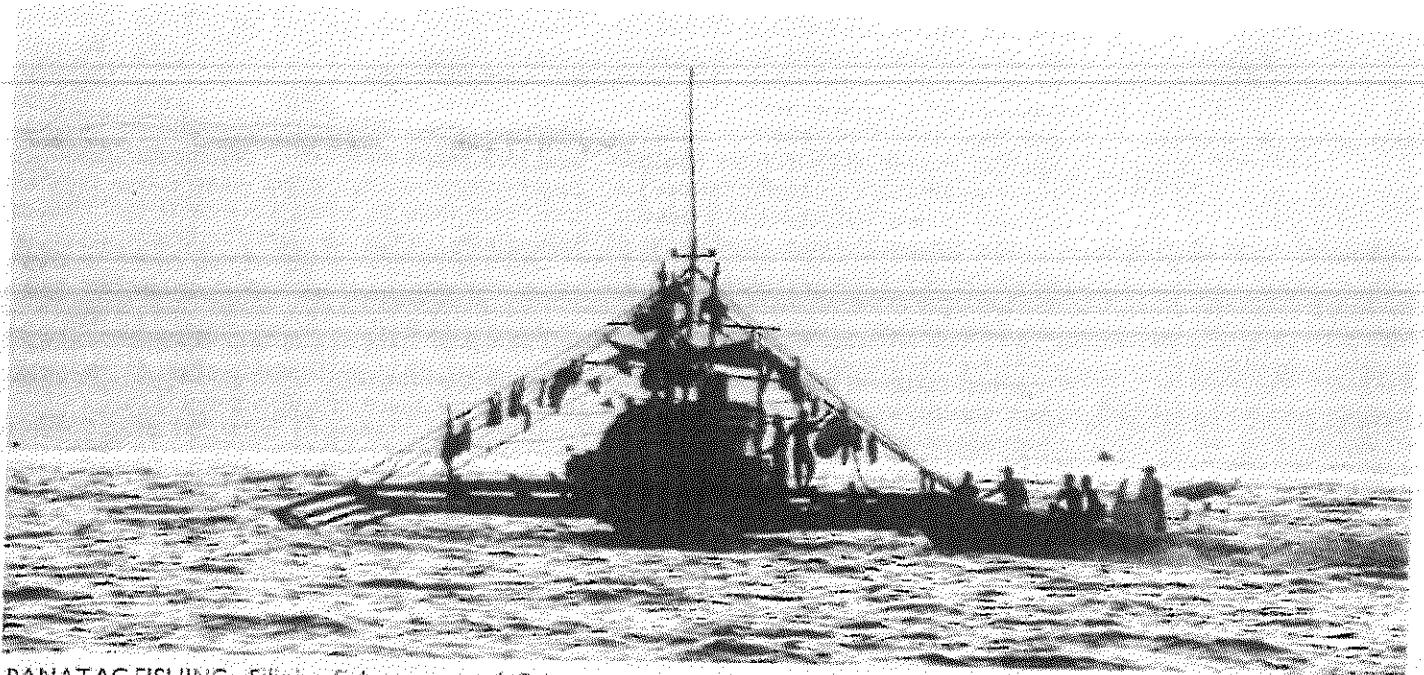
Friendship with China

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in July 2016 that China's sweeping claim had no basis in international law and declared it violated the Philippines' sovereign right to fish and explore for resources in the West Philippine Sea.

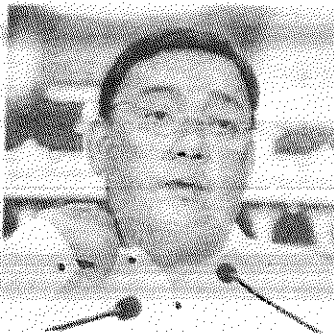
China ignored the ruling

HELP US AGAIN

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PANATAG FISHING Filipino fishermen catch fish near Panatag Shoal in the presence of Chinese Coast Guard vessels in this photo taken in 2016. —RICHARD A. REYES



Harry Roque

and President Duterte, who came to power in June 2016, put it on the back burner, preferring friendship with China and wooing the Asian economic powerhouse for aid, loans and investments.

The fishermen said Roque visited Infanta three years ago to help them. At the time, many fishermen from Zambales were

also being driven away from Panatag by Chinese patrol boats.

The Chinese Coast Guard at times used water cannon or rammed the Filipinos' fishing boats with its large vessels.

Last week, after GMA News reported that the Chinese Coast Guard often seized the best part of the Filipinos' catch at Panatag, Roque said the government would file a diplomatic protest with China if the incidents could be proved.

He said the video did not show the Chinese bullying the Filipinos but he had asked the fishermen for statements.

Forced exchange

"The Philippine Coast Guard knows what is happening at the shoal. But the incidents have not been included in formal

records," Maniago told the inquirer by phone on Sunday.

Last month, the Chinese Coast Guard boarded a boat and offered the fishermen instant noodles in exchange for fish, said Yoyoy Rizol, 46, a fisherman.

"We told them, 'No, no!' but they just ignored us," Rizol said.

The Chinese coast guards opened boxes where the Filipinos kept their catch and took more than 25 kilograms of high-value fish such as red snappers and groupers, he said.

Such incidents have been happening for some time and every fisherman in Cato has a similar story, Rizol said.

PCG escort

"But what can we do? At least they allowed us to fish in

the shoal and they did not hurt us," he added.

Maniago said the fishermen were uncomfortable with the proposal of Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate to have them escorted by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) when they go out to Panatag.

In a statement Zarate said the Duterte administration must show China that "we are serious in defending our people as well as our territory."

But Maniago said it would only spark fresh tensions between the Philippines and China.

Rizol agreed, saying fishermen may end up getting caught in the crossfire.

"It's OK for us that they (Chinese coast guards) ask for fish. But they should not get the expensive ones. We work hard to catch them," he said. INQ

CHINA has assured the Philippines it would not take any unilateral actions that would curtail the Philippines' fishing rights at Panara (San Andres) Shoal and would apply the law against violators, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said Tuesday.

Cayetano said the Philippines would continue to work with China to resolve the dispute over the shoal. He said the Philippines would continue to work with China to resolve the dispute over the shoal. He said the Philippines would continue to work with China to resolve the dispute over the shoal.

■ VIOLATORS FROM A1

China to punish violators

contested Panatag Shoal, located just 124 nautical miles from the coast of Zambales province.

Cayetano noted that the Philippines and China had formally agreed to let Filipino fishers fish freely in Panatag Shoal, except in protected areas like inside the lagoon, which serves as a spawning ground of fish.

He was referring to the agreement between President Rodrigo Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping, which was discussed during the former's visit to China in October 2016.

While Cayetano said the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was still verifying the alleged harassment incident, he noted that there were incidents wherein fishermen themselves were selling their catch in Panatag Shoal.

"What is important for us is for fishermen to bring their complaint directly to us so we could act on it right away," Cayetano added.

'Lies'

The foreign affairs secretary also appealed to critics, including Mag-

dalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejandro, to help the country find solutions to the problem instead of spreading false information.

Cayetano cited Alejandro's recent claims that Filipino fishermen were "at the mercy of the Chinese forces" at Panatag Shoal.

"That is not true, because if that is true our fishermen will be protesting vigorously already. Our fishermen can see the effort of our government to help them not only for them to fish at Scarborough but also in upgrading their boats," he added.

Cayetano also dismissed as a "lie" the claim of Alejandro that the President had ordered the military to cease from patrolling the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

"It was a blatant lie. I do not know where he got his information," Cayetano said.

Alejandro's claims, he said, were also irresponsible and would have an effect on the country's national security, by making it appear that the Philippines has no forces in the West Philippine Sea.

The Armed Forces of the Phil-

ippines on Sunday backed Cayetano's statements, saying the military did not stop patrolling over the disputed territories.

"There were no orders contrary to the information of Congressman Alejandro and actually, for the record, our maritime and aerial patrolling in the areas are continuous," said Col. Edgard Arevalo, the military spokesman.

Arevalo said the protection of fishermen within the disputed Scarborough Shoal is not the responsibility of the military but of the Philippine Coast Guard.

"In regard to protection, it's not up for the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The coast guard should be the one to answer that issue," Arevalo said in an interview over dzBB radio.

No Senate probe

The Senate Committee on National Defense and Security headed by Sen. Gregorio Honasan 2nd is not keen on conducting a Senate probe into the issue.

Honasan said the Senate could invite Cayetano and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to brief senators on the situation instead of calling for a hearing, which might expose sensitive information to the public.

"It is the reason why we have caucus for us to discuss sensitive issues and how to resolve problems quietly without making it public," Honasan added.

Opposition Senators Paolo Benigno Aquino 4th and Antonio Trillanes 4th have filed their respective resolutions seeking an investigation following reports of Chinese militarization in Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef, Zamora (Subi) Reef, and Panganiban (Mis- chief) Reef in the Spratly Islands.

Sen. Richard Gordon meanwhile insisted that the government should lodge a protest on the alleged harassment of fishermen in Panatag.

"These are marginalized people. Why are you doing this to the poor people who are just trying to make a living? This is what makes being friends with China nowadays difficult," he said.

**RALPH U. VILLANUEVA,
DEMPSEY REYES AND
JEFFERSON ANTIPORDA**

Coast Guard asked to escort Pinoys fishing at Bajo de Masinloc

By Ryan Ponce
Pacpaco

A PROGRESSIVE party-list congressman yesterday asked the Philippine Coast Guard to escort Filipino fishermen whose catch were taken away by

Chinese coast guards in Bajo de Masinloc.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate condemned the harassment by the Chinese coast guards of Filipino fishermen.

"Send our coast guards now to escort our fishermen in the West Philippine Sea (WPS)!" Zarate said.

Zarate lamented the government's "lackadaisical actions in defending our Filipino fishermen and national sovereignty."

"We call on the Duterte administration to send the Philippine coast guards to accompany or escort our hapless fisherfolks at Bajo de Masinloc or in the other areas where we have valid claims in the West Philippine Sea. We have to show China that we are serious in defending our people as well as our territory. Our officials should always assert our independence, instead of them acting as apologists for China, who apparently now treat the Philippines as her vassal state," said Zarate.

"We are not saying that we declare war on China. But what we need is for Malacañang to stand up for our fisherfolks and our territory. We have already suggested in the past the filing of a diplomatic pro-

test and increasing patrols of our seas, among others. One thing is clear though, the government must do something now to stop this invasion of China," said Zarate.

At the same time, Zarate also assailed the plan of the US Pentagon to intensify and expand its naval patrols in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) in a bid to challenge China's military build-up in the area.

"The situation in the WPS is already getting serious. The US and China should stop their saber rattling so as to lessen the tension in the area. The Philippines, along with other claimants in the area are in a situation akin to having two bullies in their backyard raring for a fight and (to) thrash each other without regard for the backyard or the houses nearby," said Zarate.

"We are again calling on our neighbors and fellow claimants like Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia together with the Philippines to band together and stand up against these bullies. We are also asking the international community to step in and pressure the US and China to demilitarize and de-escalate the tension in the region," Zarate said.

'PCG presence in WPS needed to protect Filipino fishermen'

By CHARISSA M. LUCIATIENZA

Bayan Muna Representative Carlos Isagani Zarate called on the Duterte administration yesterday to send Phil-

ippine Coast Guard (PCG) personnel to accompany and protect Filipino fishermen in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) or South China Sea.

He said the government ▶10

'PCG presence in WPS... ◀1

should take action against the Chinese coast guards for harassing and taking the catch of Filipino fishermen in Bajo de Masinloc.

"We have to show China that we are serious in defending our people as well as our territory. Our officials should always assert our independence, instead of them acting as apologists for China, who apparently now treat the Philippines as her vassal state," he said in a statement.

He lambasted the Duterte administration's "lackadaisical actions in defending our Filipino fishermen and national sovereignty."

"China is apparently treating the Duterte administration as a pushover by doing what they want in Bajo de Masinloc and the rest of the West Philippine Sea without nary a whimper from Malacañang," Zarate said.

"We are not saying that we declare war on China. But what we need is for Malacañang to stand up for our fisherfolks and our territory. We have already suggested in the past the filing of a diplomatic protest and increasing patrols of our seas, among others. One thing is clear though, the government must do something now to stop this invasion of China," he added.

However, Zarate rejected the US Pentagon's planned expansion of its naval patrols in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) to challenge China's military build-up in the area.

VP concerned

For her part, Vice President Ms. Leonor "Leni" Robredo said the Chinese coast guard's taking the fish catch of Filipino fisherman at Panatag Shoal was a "blatant disregard" of the rights of Filipinos and Philippine authority over the rich fishing ground off Zambales.

"We are too alarmed over reports that the Chinese Coast Guard was taking the fish catch of our fishermen," told reporters in Filipino last Saturday.

Robredo is concerned about the actions of Chinese coast guard towards the Filipino fishermen in the waters "clearly within the country's Exclusive Economic Zone."

The Vice President cited the 2016 decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, an international tribunal in The Hague, that upheld the exclusive rights of the Philippines over resources within the West Philippine Sea.

Alejano stands ground

Meanwhile, Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano II stood by his story that the Duterte administration allegedly ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

"I am not making up stories,"

Alejano said after the Department of National Defense (DND) and the AFP denied his claim last Saturday.

"Nagsasalita lang ako para sa mga taong hindi makapagsalita sa publiko. Nire-relay natin yan dahil gusto nating ipakita na may mga nangyayari sa ground na hindi naman tugma don sa mga sinasabi nila in public. And it is my principle and policy not to say something without basis. Hindi po ako nag-imbento ng kwento," he said in a radio interview.

He maintained that the order came from Malacañang but refused to identify the source of his information.

"Hindi korvente yan. I am 100 percent sure because the person, the source, has the authority and he relayed to me the information personally," he said.

"I never mentioned the name of the president. But since it is an order from Malacañang, it has the authority of the President," he pointed out.

Based on the information he received, there was an instruction to stop patrolling in the Scarborough Shoal and West Philippine Sea because it might offend China.

Gov't denies claims

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenza and AFP spokesperson Colonel Edgard Arevalo denied Alejano's claims.

Arevalo said the military remains committed to its job of defending its territory despite Duterte's warm ties with China.

In an interview over radio station dzBB, Arevalo said the AFP remains apolitical or doesn't meddle with matters concerning the country's foreign relations and foreign policy.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano branded as "blatant lie" the claims made by Alejano.

"This is a blatant lie. I don't know where this is coming from. I don't know if he was given a fake news or he's the one peddling the fake news so he would land in the newspapers, and eventually announce his candidacy for senator," Cayetano told reporters.

"I used to listen to him (Alejano) because we need to hear critics in society to point out what is needed or what is wrong. But how can you listen to that critic who's telling a lie," the DFA chief said.

For his part, Senate President Vicente Sotto III said claims that the Duterte administration ordered the AFP to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea should first be validated.

Sotto said that unless verified by the government, the information cited by Alejano is considered "hearsay." (With reports from Hannah L. Torregoza, Francis T. Wakefield, Roy C. Mabasa, and Raymund F. Antonio)

China assures PH on fishing accord

By Cristina Lee-Pisco

CHINA assured the Philippines that it will "apply the law very harshly" to violators of the fishing agreement at the Bajo de Masinloc (BDM) or the Scarborough Shoal, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said Sunday.

Cayetano said the issue was brought up by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ernesto Abella during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Zhao Hanhua.

This developed after a video of Chinese nationals taking some of the Filipino fishermen's catch from Scarborough Shoal was aired on a news television network.

Cayetano said he had also discussed the subject with the envoy during the 17th Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day.

"We have an agreement with them that all fishermen are free, except on protected areas because of ecology and the environment – like the lagoon at the Scarborough Shoal, that's the spawning ground for fishes, or the giant clams you see – if they are taken by Filipinos or Chinese people, there will really be apprehension," he said.

Cayetano said the two parties are now studying the establishment of a complaint system so that all nationalities that have the right to fish within the Scarborough Shoal area can air their concerns.

The Secretary urged the fishermen to report immediately such "incidents" to proper authorities, "so that they can act right away."

"Let me assure the fishermen that we are doing everything, that both sides have assured that at the traditional fishing grounds, we will be able to fish undisturbed, now if there are incidents, nangyayari talaga 'to (this really happens), report it to us at kami 'di rin naman itatago 'to sa media (we will not hide this from the media)," he stressed, adding that the government also wants to get to the bottom of the issue.

Cayetano said Beijing and Manila have agreed to discipline their respective coast guards and fishermen.

Bajo de Masinloc is located 124 nautical miles from Zambales.

China assures PH on fishing accord

By **CRISTINA LEE-PISCO**

CHINA assured the Philippines that it will "apply the law very harshly" to violators of the fishing agreement at the Bajo de Masinloc (BDM) or the Scarborough Shoal, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said yesterday.

Cayetano said the issue was brought up by Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Ernesto Abella during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua.

This, following a video being circulated this week of Chinese nationals taking some of the Filipino fishermen's catch from Scarborough Shoal.

Cayetano said he had also discussed the subject with the envoy during the 17th Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day.

"We have an agreement with them that all fishermen are free, except on protected areas because of ecology and the environment -- like the lagoon at the Scarborough Shoal, that's the spawning ground for fishes, or the giant clams you see -- if they are taken by Filipinos or Chinese people, there will really be apprehension," he said.

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Bajo de Masinloc is located 124 nautical miles from Zambales.

Sotto on harassment: Let's complain to China

By Macon Ramos-Araneta and Rio N. Araja

SENATE President Vicente Sotto III said Sunday the Philippine government can directly complain to China about the harassment suffered by Filipino fishermen in the Panatag or Scarborough Shoal at the hands of Chinese Coast Guard patrolling the area.

"The action of the Coast Guard is not the action of the President of China," he said in an interview with radio dzBB.

"Let us complain to China. Let us send

our complaint to them. Let us get the facts and from there, let us complain. Let us see if they will act or not," Sotto said.

In doing so, the Philippines should use a diplomatic approach in bringing this issue to China, saying "it's better to have friends than enemies."

"Why are we going to fight China if we are capable of diplomatic means?" said Sotto, adding that the country cannot afford to engage into war with the Asian superpower.

"Those who want a fight should go there first. Why send our soldiers there?" he added in Filipino.

Sotto said China has been "kind" to the Philippines.

"I just do not know if they know all the help China has been giving us," he said, citing the role played by China in the development of the national power grid.

He also cited the need to validate Magdalo Party-list Rep. Gary Alejano's statement Jan. 16 Duterte administration ordered the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

"Where did he hear this? Did he go there?... We will know where he got that [information]," Sotto said.

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Sotto...

From A1

Both Malacañang, the Defense Department and the Foreign Affairs Department have denied Alejano's claim.

Senator Richard J. Gordon, meanwhile, condemned the harassment suffered by Filipino fishermen who complained that Chinese Coast Guard personnel in the area were confiscating some of their catch.

"We are freedom-loving people. These are marginalized people. Why are you doing this to the poor people who are just trying to make a living. This is what makes being friends with China nowadays difficult," he said.

"The actions of the Chinese coast guards are more like the muling practices of rogue law enforcers.... They are no different from the pirates of olden times who prey on helpless victims," Gordon said.

The senator also said the Chinese leadership should exercise extreme control over their forces patrolling the area, which is a common fishing ground for all the claimants.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, meanwhile, suggested that the government send Philippine Coast Guard to escort Filipino fishermen in the West Philippine Sea, as he condemned the Chinese Coast Guard for harassing Filipinos fishing in the area.

"Our officials should always assert our independence, instead of them acting as apologists for China, who apparently now treats the Philippines as her vassal state," he added.

"We are not saying that we declare war on China. But what we need is for Malacañang to stand up for our fisher folk and our territory. We have already suggested in the past the filing of a diplomatic protest and increasing patrols of our seas, among others. One thing is clear though, the government must do something now to stop this invasion of China," he said.

At the same time, he slammed a plan of the United States to intensify and expand its naval patrols in the West Philippine Sea to challenge China's military buildup.

The Chinese government assured the Philippines that it would "apply the law very harshly" on violators of the fishing agreement at the Bajo de Masinloc or the Scarborough Shoal, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said Sunday.

The statement came after a video of Chinese nationals appearing to take some of the Filipino fishermen's catch from Scarborough Shoal circulated this week.

Cayetano said the issue was already raised by DFA Undersecretary Ernesto Abella during a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua.

Cayetano said he had also discussed the subject with the envoy during the 17th Filipino-Chinese Friendship Day on Saturday.

While he did not elaborate on the issue, the foreign affairs chief said he got an assurance that China will apply the "law" very harshly to violators.

Cayetano said the two parties are now studying the establishment of a complaint system so that all nationalities that have

the right to fish within the Scarborough Shoal area can air their concerns directly.

Cayetano also urged the fishermen to report immediately such "incidents" to the proper authorities, "so that they can act right away."

"Let me assure the fishermen that we are doing everything, that both sides have assured that at the traditional fishing grounds, we will be able to fish undisturbed," he said. "Now if there are incidents, report them to us, and we will not hide it from the media."

Cayetano said Beijing and Manila have agreed to discipline their respective coast guards and fishermen.

Rolly Bernal, a fisherman from Masinloc, Zambales, for his part said he hopes that the assurance made by the Chinese government will take effect immediately.

"Our only call here is for the government to solve this problem—the harassment of the Chinese coast guard, and for us to be able to fish freely," he told the Philippine News Agency in an interview Sunday.

"I hope the Chinese coast guards stop approaching our boats and taking our catch. That's what we fishermen want," he said in Filipino.

Bajo de Masinloc or Scarborough Shoal is located 124 nautical miles from Zambales.

Following a standoff between China and the Philippines in 2012, Filipino fishermen were prevented from fishing in the area. It was only in 2016 when the two states were thawing frozen ties and when

President Rodrigo Duterte expressed concern over the issue that fishermen were allowed to operate again in the Scarborough Shoal.

On Saturday, Special Assistant to the President Christopher Go said President Duterte did not order the Armed Forces of the Philippines to stop patrolling the disputed West Philippine Sea.

Go made this assurance after Alejano claimed that the Duterte administration has ordered the military to stop guarding the area. With PNA

Info ni Alejano sa WPS dapat ma-validate - Sotto

Nais malaman ni Senate President Tito Sotto kung saan nanggaling ang impormasyon ni Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano na inuutos daw ni Pangulong Duterte ang pagpapatigil sa pagpatrol sa West Philippine Sea.

"Saan niya narinig 'yun? Nagpupunta ba siya roon? Hindi, baka meron siyang ano... malaman natin saan galing 'yun kasi madami rin akong nakikitang balita sa social media na iba eh, na dapat nga di basta-basta paniwalaan eh," wika ni Sen. Sotto kahapon.

Dapat daw na ma-validate muna ang impormasyon upang sa gayon maberpika raw ito.

Sa ganitong paraan, matutukoy kung totoo nga ba ang naturang balita o pawang hearsay lamang.

Una rito, sinabi ni Alejano na ipinaabot sa kanya ng hindi pinangalanang source na sa huling bahagi ng 2017 nang ihinto raw ng AFP ang pagpatrolya ng mga tropa nito sa pinag-sagawang teritoryo. (Rudy Andal)

Solon: Soldiers dismayed over China row handling

BY WERDELL VIGILIA

AN official in uniform yesterday said many soldiers are dismayed over President Duterte's handling of the country's territorial row with China, especially his alleged order for the Armed Forces to stop patrolling the disputed West Philippine Sea.

"If it's only, strictly, about the West Philippine Sea issue, many are really dismayed at the President," Rep. Gary Alejano of the Magdalo party-list group told radio dzRB.

Alejano is a former Marine captain and was an assistant officer

who led a shore-based unit under the Arroyo administration.

On Saturday, he said he was told last month ago that President Duterte had ordered the military to stop patrols in the West Philippine Sea (WPS), but the Armed Forces reportedly opposed the order, at least its maiden copy over Philippine sovereignty. The military, even teamed with Malacañang, Alejano said, was ordered to limit patrols to "once a month instead of completely halting it."

The WPS covers South China Sea waters within the country's exclusive economic zone, based on an administrative order issued

by then President Aquino in September 2012.

Alejano yesterday said his concern in the military community to receive information about the situation in the area where the Chinese allegedly continue to harass Filipino soldiers and fishermen.

He also said he was last informed the public of the real situation because the military is not authorized to discuss it.

He said his military sources are dismayed because the situation in the area is the opposite of what the public is told. The public is told

and Defense Affairs Secretary Alan Carpio that everything is okay with China, even though national law is different when you're facing the enemy and you're patrolling the exact opposite of it — the harassment and bullying of our fishermen and soldiers," Alejano said.

The former Marine officer said he is sure that Duterte has ordered the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

"That's not a hard order," he said. "I am sure 100 percent care for us, the men of the sea, in the navy and he helped to me

President

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the information personally."

Alejano said he was told that the "instruction" to stop the patrols in Scarborough Shoal and other parts of the WPS came from Malacañang.

He said the Executive issued the order to the AFP "since it (patrolling) has no effect and it

might only offend China."

"I did not say that the order directly came from the President — it was an order from Malacañang. To my understanding, the order was delivered in a meeting. It was given directly," he said. And since the order came from Malacañang, he said, it was assumed that "it has the authority of the President."

"I never mentioned the name of the Presi-

dent," Alejano said, adding that the compromise was to patrol the area at least once a month which, he said, "has been hardly followed." There was one time that three months had passed without a single patrol being conducted in the area, he said.

Alejano said the administration appears to be pleading for China's friendship while the emerging superpower continues to bully Filipinos.

"It's like we're kneeling in front of them (the Chinese)," he said. "We should not deceive our people because whenever they (government officials) talk to them (the Chinese), they carry our national interest and security and that can't be sacrificed."

It was earlier reported that the Chinese Coast Guard continue to harass Filipino fishermen in Panatag or Scarborough Shoal which is 124 nautical miles from the coast of Zambales.

Cayetano earlier told a House hearing that while there is still a "slight" harassment in the area, it should be considered a welcome

development since Filipino ships could not even enter the area in the past.

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Patrulya sa West Phi Sea tuloy - AFP

Patrulya umano ang ginagawang pagpapatrulya ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Sinabi ni AFP spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo na regular ang ginagawang pagpapatrol ng AFP sa naturang lugar base sa nakukuhang impormasyon at kanilang itong ibinabato sa headquarters at matataas na ahensiya ng gobyerno para maging basehan ng decision makers.

Ginawa ni Arevalo ang reaksiyon matapos na itayag ni Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano na inatasan ng Malacañang ang militar para itigil ang

NI GEMMA GARCIA

pagpapatrulya sa pinagagawang teritoryo.

Hindi naman mabanggit ng tagapagsalita ng AFP kung gaano kadalas ang pagpapatrulya ng militar sa WPS dahil ito umano ay "operational details".

Para kay Arevalo, bahaia na ang tao kung sino ang kanilang paniniwalaan basta ang kanyang sinasabi ay nakabase sa official records ng AFP.

Nilinaw naman nito na ang ibig sabihin ng "regular" ay maaaring dalawa, tatlo o maging isang beses kada linggo na pagpapatrulya.

Pinabulaanan, naman ni Arevalo na isang beses kada buwan lamang ang ginagawang pagpapatrol ng AFP sa WPS. //

Nilinaw pa ng opisyal na maaaring ang impormasyon ni Alejano ang mali at hindi sa kanya at maaaring kuryenteng balita lamang ang pinagmulan ng impormasyon ng kongresista.

Kinontak na umano ni Arevalo ang AFP chief of staff, gayundin din ang chief of operations, commander ng Western Command sa Palawan at lahat sila ay nagsabi na walang utos mula sa Commander-in-Chief.

Iginilit pa niya na patuloy ang AFP na gampanan ang kanilang mandato na protektahan ang soberanya ng Pilipinas.



AFP patuloy ang pagpapatrulya sa WPS

Patuloy at regular ang umano y ginagawang pagpapatrulya ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Ito ang inihayag ni AFP spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo base sa nakukuha nilang impormasyon at kanila itong ibinabato sa headquarters at matateas na ahensiya ng gobyerno para maging basihan ng decision makers.

Ginawa ni Arevalo ang reaksyon matapos na

ihayag ni Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano na inatasan umano ng Malacañang ang military para itugil ang pagpapatrulya sa pinag-aagawang teritoryo.

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Nilinaw naman nito na ang ibig sabihin ng "regular" ay maaaring dalawa, tatlo o magiag isang beses kada linggo na pagpapatrulya at pinabulaanan na isang beses kada buwan lamang ang ginagawang pagpapatrulya ng AFP sa WPS.

Maaaring ang impormasyon na nakuha ni Alejano ang mali at maaaring kuryenteng balita lamang ang pinagmulan ng impormasyon ng kongresista. *-Gemma Garcia-*

Prepare for air conflict, AFP told

By Frances Mangosing
 @FMangosingINQ

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana recently told the Philippine military and its closest allies to plan for the future of air conflict amid an evolving security landscape in the region.

"Since we are all friends and allies here, we have to project our minds and foresee what the face of the future of air combat will be. Will it be good to have fighter jet planes? Or maybe just invest in missiles to protect ourselves?" Lorenzana said at a forum sponsored by the Philippine Air Force at Camp Aguinaldo on Thursday.

The forum a preanniversary activity of the Air Force, was aimed at increasing awareness among stakeholders on how air

power can be mobilized to contribute to national and regional security.

Top Air Force officers from the Philippines' most important security partners—United States, Japan and Australia—were present to share their perspectives.

Trained for jungle warfare

"While we are prepared for current wars, sometimes it's good to project what the face of the future war will be. Sometimes in the military, we prepare for the past war that just ended without thinking of the coming war," Lorenzana said.

The Philippine Army at present is mostly trained for jungle warfare to fight communist rebels and terrorists in the mountains.

It was the Marawi crisis in

2017, the five-month gun battle between government troops and Islamic State-linked terrorists in the predominantly-Muslim city, that put to test their abilities in urban warfare.

"With Marawi, we were at a loss for quite some time... We had to learn to fight in urban warfare," he said.

"Air power is paramount to the defense of the state... The complex and dynamic nature of the regional security environment needs broader cooperation among Asean and other nations to prevent and counter violent extremism," said the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr.

Galvez also expressed gratitude to Australia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States

for their technical support and transport of relief items during the five-month crisis, at the same time noting that China had donated 50 sniper rifles.

Maj. Gen. Russell Mack, deputy commander of the US Pacific Air Force, stressed the need for allies to work together to face the challenges in the region.

"Due to the main challenges we face in this AOR (area of responsibility) in this vast region, working together is a necessity," Mack said.

Bilateral exercises

He cited bilateral exercises and formal agreements, such as the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, as some of the means to boost their collective presence.

"Access to shared spaces in-

cluding freedom of overflight and freedom of navigation to international airspace and waters are essential to continued security and prosperity," Mack said.

Gen. Yoshinari Marumo, chief of staff of Japan's Air Self-Defense Force, cited China as one of the region's security challenges, along with Russia and North Korea.

"The modernization of the People's Liberation Army has rapidly expanded and intensified its activities in the vicinity of Japan... Aircraft carrier Liaoning has increased its activities by entering the Western Pacific and heightening its operation of fighters," Marumo said.

"China is escalating its activities around Japan and Western Pacific and is trying to make its presence a normal state," he added.

Marumo also highlighted the "quadrilateral defense cooperation" of the Philippines, Japan, Australia and United States.

Air Vice Marshal Steven Robertson of the Royal Australian Air Force also voiced out the need to maintain strong relationships with allies and to conduct international exercises amid security challenges.

"The nature of Philippines, as well as Australia, United States and Japan, share similar visions of stability, security and rules-based approach. As close allies, we must seek integration beyond technical platforms... Our integration occurs across all aspects of government and across other services... and across allies like our wonderful partners represented today," Robertson said. INQ

China military plane in Davao causes stir

DAVAO CITY—Social media exploded with conspiracy theories when a group posted a picture of a Chinese military plane parked at the Davao international airport. Officials quickly moved to ease fears that the plane's presence was linked to what government critics said was creeping Chinese invasion of the Philippines. No cause for alarm, the officials said. —STORY

BY ALLAN NAWAL

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China military plane causes stir

Officials quick to play down panic reactions that landing at Davao airport linked to territorial dispute

DAVAO CITY—Authorities quickly dismissed concerns over the landing of a Chinese military plane at Davao International Airport here on Friday, saying it was no cause for alarm that should add to worries over what government critics had said was creeping Chinese invasion taking place in Philippine seas.

"It only refueled," said Lt. Col. Jose Ritchie Pabilonia, commander of the Philippine Air Force's (PAF) Tactical Operations Group in Southern Mindanao.

Pabilonia said the PAF had allowed the plane to land because "it had a diplomatic clearance."

In a statement, Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go said the request for landing and refueling of the Ilyushin Il 76 had been properly coordinated and cleared by the Department of National Defense, the Department of Foreign Af-

airs and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

Conditions met

"The landing was requested for the specific purpose of refueling and was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," said Go, President Duterte's most trusted aide, in a statement on Sunday.

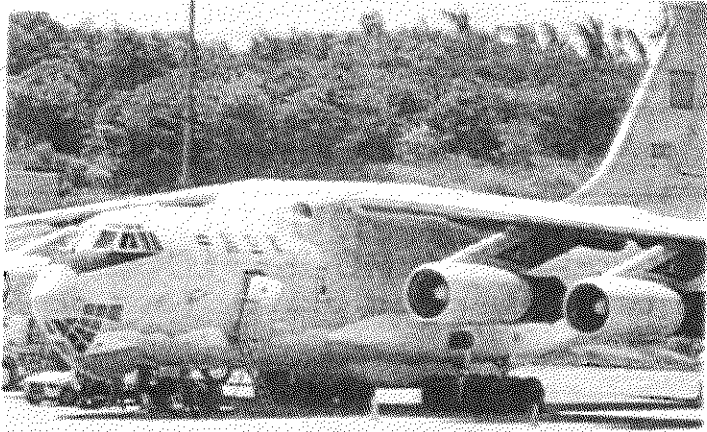
He said there was nothing wrong in the landing and refueling and that Philippine aircraft also make technical stops when needed in foreign countries.

"The same courtesy is extended to Philippine government aircraft when technical stops need to be undertaken," Go said.

Go said the Il 76 only did refueling and nothing else.

No passenger movement

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the aircraft tapped a local han-



NOT ALARMING? The Philippine Plane Spotters Group uploaded this photo of an Ilyushin Il 76 parked at the Davao International Airport on Friday. —PHOTO FROM PPSG FACEBOOK PAGE

dler, Transnational Aviation Support Service, for the issuance of permits to use the Davao airport.

"No movement of passengers was made," Roque said.

Pabilonia said in a phone in-

terview that PAF men "assisted it for refueling."

Asked why the Il 76, operated by the People's Liberation Army, chose Davao City for refueling, Pabilonia said he did

not know.

He said he also did not know where the plane was from.

"Nothing to be alarmed of. It is well-coordinated," he said of the landing.

Photos of the plane were first uploaded on social media by a group calling itself Philippine Plane Spotters Group.

Social media protest

Netizens raised a howl or protest over the landing of the Chinese military aircraft, saying it was testament to President Duterte's sellout of the country to the Chinese.

Duterte critic Jose Antonio Custodio said the landing took place amid "the travails of Filipino fishermen" at Scarborough Shoal, a Philippine territory that China claimed as its own and started to guard with coast guard vessels.

"Maybe we already have a VFA with the Chinese that I am

not aware of," Custodio wrote on Facebook, referring to Visiting Forces Agreement, a military deal between the Philippines and United States.

"Anyway, this administration really loves rewarding China for bad behavior," Custodio added.

Tough aircraft

The Il 76 was originally designed in 1967 to lift heavy machinery and was capable of short landings, even on ice.

Russia later tried to re-purpose it into a commercial plane with a capacity of 60 passengers but the plan did not materialize.

It continued to serve its original purpose—transport heavy machinery and supplies in remote areas of Russia and other countries that have been using it, like China.

The Il 76 has a capability to refuel smaller planes on air.

—ALLAN NAWAL INQ

Go: Chinese plane refueled in Davao

SPECIAL Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go on Sunday confirmed that a Chinese military plane landed last week in Davao City.

In a statement, Go said the military transport plane Ilyushin Il-76, or simply Il-76, of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) stopped by to refuel.

"There are reports from social media showing a Chinese government plane landing in the Philippines. The request for landing was received, processed and cleared by

relevant Philippine Government agencies," Go said.

"The landing was requested for the specific purpose of refueling and was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," he added.

Go said such technical stops by foreign government and commercial planes were "closely coordinated" with government's agencies

and that domestic procedures and existing agreements were followed.

This "courtesy" is also given to Philippine government aircrafts when needed, he said.

"The [Departments of National Defense and Foreign Affairs] and the [Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines] - and other relevant agencies - work together to ensure that requesting parties comply

with our domestic procedures and requirements," Go said.

Pictures of the plane went viral on social media on Friday after the Philippine Plane Spotters Group posted it on Facebook.

The aircraft is designed to deliver heavy machinery to remote and poorly served areas. It may also be used to conduct tactical airlift missions, transport of troops and evacuation.

Davao City is the hometown of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Duterte has taken a softer stance on sea disputes with China compared with his predecessor, Benigno Aquino 3rd, despite China's militarization in the South China Sea.

Malacañang however bared that the Philippine government had filed a diplomatic protest against China for its actions in the disputed sea.

Chinese military plane refuels at Davao airport

By ANTONIO L. COLINA, IV and GENALYN D. KABILING

DAVAO CITY – A Chinese military plane en route to New Zealand landed in this city last June 8 to refuel, military and palace officials confirmed yesterday.

Major Ezra L. Balagtey, public information officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Eastern Mindanao Command (EastMinCom), confirmed the incident after photos ▶10

Chinese military plane... ◀1

of "Ilyushin Il-76," a strategic airlifter of the Chinese military, circulated on social media.

Balagtey said the Chinese aircraft landed at the Davao International Airport at 11:30 a.m. last Friday and immediately left at 1 p.m. after refueling.

Likewise, President Duterte's assistant Christopher Go confirmed that the foreign airplane was allowed to make the technical stop with certain conditions for compliance by the concerned party.

"There are reports from social media showing Chinese government plane landing in the Philippines. The request for landing was received, processed and cleared by relevant Philippine Government agencies," Go said in a statement.

"The landing was requested for the specific purpose of refueling and was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," he added.

Philippine Air Force (PAF) Tactical Operations Group commander, Lt. Col. Ritchie Pabilonia, said the request for landing was arranged by the Chinese attaché in Manila.

Go assured that such technical stops of government and commercial planes are closely coordinated by government agencies, citing "established domestic procedure and in consideration of existing agreements."

"The same courtesy is extended to Philippine Government aircrafts when technical stops need to be undertaken," he said.

'China jet got go-ahead to land in Davao'

THE Chinese military aircraft that landed in the Philippines only made a landing with Special Assistant to the President Josephine Guo said Sunday.

"The request for landing was received, processed and cleared by relevant Philippine government agencies," Guo said in a statement Sunday.

The presidential top aide issued the statement after planes of Chinese military aircraft landed at the airport circuitous was a routine ICAO work.

The landing was requested for the tourist purposes of refueling and was planned in accordance with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," he said.

Guo said such "technical steps" by foreign government and commercial planes include those for refueling purposes, as already operational by relevant government agencies following domestic procedure and in consideration of existing agreements.

He added that the same courtesy is extended to Philippine government aircraft when any formal steps need to be undertaken.

Guo continued that the requesting party, coordination with the Defense department, the Foreign Affairs department and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines.

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'China...

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"The DND, DFA and CAAP - and other relevant agencies - work together to ensure that requesting parties comply with our domestic procedures and requirements."

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque also confirmed the landing of the military aircraft in Davao City, citing report by the CAAP.

"As verified and reported by CAAP, no movement of passengers was made outside the terminal building. The Chinese aircraft used a local handler, Transnational Aviation Support Service, to arrange the requirements for the permit. The flight was given an entry and exit permit, like any other private flights," Roque said. PNA



Chinese plane landing in Davao confirmed

SPECIAL Assistant to the President Bong Go yesterday confirmed that a Chinese government plane recently landed in the Philippines.

Go said the aircraft was cleared for landing.

The plane was spotted at the Davao City Airport on Friday, June 8, according to viral social media posts. The aircraft was identified as People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) military transport plane IL-76.

There are reports from social media showing a Chinese government plane landing in the Philippines. The request for landing was received, processed, and cleared by relevant Philippine government agencies, Go said in a statement yesterday.

Go said the landing was done so that the plane could refuel. Permission was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party.

Go explained that technical landings by foreign government and commercial planes are done through close coordination by relevant government agencies, following established domestic procedure and in consideration of existing agreements.

He added that the Department of National Defense (DND), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), as well as other agencies, ensure

that parties requesting to land in the Philippines comply with procedures and requirements.

Go said the same courtesy is also extended to Philippine government planes.

In a separate statement, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that based on CAAP's records, the Chinese aircraft made a technical stop in Davao City on June 8 for mere refueling.

According to the permit granted, the aircraft was bound for Cairns, Australia, Roque said.

He added: "As verified and reported by CAAP, no movement of passengers was made outside the terminal building. The Chinese aircraft used a local handler, Transnational Aviation Support Service, to arrange the requirements for the permit. The flight was given an entry and exit permit, like any other private flights."

On Saturday, June 9, a social media post showing images of the Chinese military aircraft went viral after military historian and defense analyst Jose Antonio Custodio posted photos attributed to the Philippine Plane Spotters Group.

The Chinese aircraft's landing comes as the Philippines and China remain embroiled in a dispute over the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea). The most recently reported incident between the two countries involves the Chinese Coast Guard taking the catch of Filipino fishermen in Panatag Shoal (Scarborough Shoal).

EMontano

Landing of China plane in Davao confirmed

By **EFREN MONTANO**

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He added the Department of National Defense (DND), the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), as well as other agencies, ensure that parties requesting to land in the Philippines comply with procedures and requirements.

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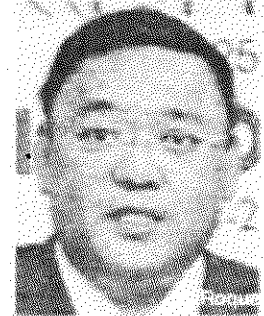
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Go



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Chinese plane pinayagang lumapag, mag-refuel sa Davao

Binigyan ng clearance ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas ang mga eroplano ng Chinese government na makalapag at mag-refuel sa bansa, ayon sa isang opisyal ng Palasyo.

Kinumpirma ng assistant ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na si Christopher Go na ang banyagang eroplano ay pinayagang mag-technical stop kaakibat ang ilang mga kondisyon.

"There are reports from social media showing Chinese government plane landing in the Philippines. The

request for landing was received, processed and cleared by relevant Philippine Government agencies," saad sa pahayag ni Go.

"The landing was requested for the specific purpose of refuelling and was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," dugtung niya.

Naglabas ng pahayag si Go niatapos kumalat sa social media ang mga larato ng isang Chinese military plane na lumalapag sa Davao City International Airport. Ang foreign aircraft ay inilalat na

nag-technical stop sa bansa nitong nakaraang linggo.

Iniyak ni Go na ang mga ganitong technical stops ng government at commercial planes ay may mahigpit na koordinasyon sa mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan, binanggit na "established domestic procedure and in consideration of existing agreements."

"The same courtesy is extended to Philippine Government aircrafts when technical stops need to be undertaken," aniya.

Genalyn Kabling

PH allows China military aircraft to land in Davao

The government has cleared a Chinese military aircraft to land in the country for refueling, a Palace official said yesterday.

President Duterte's assistant Christopher Go confirmed that the foreign airplane was recently allowed to make the technical stop with certain conditions for compliance by the concerned party.

"There are reports from social media showing Chinese government plane landing in the Philippines. The request for landing was received, processed, and cleared by relevant Philippine government agencies," Go said in a statement. "The landing was requested for the specific purpose of refueling and was granted and given with specific conditions for compliance by the requesting party," he added.

Go issued the statement after

photos of a Chinese military plane landing at the Davao City International Airport circulated on social media. The foreign aircraft reportedly made the technical stop in the country last week.

He assured that such technical stops of government and commercial planes are closely coordinated by government agencies, citing "established domestic procedure and in consideration of existing agreements."

"The same courtesy is extended to Philippine government aircrafts when technical stops need to be undertaken," he said.

He said the Department of National Defense, Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines and other agencies are working together "to ensure that requesting parties comply with our domestic

procedures and requirements."

There was no movement of personnel outside the Davao airport terminal when the airplane made a refueling stop, Malacañang added.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the aircraft which was on its way to Cairns, Australia was allowed to make a technical stop by concerned government agencies after following certain protocols.

"As verified and reported by the CAAP, no movement of passengers was made outside the terminal building," Roque said. "The Chinese aircraft used a local handler, Transnational Aviation Support Service, to arrange the requirements for the permit. The flight was given an entry and exit permit, like any other private flights," he added. **(Genalyn D. Kabiling)**

Military: Troop morale 'very high'

BY VICTOR REYES

THE Armed Forces yesterday sought to deny the allegation of Rep. Gary Alvarado of the Mandate party list group that soldiers are disgruntled over President Duterte's handling of the territorial dispute in the South China Sea.

Col. Noel Domingo, chief of the AFP public affairs office, said: "That is not true. Nobody is demoralized. Our troops are busy doing their jobs. We are pre-occupied with our mission at hand."

Domingo said the morale of troops is "very high" since reforms that have been instituted in the Armed Forces.

"Their morale is high because of the upgrade of their equipment, upgrade of their training, upgrade of their facilities... The AFP now is very different from the AFP when I was a lieutenant in the 90s," he also said.

AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military does not

"Our job, our mandate is to secure the integrity of the territory

See MILITARY TROOP > Page B1

said his country had completed development of its nuclear program and would focus on economic development, suggesting a meeting with South Korea.

After a flurry of contacts between the two Koreas, South Korean officials suggested to Trump in March that Kim would be willing to meet face to face.

The summit comes after weeks of sometimes-contentious discussions and was briefly cancelled amid North Korean outrage over messaging from some US advisers.

Many remain skeptical Kim will ever completely abandon his nuclear programs. They believe his latest engagement is aimed at getting the United States to ease crippling economic sanctions that have squeezed the impoverished country.

For Trump, a successful summit will see him achieve badly needed recognition on the international stage ahead of congressional elections in November.

Believed to be 34, Kim is one of the youngest heads of state in the world and looks an unlikely candidate to be making history of the kind that has eluded his father and grandfather, both past leaders of North Korea.

But since taking power in 2011 after his father's death, the youthful Kim has displayed a mixture of ruthlessness, pragmatism and statecraft to get this prize: to sit across the table with the leader of the United States and be treated as an equal.

The two countries were on the brink of war last year, with their leaders trading insults and threats, until Kim made a dramatic offer in March to meet Trump and discuss nuclear disarmament, which the American president quickly accepted.

Kim's journey from international pariah to being regarded as a responsible head of state has taken just a few months.

The two leaders meet at 9 a.m. (0100 GMT) on Tuesday at the Capella on Sentosa island, a refurbished British Army artillery mess that is now one of Singapore's most expensive luxury hotels.

-- Reuters

MILITARY: TROOP

of the Armed Forces," said Arevalo.

Arevalo earlier belied Alejano's allegations that President Duterte has asked the military to stop patrols in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

The WPS covers South China Sea waters within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, based on an administrative order signed by then President Aquino in September 2012.

The Philippines, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan have overlapping claims over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano called "fake news" and "a blatant lie" Alejano's claim that Duterte ordered a stop to military patrols in the WPS.

He said Alejano is doing a "disservice" to the people as he again insisted that the Duterte administration will not allow any piece of the country territory to be taken away.

Prior to the Duterte administration, the Philippines was one of the most outspoken critics of China's aggressive actions in the disputed waters.

Duterte has been saying he would not risk going to war with China whose military might is much more superior than that of the Philippines.

Cayetano also said government will not file a diplomatic protest against China regarding an incident in the Scarborough Shoal (Panatag Shoal) wherein members of China's Coast

Guard boarded boats of Filipino fishermen reportedly to grab their catch.

He said Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua has assured him that violators will be apprehended.

"The Chinese ambassador has assured us they will apply the law very harshly to the violators. We have an agreement with them that fishermen should be free to fish except in marine protected areas, such as the lagoon in Scarborough which are spawning grounds of fishes and giant clams," Cayetano told reporters after welcoming some 100 distressed Filipino workers repatriated from the United Arab Emirates.

He did not specify which law the Chinese envoy was referring to.

He thanked media for exposing the alleged harassment of Filipino fishermen in the Scarborough Shoal but expressed doubts on Alejano's claim that Chinese Coast Guard personnel continually harass Filipino fishermen in the area.

He said there is the likelihood that the fishermen were selling their catch or bartering with the Chinese. He asked the fishermen to report to the authorities or the Philippine Coast Guard any incident of harassment so that the DFA can act on the matter.

Cayetano said a diplomatic protest will be filed "if you find the approach of one country not acceptable."

Senate President Vicente Sotto III asked Alejano to reveal his "sources" since Malacanang and the AFP have already denied Duterte

issued such order.

"Saan niya narinig yun? Nagpupunta ba siya dun? Bakas meron siyang ano, malaman natin (Where did he get the information. Did he go there? Maybe he has information about that. We should know)," he said in an interview with radio dxBB.

Sen. Richard Gordon said government should lodge a protest.

COAST GUARD RESPONSIBILITY

Arevalo said the protection of Filipino fishermen in the disputed areas is primarily the responsibility of the Philippine Coast Guard.

"It's not up to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It's the Coast Guard who should be able to help on that issue," Arevalo said in a radio interview when asked on the protection of Filipino fishermen.

"Matters or issues on enforcement of maritime laws is a Coast Guard function," he also said.

Television GMA 7 said Chinese Coast Guard personnel asked for fish catch of Filipino fishermen on May 28. The fishermen did not give any because they were yet to catch any fish at the time they were approached.

GMA 7 also had an amateur video showing Chinese Coast Guard personnel confiscating fish from Filipino fishermen, also in Scarborough Shoal, on May 20. — *With Ashzel Hachero and JP Lopez*



Senator wants sustainable weapons manufacture in PH

SENATOR Sherwin "Win" Gatchalian wants the government to improve the country's defense capabilities by pursuing self-sufficiency in the manufacture of basic weaponry, bullets, and armaments.

In a Senate hearing on the Special Defense Economic Zone Act (House Bill No. 6525) sponsored by Bataan 2nd District Representative Jose Enrique "Joet" Garcia, national defense officials explained that at present, some 20 million rounds of bullets are being imported by the Philippines from Brazil, South Korea, and Spain.

This comprises 30 percent of the total ammunition requirement of 60 million rounds of bullets that the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) needs

every year. The remaining 70 percent are being manufactured locally.

However, the Department of National Defense (DND) stressed that raw materials required in the production -- such as copper, nickel, and brass -- are still being sourced from outside the country.

Gatchalian explained that the country may not be "on stable ground" if it continues to rely on importing its defense requirements, citing some possible implications it might have on maintaining the national arsenal reserves and improving the marksmanship skills of troops.

However, the senator said the bill will still need to undergo further scrutiny to ensure that it is the best means of achieving the goal of self-reliance.

HB 6525 aims to convert the country's existing Government Arsenal located in Camp Gen. Antonio Luna, Limay, Bataan into a Special Defense Economic Zone (SpeDEZ), and establish the Special Defense Economic Zone Authority (SpeDEZA), which shall manage the

SpeDEZ in line with the AFP Modernization Law (RA 7898).

Calling it a "very unique proposition," Gatchalian said the DND must first justify why a legislated ecozone should be created instead of an administrative ecozone under the Philippine Economic Zone Au-

thority (PEZA).

In the hearing, PEZA said the DND has a pending application with them for the establishment of an ecozone.

"We also want to see a detailed plan-of-action and timetable needed for the creation of the ecozone. This experiment will cost

about P3 billion over five years so we have to make sure that it will be sustainable," Gatchalian said.

The senator assured the AFP that Congress will continue providing the funds it needs in modernizing the military capabilities.

Marion Purificacion

Pinas may sapat na armas pandigma

May sapat na kakayahan ang Pilipinas na ipagtanggol ang sarili sa digmaan dahil kaya nitong gumawa ng mga armas.

Sa pagdirug ng Senate Special Defense Economic Zone Act, lumabas na 30 porsiyento lang ng 60 milyong balang gamit ng militar ay inaangkat mula Brazil, South Korea, at Spain. Ang 70 porsiyento ay gawa ng mga lokal na kumpanya.

Ayon kay Senador Win Gatchalian, ang isa lamang sa magiging problema ay ang pag-import ng mga panguluha sa sangkap sa paggawa ng bala.

Aniya, ang kailangang lang gawin ng Department of National Defense (DND) ay magtatag ng isang economic zone sa ilalim ng Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) na nakalaan sa paggawa ng armas at bala.

"We also want to see a detailed plan of action and timetable needed for the creation of the ecozone. This experiment will cost about P3 billion over five years so we have to make sure that it will be sustainable," sabi ni Gatchalian.

Leonel M. Abasola

15 more Marawi heroes get medals

BY VICTOR REYES

FIFTEEN more Army officers and enlisted personnel received medals from Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. for their role in last year's liberation of Marawi City from the Daesh-inspired Maute Group.

Galvez conferred the medals yesterday during a visit at the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, his first since assuming command as AFP chief on April 18, according to Army spokesman Lt. Col. Leon Villanueva.

Seven received the Field Cross Medal, the third highest military

decoration in combat. They are 1st Lt. Ruzel Romulo, 1st Lt. Romel S. Soto, 1st Lt. Romeo Abad and Randy Suarez, Sgt. Jovito Andrang, privates first class Leonard Santos and Mar Nan Pascillan and Cpl. Federico Restabillo Jr.

They received the Silver Cross Medal — 1st Lt. Sarah Jane Bargasoli, 2nd Lt. Rodessa Armon, Sgt. Marsel Ardeane, and Corporal Gilbert Acal and Ian Javan.

Conferred the Military Merit Medal were 1st Lt. Berhan Galam, 1st Lt. Sgt. Winston Regal and Sgt. Isador Chibay.

Villanueva said Galvez was accorded with the traditional military

honors during the ceremony held in Army chief's office, Roland Marasa.

Galvez and Marasa posthumously led the operations to quell the Marawi City siege, at the former commander of the Western Mindanao Command and Joint Task Force Marawi, respectively.

"The magnitude of his role was the awarding of medals to denote the personnel who contributed in the liberation of Marawi City and Sultan Kudarat.

In his address, Galvez thanked the courage displayed by soldiers

See 15 MORE > Page B1

15 MORE

during the siege, including Scout Ranger Sgt. Antonio Basa who dropped his body over an improvised bomb to protect a fellow soldier.

Galvez said he visited Basa at a military hospital and was touched by the soldier's gesture. He said Basa tried to render a salute to him though the latter could barely lift his arm because

of his injury.

"The unfathomable sacrifices of our soldiers' blood, sweat and tears will not be put in vain. As the Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, I will ensure that all your requirements in your operation will be provided to facilitate the accomplishment of your mission," said Galvez.

Scores of officers and men have

already received awards for their involvement in the Marawi siege, including Capt. Rommel Sandoval who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Valor, the highest military decoration for combat.

Maute members laid a siege of the city on May 23. The five-month conflict resulted in the death of 974 terrorists, 168 soldiers and policemen, and 47 civilians.

FROM PAGE B1

Galvez, AFP hail Marawi heroes

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff General Carlito G. Galvez Jr. visited the Philippine Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City on Saturday and awarded medals to deserving personnel who helped liberate Marawi City.

Galvez was warmly welcomed by Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito D. Bautista, who also accorded him with traditional military honors.

The highlight of Galvez visit to the Philippine Army headquarters was the awarding of medals to deserving personnel who contributed in the liberation of Marawi City.

Gold Cross, Silver Cross and Military Merit Medals were awarded to several officers and enlisted men who served in Marawi City.

"The unfathomable sacrifices of our soldier's blood, sweat and tears will not be put in vain. As the Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, I will ensure that all your re-

quirements in your operation will be provided to facilitate the accomplishment of your mission," Galvez said.

9 students rescued atop Mount Natib

By MAR T. SUPNAD

ORANI, Bataan—Nine students from the Bulacan State University (BSU) who were stranded atop Mount Natib at the height of tropical storm “Domeng’s” onslaught last Saturday were rescued successfully by government rescue teams.

Senior Superintendent Marcelo Dayag, Bataan Police Provincial Office

(PPO) director, identified the rescued students as Quino Santiago, Leomart Mangawan, Carlo Fuentes, Jovito Bacay Jr., Ian Carlo, Reniel Calooy, Federico Odiada, Jeffrey Culilap and Arjan Esteban, all electrical engineering students at the BSU.

Dayag lauded the combined efforts of rescue teams from the Bataan PPO, the Metro Bataan Development Authority (MBDA), and the military

for the safe rescue of the nine students from the province’s highest peak – the summit of Mt. Natib in Barangay Tala, this town.

“Mabilis po ang naging rescue procedures kasi very high-tech ang approach ng MBDA and we thank everyone sa rescue units, the army at lahat po ng mga tumulong,” he said.

MBDA General Manager Charlie Pizarro, who mobilized the rescuers,

said the stranded students were so exhausted and cold after being exposed to very bad weather on the mountain.

“They were shaken and cold when we met them during our rescue efforts with the 48th IB (Infantry Battalion) personnel of the Philippine Army,” said Chief Inspector Leobaldon Bacon, Orani chief of police, told the Manila Bulletin. “They were then so weak and hopeless,” he added. ☞

9 students rescued in Bataan

By Zaida DeLos Reyes-Palanca

NINE college students from Bulacan were rescued by government forces after being stranded in a mountain due to heavy rains brought by Typhoon Domeng in Orani, Bataan.

This was confirmed yesterday by Armed Forces of the Philippines-Northern Luzon Command (AFP-NOLCOM) spokesperson Col. Isagani Nato.

Nato said Army troops from NOLCOM rescued the victims who were all students of Bulacan State University (BSU) and rescued them at around 12:10 a.m. in Mount Natib, Bgy. Tala, Orani, Bataan.

The victims were identified as Quirino Santiago, Leomart Mangawan, Carlo Fuentes, Jovito Bacay Jr., Ian Carlo, Romel Calocoy, Federico Odiada, Jeffrey Cutilan and Arjan Etuban.

Nato said at that around 12 p.m. midnight on Friday, they received information that the students were

stranded during their hiking in the said forested area due to heavy rains and flooding brought by Typhoon Domeng that was enhanced by south-west monsoon.

The incident was immediately relayed to the 48th Infantry Battalion (48IB) under the Joint Task Force (JTF) "KAUGNAY", which deployed troops and conducted Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) operations.

The team was accompanied by members of Orani PNP and Metropolitan Bataan Development Authority (MBDA) personnel in their operation that led to the successful rescue of the victims.

They were brought to Tala Patrol Base in Bgy. Tala, Orani, Bataan for medical assistance and initial debriefing.

In line with this, the NOLCOM assured the public that they will continue to be ready to respond to emergencies, ensuring the safety of every Filipino specially this rainy season.

NEWS ROUNDUP**Soldiers rescue students trapped on Mount Natib**

ORANI, Bataan – A group of students from Bulacan were rescued by Army troops from the Armed Forces Northern Luzon Command after they were stranded on Mount Natib here Saturday. Noicom spokesperson Lt. Col. Isagani Nato identified the students from the Bulacan State University as Quirino Santiago, Leomart Mangawan, Carlo Fuentez, Jovito Bacay Jr., Ian Cario, Reniel Calcoy, Federico Odlada, Jeffrey Cullap, and Arjan Eteban. The students were hiking in Mount Natib Friday when they were trapped by heavy rains and flooding caused by the southwest monsoon or "habagat" and tropical storm "Domieng." The 48th Infantry Battalion under the Joint Task Force Kaugnay was informed and promptly rescued the students. The 48th IB was accompanied by the police here and Metropolitan Bataan Development Authority. They were taken to the Tala Patrol Base in Barangay Tala, this municipality, for medical assistance and initial debriefing following their rescue. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

Clashes force Agta families to flee

LUCENA CITY—Families of the Agta indigenous group have camped out near the Barangay Umitay bridge in General Nakar, Quezon, after fleeing their upland homes following fierce clashes between government troops and communist rebels. The children attend classes in makeshift tents, where they sit on damp soil covered with cardboard boxes and sacks. They're calling for a stop to the fighting. —STORY BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

A9

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Special to the Inquirer

LUCENA CITY — At the mercy of moist weather, young children belonging to the Agta indigenous group are holding classes in makeshift tents made from discarded canvas, cartons and other wastes.

Their makeshift is the lack of a wooden floorboard, instead of school chairs. The students sit on mats and mats, covered with cartons and sacks," said Lenna Sollano, a volunteer of a non-government organization.

The school children were among scores of Agta people from the Sierra Madre range who were displaced by renewed fighting between government forces and communist New People's Army (NPA) units in eastern Quezon.

Sollano, a volunteer of Davao Ecotour, has appealed to netizens to help alleviate the plight of the tribe.

On her Facebook account, she posted photos of more than 40 Agta families who left their

mountain community at San Dadyangaw, Barangay Umitay, General Nakar town, after Army soldiers and NPA guerrillas engaged in furious battles last month.

Dadyangaw is more than five hours by boat from the temporary settlement site of the families near the Umitay bridge, also in General Nakar.

"They left their community, their school and all their possessions belonging to escape intense fighting. Now, they themselves are fighting their own battle—how to survive far away from home," Sollano said in a phone interview on Saturday.

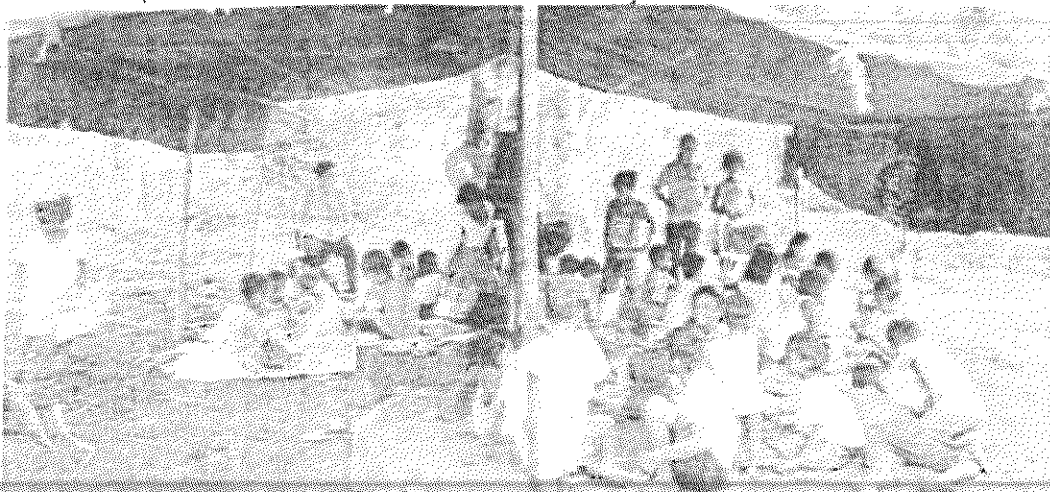
She said most evacuees were young children who were supposed to be studying in the confines of their school in Dadyangaw.

Three teachers

Despite conditions far from ideal, three women teachers are holding regular school sessions to feed and nourish the minds of their students from kindergarten to Grade VI.

Sollano and a male volunteer stayed at the evacuation camp for two days, helping cook food for the Agta people and assisting the teachers.

She said the community could barely survive from donations, including those made by Army soldiers.



MAKESHIFT CLASSROOM Elementary school teachers from Umiray village in Quezon's General Nakar town continue to educate Agta schoolchildren in improvised tents where their families have fled after fierce clashes between government forces and communist rebels. —PHOTO TAKEN FROM LENIE SOLLANO'S FACEBOOK ACCOUNT

The parents of the schoolchildren are looking for any kind of employment so they may feed their families, she said.

"What they wish is for the NPA rebels and the government forces to stop the fighting and leave their tribal community in

peace," Sollano said.

Traumatized

She said the young children had been traumatized by the fighting.

"I personally witnessed how a frightened young boy ran to her mother after he saw a man

wearing camouflage, which he mistook for a soldier," she said.

Last month, Army soldiers and NPA rebels engaged in a fierce battle at Dadyangaw that left one government trooper dead. Two alleged NPA members were captured.

The military reported that it found an abandoned rebel camp, composed of 30 makeshift huts that can accommodate more than 100 people.

Zone of peace

Sometime in 2007, mountain tribes, lowland residents and officials of Real, Infanta and General Nakar towns, declared a zone of peace in their respective places to spare themselves from clashes between government troops and rebels. **A9**

Their announcement, however, has often been ignored by both sides.

The Duterte administration and communist rebels are set to resume peace talks next month, hoping to end the nearly half-century insurgency that has claimed the lives of more than 40,000 combatants and civilians. **INQ**

Troops kill bandit, nab NPA rebel

BY AL JACINTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Army soldiers killed a bandit and arrested a communist New People's Army (NPA) rebel in separate clashes in Zamboanga Peninsula over the weekend.

Officials said troops from the 42nd Infantry Battalion engaged a local lawless group in a firefight killing one of them in Barangay Panabutan, Sirawani town of Zamboanga del Norte.

The slain gunman was identified as Haton Hassan, a member of the Jumalon Tungkalan group of bandits operating in the province. Recovered from him was a .45-caliber pistol.

"Reports of the civilian populace were very vital in tracking down the enemy location leading to the successful encounters of

our unit," said Col. Francisco Ariel Felicidadario 3rd, commander of the 102nd Infantry Brigade.

Meanwhile, soldiers from the 53rd Infantry Battalion led by Sgt. Roseller Delparine encountered a band of NPA rebels triggering a firefight in Barangay Balonai, Midsalip town in the neighboring province of Zamboanga del Sur.

They captured NPA rebel Jerry Macabinta and seized his .45-caliber pistol. **A7**

Macabinta claimed to be a member of the section committee-KARA under the Western Mind-

anao Regional Party Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Major Ronald Suscano, spokesman for the 1st Infantry Division based in the province, said there was no casualty on the govern-

ment side.

There was no immediate statement from the NPA on the arrest of its member.

Major General Roseller Murillo, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said the Army

is ready to thwart any attempt by lawless elements to sow fear and terror among the civilian communities.

"Our soldiers are ready to respond and address any attempt by the armed groups threatening

the safety and well-being of the people. We will continue engaging with our civilian stakeholders and put our acts together to pave the way for a resilient and developed communities in our area of responsibility," he said.

NPA, dinakma sa Zamboanga encounter

Isang hinihinalang miyembro ng rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) ang dinakip ng militar na nakasagupa ng mga ito Zamboanga del Sur, nitong Sabado ng umaga.

Nasa kustodiya na ng 53rd Infantry Division (ID) ng Philippine Army (PA) ang rebeldeng si Jeery Macabinta, ayon kay Major Ronald Suscano, tagapagsalita ng 1st ID ng PA.

Nagsasagawa ng combat patrol ang 53rd IBnang makaengkuventro ng mga ito ang grupo ni Macabinta sa Sitio Pisis, Barangay Balomat, Midsalip, bandang 11:00 ng umaga.

Umattas sa bakbakan ang mga rebelde, maliban lamang kay Macabinta na dinakma ng militar.

Nariniwala ang militar na

nasugatan sa labanan ang ilang kasamahan ni Macabinta na binitbit ng mga rebelde sa kanilang pagtakas.

Walang iniulat na nasugatan sa pang ng pamahalaan.

Nabawi ng militar kay

Macabinta ang isang caliber 45 pistol at mga bala nito.

Nakatakodang sampahan si Macabinta ng kasong rebelyon at illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions.

Fer Taboy

Army seizes NPA rice stockpile in Bukidnon

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City — Troops of the Army's First Special Forces Battalion (1st SFBn) under the 403rd Infantry (Peacemaker) Brigade discovered 15 sacks of rice buried, believed to belong to sympathizers of the New People's Army (NPA), in Sitio Mahusay, Barangay Dominorog, Talakag town, Bukidnon province, Capt. Norman M. Tagros, Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer of the Army's 403rd Infantry (Peacemaker) Brigade said.

In a statement sent to The Manila Bulletin, Tagros said the elements of the 1st SFBn unearthed the 45 plastic containers filled with 15 sacks of rice,

buried under five feet of soil, in Mahusay area, with the help of villagers.

"The troops of the 1st SFBn conducted security patrol in response to the reports and complaints of concerned residents in the nearby communities who are already fed-up with the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPA Terrorists extortion," the 403rd CMO officer said.

"Moreover, the residents who are mostly poor farmers claimed that they were already fed up with being constantly forced by the CPP-NPA Terrorists to take up arms against the government as members of the Milisyang Bayan (MB)," he said.

"These MB members are also tasked to provide rice and food and carry such

items to the mountains where they are then asked by the CPP-NPA Terrorists to bury said rice using 20-liters plastic water containers," claimed the 403rd CMO officer.

"The terrorists constantly violated the provisions of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) by forcing the civilians to become direct participants to hostilities and for constantly subjecting civilians to attacks and harassments, Northeastern and Northern Mindanao 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division spokesperson Lt. Tere Ingente also told The Manila Bulletin.

TODAY

Court lets 5 top Reds to join peace talks

By Rey E. Hoquejo

FIVE leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) were allowed by a Manila Regional Trial Court to travel abroad to participate in the resumption of peace talks with the Philippine government this month.

The court granted a motion for travel abroad filed by CPP leaders Danilo Tiamzon, Adelberto Silva, Daniel Baybayan, Randall Edrains and Romeo Cellada, allowing them to travel abroad from June 22 to 30 to join the informal and formal peace talks.

The communist leaders were among the accused in a murder case filed in 2010 by the prosecutors of the Manila

Next page

grave in Leyte containing suspected victims of the communist rebel purge in the 1980s.

The CPP leaders were released from detention in August 2016 to join the peace negotiations as consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

But the lower court ordered their re-arrest in January following the request of the Department of Justice when the peace talks bogged down in November last year.

In their motion, Tiamzon and Silva told the court that the peace negotiations between the government and the NDFP are "currently underway" following President Rodrigo Duterte's announcement last April of his plans to revive the peace talks.

"Thus, they entreat that their bail bonds be reinstated and declared effective for the duration of the peace negotiations," the order stated.

The accused also said they have been invited by NDFP negotiating panel chairman Fidel Agcaoili to attend the informal talks, which will be followed by the formal talks.

They also said they have respective functions during the event, which they claimed "are indispensable."

"After a careful consideration of the arguments of both parties, the Court grants the accused-movants' motion to travel abroad," the court's order read.

However, the accused were required to strictly follow the rules the court set for their provisional liberty, including the requirement to return to the country within three calendar days after the completion of the informal and formal talks.

Tiamzon and Silva were required to post another P100,000 bond as their previous bail bonds have already been canceled.

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Military pounds BIFF 'bomb factory'

THE military on Sunday launched air strike operations against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) under the Bungos faction in Maguindanao, disabling the group's bomb factory.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the Philippine Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the air strikes that started at 4 a.m. lasted hours.

"The only information I can provide is that we were able to destroy the main IED (improvised explosive device) factory in Southern Liguanan," Sobejana told reporters.

"So, it is a big loss [for the BIFF] on their IED emplacements in

crowded areas. Our clearing [operations] is ongoing," he added.

Sobejana said no civilian casualties were reported.

"We made use of all available capabilities, all available means and we employed our reasonable force to neutralize the military target," he said.

After disabling the IED factory, soldiers hoisted a Philippine flag there. *A2*

"We cannot account if there were enemies killed since [the marsh] is composed of water. Maybe, some of them drowned," Sobejana said, adding that 60 to 100 BIFF members were in the area.

DEMPSEY REYES

AFP dismantles BIFF IED factory

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The military Sunday said government troops have destroyed a factory being maintained by the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) to manufacture IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) in Southern Liguasan, Maguindanao province, following intense military operations there.

In an interview, Army 6th Infantry Division (6th ID) commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, said the operation started at about 4 a.m. Sunday when government troops launched air and ground assaults against Abu Turaife and his sub-leaders believed responsible in the production of IEDs.

Sobejana said Abu Turaife and his sub-leaders had with them about 60 to 100 combatants, many of which could have been killed or hurt as a result of the military operation.

"It started early this morning at around 4 a.m. Clearing operations are still on going," Sobejana said.

"So far the info that I can give you is that we were able to destroy the main IED factory in Southern Liguasan. So this is a big loss for them in terms of their

IED emplacements in crowded areas," he added.

Sobejana described their operation to be deliberate as it is centered on a very large area.

"Our operation covered a big area. It's not in a specific barangay, sitio or municipality because it's scattered around the area. What we did is very deliberate and we have to make sure that innocent civilians will not be affected. We also need to ensure that we preserve the peace process with the MILF," Sobejana said.

Sobejana said troops used all available capabilities and assets to ensure victory and defeat the enemy.

"We used all capabilities, para generic, all available means. We employed reasonable force to neutralize the military target," he said.

"We have occupied the area. In fact we have raised the Philippine flag at the IED manufacturing facility" he added.

Sobejana said troops are still scouring the area in order to get more and defeat the enemy.

The BIFF is an Islamist militant organization based in Mindanao. It is a breakaway group from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) founded by Ameril Umbra Kato.

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BIFF 'bomb factory' up in smoke

By Francisco Tuyay

SECURITY forces on Sunday destroyed a factory for making Improvised Explosive Devices operated by the terrorist group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters on the outskirts of Liguasan marshland in Maguindanao.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said a number of BIFF fighters might have been pinned to death after government forces pounded the periphery where the IED factory was situated

around 4 am on Friday day.

"We were able to destroy the main IED factory in Southern Liguasan, so this is a big loss on their IED emplacements in crowded areas," Sobejana said as ground forces continued to clear the site.

Sobejana said 60 to 100 BIFF fighters believed scattered in the vicinity guarding the IED factory challenged military attackers, igniting running gun battle.

"There was resistance but our troops maneuvered at a close distance prompting them [the enemy] to scampered in different places in the marshland," Sobejana said.

He said composite troops had employed aerial and ground bombardment against the BIFF defenders to neutralize the target without collateral damage to the civilian population.

"A reasonable force was employed to neutralize the military target," Sobejana said.

He said military operation that resulted

in the destruction of the IED factory was done deliberately.

"We have to make sure that no civilians would be affected to preserve the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front," Sobejana said.

Reports indicated that the IEDs being used by the BIFF in their bombing sorties in crowded places in Maguindanao were coming from the factory.

Sobejana said the troops has raised the Philippine Flag at the center of the IED manufacturing facility.

As to number of BIFF fighters killed, Sobejana said they could not still account for them because the area where the fighting took place was surrounded by water.

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Wednesday

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Military destroys BIFF bomb factory

BY VICTOR REYES

GOVERNMENT forces destroyed a bomb factory of the terrorist Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters during air and ground operations in Maguindanao early Sunday morning, a military commander said.

Brig. Gen. Carlito Sobejana, commander of the Army's 6th In-

fantry Division, citing intel reports, said 15 BIFF fighters were killed during the operation.

Two others were captured by military forces, Sobejana also said.

"We were able to destroy their main IED factory in southern Liguasan. This is a big loss to them in terms of their IED emplace-

See MILITARY > Page B3

MILITARY

ment capability in crowded areas," Sobejana said a phone interview.

Sobejana said air and ground forces targeted the BIFF's improvised explosive device (IED) bomb factory in the southern part of Liguasan marsh, which was being guarded by some 60 to 100 BIFF fighters.

He said aircraft and artillery fires pounded the BIFF factory at around 4 a.m., after which ground troops went in. "We used all our available capabilities, all available means. We employed reasonable force to neutralize the military target," he also said.

He added little resistance was put by the BIFF fighters against the advancing ground forces. "We closed in immediately and they (BIFF men) scampered to different places in the marshland," Sobejana said.

Sobejana could not immediately account for other BIFF bomb factories that might still be operating in Mindanao but said: "That is the main and we are still checking if there are still remaining."

A military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they are looking at five more BIFF bomb factories in Central Mindanao. "This number is still subject to validation," the source said.

Sobejana and 6th ID spokesman Maj. Arvin Encinas declined to say the specific location of the destroyed bomb factory, saying follow-up operations were still ongoing.

The BIFF is composed of around 300 to 400 members, mostly former members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The BIFF has pledged allegiance with the Islamic of Iraq and Syria.

Encinas said the military coordinated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front prior to the

conduct of the operation to ensure innocent civilians will not be affected by the operation.

"This (MILF coordination) is to avoid a bitter outcome, considering we have a peace process. We are giving primary to the peace process, that's the bottom line there," Encinas said.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday sought to downplay reports Indonesian and Malaysia forces are due to be sent to Mindanao for joint ground patrols with Filipino soldiers against terrorists.

Lorenzana cleared the reported joint ground patrol is still being discussed with Malaysia and Indonesia, noting the Philippines has no existing agreement that will warrant the presence of Indonesian and Malaysian forces in the Philippines.

"The joint land patrol is still in the planning stage because we still don't have a Visiting Forces Agreement with the two countries," Lorenzana said.

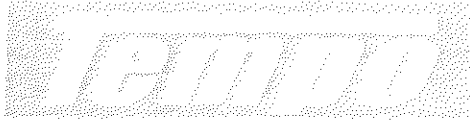
The Philippines has standing visiting forces agreements with the United States and Australia. US forces frequent the country mainly for military exercises with Filipino troops.

Indonesian defense minister Ryamizard Ryacudu has said Indonesia will deploy forces to Mindanao to fight ISIS-inspired terrorists. He said the Indonesian troops will conduct joint patrols in Mindanao with Filipino and Malaysian soldiers to locate terrorists and stop their operations.

Lorenzana said the counter-terrorism efforts among the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia are currently limited to naval and air patrols, in keeping with an agreement forged last year.

"We can only do naval and air patrol. That is the trilateral maritime and air patrols we signed with Malaysia last year. That really was done to fight terrorists," he added.

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4 MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2018

Troops destroy BIFF IED factory in Maguindanao

The military said that they have destroyed the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters' main improvised explosive device factory in Southern Liguasan, Maguindanao following an intense military operation yesterday.

Army 6th Infantry Division commander Brig. Gen. Cirillito Sobejana said the operation started at about 4 a.m. when government troops launched air and ground assaults against Abu Turaife and his sub-leaders who are responsible in the IED production and have about 60 to 100 members.

The military said that a number of BIFF members were either killed or wounded in the operation.

"It started early this morning at around 4 a.m. Clearing operations are still ongoing," Sobejana said. "So far the info that I can give you is that we were able to destroy the main IED factory in Southern Liguasan. So this is a big loss for them in terms of their IED

emplacements in crowded areas," he added.

Sobejana described their operation to be deliberate as it is centered in a very large area. "Our operation covers a big area. It's not in a specific barangay, sitio, or municipality because it's scattered around the area. What we did is very deliberate and we have to make sure that innocent civilians will not be affected. We also need to ensure that we preserve the peace process with the MILF," Sobejana said.

Sobejana said troops used all available capabilities and assets to ensure victory and defeat the enemy. "We used all capabilities, para generic, all available means. We employed reasonable force to neutralize the military target," he said.

"We have occupied the area. In fact we have raised the Philippine flag at the IED manufacturing facility," he added. **(Francis T. Wakefield)**

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ASG leader, 9 of his men surrender in Basilan

D. NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY - A sub leader of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and nine of his followers surrendered to the military, Friday, bringing with them their high powered firearms and ammunition in Basilan.

Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) Commander Lt. Gen Arnel Dela Vega identified the ASG sub leader

as Bobong Mastul, alias Bobong, and his followers Atotong Sarahadil, Mudzrie Salahudin Jabbon, Sapwan Kapitan Aliman, Nassir Jaid Tabil, Hair Tiglama Kawakbon, Adeh Kawakibon, Rubin Ikih, Aminin Balyong, and Suedin Muril.

According to Dela Vega, the 10 ASGs also surrendered three M16 rifles, an M79 grenade launcher, an Ingram sub-machine pistol, a 5.56mm carbine, an M1 Garand rifle, various magazines and ammunitions and assorted communica-

tion equipment.

Dela Vega said the Abus surrendered to Lt. Col. Philip Fagei, commanding officer of the 64th Infantry Battalion around 10 a.m. Friday, at its headquarters in TARBIDC Compound, Barangay Tumahubong, Sumisip, Basilan Province.

The surrenderers are still in the custody of the 64IB for profiling, custodial debriefing, and proper documentation of the turned-over firearms.

TESDA naglaan ng 3,000 scholarship slots sa MILF, MNLF

NAGLAAN ang Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) ng 3,000 scholarship slots sa grupong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) at Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) para sa libreng pagsasanay.

Ayon kay TESDA Director General Aguilang "Gene" A. Mamondiong, pangunahing layunin nito ay matulongan ang mga miyembro ng MILF at MNLF na maiangat ang kanilang pamumuhay sa pamamagitan ng pagkakatambag ng mga libreng kasanayan at assessment upang mabigyan sila ng trabaho, pangkabuhayan at

lawalakang arthropodimolok sa iba't ibang development programs ng gobyerno.

"The target beneficiaries are the MNLF and MILF in ARMM communities to empower and uplift their lives along with others belonging in the marginalized sectors through employment and livelihood opportunities," ani Mamondiong.

Ang mga target beneficiaries ay 1,000 MILF at MNLF mula sa Lanao del Sur; 1,000 sa Maguindanao at 1,000 para sa Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi at Zamboanga.

Samantala, ang programang ito ay iniaalok din sa puluhang grupo na Commu-

nist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

"Itong programang ito ay inibigay natin sa mga kapatid natin na kasama sa CPP-NPA armed combatant," anang Mamondiong.

Ang mga matatanggap na scholars ay sasanayin sa iba't ibang sektor ng Agriculture, Automotive, Construction, Tourism, Metals and Engineering, Heating, Ventilations, Air-conditioning and Refrigeration, Semi-conductor, Electronics, Furnitures and Fixtures, Garment and Textile, Health, Social at iba pang community development services. Sinabi ni Mamondiong na ang mga schol-

ar ay partakatawhin ng libreng skills training, libreng assessment at training support fund.

Ang mga beneficiaries ay sasanayin sa ilalim ng Training for Work Scholarship Program (TWSP) na hindi isalagpas sa loob ng 40 araw. //

Kaugnay nito, nanawagan si Mamondiong sa mga miyembro ng MNLF at MILF na samantalahin ang pagkakatambag at magtungo na sa mga TESDA offices sa Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga at Basilan upang magpatala para sa libreng pagsasanay na iniaalok ng ahensya.

TESDA naglaan ng 3K scholarship slots sa MILF, MNLF, NPA sa rin

Naglaan ang Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) ng 3,000 scholarship slots sa grupong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) at Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) para sa libreng pagsasanay.

Ayon kay TESDA Director General Aguing "Gene" A. Mamonding, pangunahing layunin nito ay matulungan ang mga miyembro ng MILF at MNLF na maingat ang kanilang panamuhay sa pamamagitan ng pagkakatrabaho ng mga libreng kasangkapan at assessment upang maibigyan sila ng trabaho, pangkalahatan at gawin silang aring tumanggap sa iba't ibang development programs ng gobyerno.

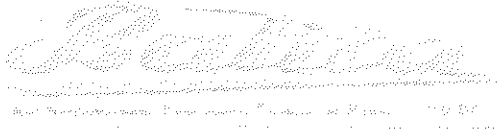
"The target beneficiaries are the MILF and MILF-ARMM communities to empower and uplift their lives along with others belonging in the marginalized sectors through employment and livelihood opportunities," ani Mamonding.

Ang mga target beneficiaries ay 1,000 MILF at MNLF mula sa Lanao del Sur; 1,000 sa Maguindanao at 1,000 para sa Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi at Zamboanga.

Samantala, ang programang ito ay inaalok din sa Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army (CPP-NPA) "kung programang ay ibibigay natin sa mga kapatid natin na kasama sa CPP-NPA armed combatant," ani Mamonding.

Kaugnay nito, nanawagan si Mamonding sa mga miyembro ng MNLF at MILF na samantalang ang pagkakatrabaho at magtungo na sa mga TESDA Offices sa Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Zamboanga at Basilan upang magpatala para sa libreng pagsasanay na inaalok ng ahensya. (Rudy Ande)

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3,000 scholarship inilaan sa MILF, MNLF

Nasa 3,000 scholarship slots ang inilaan ng Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) sa mga grupong Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) at Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) sa Mindanao para sa libreng pagsasanay.

Ayon kay TESDA Director General Aguing Mamondiong, layunin nitong matulungan ang mga miyembro ng MILF at MNLF na maiangat ang kanilang pamunuhay sa pamamagitan ng libreng kasanayan.

Aniya, malaking tulong din ito upang mabigyan sila ng pagkakataon na magtrabaho, kabuhayan at aktibong makalahok sa iba't ibang development programs ng gobyerno.

"The target beneficiaries are the MNLF and MILF in ARMM communities to empower and uplift their lives along with others belonging in the marginalized sectors through employment and livelihood opportunities," ani Mamondiong.

Kabilang sa target beneficiaries

ay ang 1,000 MILF at MNLF mula sa Lanao del Sur; 1,000 sa Maguindanao; at 1,000 naman buhat sa Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, at Zamboanga.

Aniya, ang programang ito ay iniaalok din sa grupo na Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA).

"Ang programang ito ay ibinibigay natin sa mga kapatid nating CPP-NPA armed combatant," sabi pa nito.

Bella Gamotea

11 June 2018

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COMMONSENSE

MARICHU A. VILLANUEVA

Latest Palace protocols

It's official. Rainy season is with us again. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) announced last Friday that the required volume of rain in select climate stations had been reached, enough for them to conclude the end of summer season here in our country. This was largely due to the continuous rains brought in by tropical storm "Domeng" - the fourth typhoon this year that is projected to exit the Philippines today.



The end of the dry season and the rainy months ahead of us are both boon and bane to the power outlook in our country.

This is especially true when destructive typhoons cut off the transmission lines with strong winds and cause landslides that can topple power towers.

Days before Pagasa declared the onset of rainy season, the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) raised the "yellow" alert at the Luzon grid, citing the unexpected shutdown and limited generation of some power plants as well as high demand. A "yellow" alert means there were not enough reserves to cover the largest running generating unit at the time, but does not necessarily lead to power outages.

But such power interruptions may get lessened, if not totally avoided, with the additional reserves at the Luzon grid that went on stream starting last week. This was after President Rodrigo Duterte inaugurated the newly completed 420-megawatt (MW) Pagbilao Unit 3 power project in Quezon Province. The latest based-load, coal-fired generating facility and merchant power plant are expected to boost and stabilize energy supply in the Luzon grid.

Operated by the Pagbilao Energy Corp. (PEC), this power plant is a joint venture of the Aboitiz Group's Therma Power Inc. and Japan's Team Energy Corp. (TEC). The newly-built power facility was developed and constructed at a cost of \$976 million. Construction began in December 2014. It is located within the same complex, and is adjacent to the existing units 1 and 2, of the Pagbilao Power Station operated by TEC bringing total generating capacity to 735-MW.

President Duterte was profuse in his gratitude to the Aboitiz family who he cited has been a close supporter even during his stint as Mayor of Davao City. "You should thank the Aboitiz for setting up this equipment because you can run all your machines or whatever you have. *Lihat, pati yang ilaw niyo sa bukal.*" the President told his audience.

The Cabinet Secretariat was tasked to make sure the latest Palace "protocols" are followed and complied with.

This new facility will provide 420 (megawatts). It will brighten all of Quezon and even the NPA (New People's Army) *magkaroon ng ilaw ang mga buang*. Why don't you just come down and let us talk. You're wasting our time. *mag-usap na lang tayo.*" the President issued this appeal directed at armed insurgents. The province of Quezon is a known hotbed of NPA rebels.

In his return trip back to the country after his three-day state visit to South Korea last week, President Duterte admitted he fell ill on board the plane. A few days after he arrived in Manila, President Duterte publicly admitted he had another bout of severe migraine that made him puke while airborne. This was to explain why he was not able to move around and mingle with fellow passengers on board the commercial flight of the Philippine Airlines from Seoul.

The 73-year-old President Duterte though reassured the Filipino people there was nothing serious in this latest episode of vomiting related to his existing ailments. Before his election in May, the former Davao City Mayor admitted to be suffering from four illnesses - Buerger's disease, Barrett's esophagus, a respiratory infection and a slipped disc - all of which were allegedly not fatal. Buerger's Disease is an inflammation of blood vessels, mostly in the limbs, that has been traced to smoking.

Last year, it was Vice President Leni Robredo who led the flag-raising ceremonies for the Independence Day traditionally held in front of the Dr. Jose Rizal monument in Luneta. This was after President Duterte failed to attend because as he was reportedly "not feeling well." It was Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea and Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano who joined Vice President Robredo at the Luneta rites.

Cayetano explained President Duterte could not attend after apparently getting exhausted from visiting wounded soldiers in Cagayan de Oro City before flying to Villamor Airbase to honor the Marines who died in the Marawi siege last year.

By this time, the Chief Executive has taken full rest and perhaps refreshed after spending a weekend break with his family at his home in Davao City. So it would be safe to assume President Duterte would this year be able to lead the observance of the 120th Independence Day anniversary.

On the eve of the Independence Day anniversary, President Duterte is convening a Cabinet meeting at Malacañang Palace. A little birdie chirped to me the last item in the agenda of today's Cabinet meeting - a discussion on "good manners and right conduct." Actually, I was told, this item in the Cabinet agenda intends to remind the "protocol" that must be observed by all Cabinet Secretaries and other officials invited to meetings at the Palace.

It has been observed that every time the President stands up to relieve himself, Cabinet officials "ambush" him on the way out of the conference room. Apparently, Cabinet officials who cannot get or cannot wait for audience or official appointment takes the opportunity to buttonhole the President.

The President has been vocal in his policy he does not interfere in the works of his Cabinet Secretaries. "See me in my office," the President quotes himself telling all officials, including the Cabinet, wanting to talk or meet with him. The President repeated the same last week in his latest extemporaneous speech last Friday. Whoever among the Palace officials included "good manners and right conduct" in today's Cabinet agenda might have picked up from the latest presidential cues.

The Cabinet Secretariat was tasked to make sure the latest Palace "protocols" are followed and complied with.

EDITORIAL

Less peaceful?

INTERNATIONAL organizations and think tanks have serially called attention to the country's deteriorating peace-and-order condition.

But at the same time condemn tough government actions to combat crime, especially the illegal drugs trade and terrorism.

They want the government to clean up its backyard but insist on tying its hands when dealing with the neighborhood troublemakers.

How do they expect it to achieve its goal under such conflicting and ironic conditions?

Fighting criminality, especially the illegal drugs trade, requires total commitment to defeat the social menace.

Quite necessarily, certain concerns or considerations must take the back seat for a total war on crime to succeed.

But foreign research organizations and observers persist in criticizing the methods used to combat crime while condemning alleged deterioration of peace-and-order conditions.

For instance, based on Australian Research Institute Global Peace Index reported by the Institute for Economics and Peace, the problem of peace and order in the Philippines is worsening.

From ranking 136th in 2017, the country now ranks 137th in relation to peacefulness.

In Asia Pacific, the Philippines is followed by North Korea as the least peaceful country in the region.

Based on the report, the continuous anti-illegal drug operations and the Marawi siege are the reasons for the rank downgrade.

However, Malacañang said President Rodrigo Duterte wants some improvements in the government's war against drugs and criminality.

This explains the statement of the chief executive earlier when he warned of imposing changes in the following days.

"I will make radical changes in the days to come. For those offices na hindi talaga ma-control, I will place you under the Office of the President. Ako na mismo ang kaharap mo araw-araw," said the president.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said, "Abangan ang mga reporma dahil nais pa niyang paigtingin ang giyera kontra kriminalidad at iligal na droga (Watch out for reforms because he wants to intensify the war against illegal drugs and criminality)." He added that the president has heard about the murder of the pregnant assistant prosecutor.

Sotto urges diplomatic PH approach to China

By **MARLON PURIFICACION**

SENATE President Tito Sotto yesterday urged the government to tackle issues with China in a diplomatic manner the supposed harassment of Chinese Coast Guard to Filipino fishermen in the disputed West Philippine Sea.

Sotto also stressed that the country could not afford to engage into war with the Asian superpower.

"Kailangan diplomatic ang approach natin sapagkat it's better to have friends than enemies, eh bakit naman natin aawayin ang China kung kaya natin daguin sa diplomatic means, 'di ba?" Sotto said in a radio interview over dzBB.

"Pwede ireklamo 'yun sa China mismo. Alam mo 'yung aksyon ng Coast Guard eh hindi naman aksyon ng Presidente ng China

eh. Like for example 'yung Coast Guard eh may inapi sa Visayas o sa Mindanao, eh ibig sabihin ba nun Pilipinas o China na ang may kasalanan?" he said.

"Pag nangaway tayong wala tayong ibubuga. Ngayon 'yung gusto ng away, mauna sila, bakit 'di sila pumunta doon? Mang-away sila kasi bakit mo iausubong 'yung mga sundalo natin," Sotto added.

Senator Gregorio Honasan echoed Sotto's statement as he called on the government to verify and, if necessary, protest the reported harassment of Filipino fishermen in the WPS.

Recently, GMA News obtained a video showing Chinese Coast Guard taking the catch of Filipino fishing in the waters of Scarborough Shoal (Panatag Shoal) in Zambales.

"Unang-una 'di ko sinasabing pabayaon natin ito. Pero first i-verify natin ang

information para sigurado tayong makatotohanan at i-verify ang source. Kapag kumpirmado huwag magpadalos-dalos, kung kailangan magprotesta, magprotesta," Honasan said in a separate over dzBB.

Honasan added President Rodrigo Duterte and the Chinese ambassador to the Philippines can take up the incident with Chinese President Xi Jin Ping.

Sotto also said that China has been "kind" to the Philippines.

"Ang bait so akin eh. Lately ha... ewan ko kung alam nila lahat ng tulong na binibigay ng China, 'di nila nauuap na ang may hawak ng national grid natin sa kuryente eh China," he said.

For his part, Senator Richard Gordon condemned the harassment suffered by Filipino fishermen who are merely trying to make a living.

"We are freedom-loving



people. These are marginalized people. Why are you doing this to the poor people who are just trying to make a living. This is what makes being friends with China nowadays difficult," he said.

Meanwhile, Sotto said that information cited by Magdalo party-list Representative Gary Alejano that the Duterte administration ordered the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea must be validated first.

"Saan siya baring yon? Nagpupunta ba siya roon? Hindi baka meron siyang ano... malaman natin saan galing 'yun kasi madami din akong nabiktang bata sa social media na iba eh, na dapat ngs 'di basta-basta paniwalaan eh," he said.

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Chinese harassment Sa West Philippine Sea

HINA-HARASS ng mga Chino ang mga Pinoy sa West Philippine Sea at kinukumpiska ang mga huling isda. Hindi ni Justice Antonio Carpio, mag-file ng arbitration case sa International Court. Magastos iyan lalo pa't mga dayuhang abogado ang kinukuha. Balita ko, umabot sa 7 milyong dollar ang ginastos ng Pilipinas sa kasong sinampa noon.

Dapat siguro ay ipaubaya na lang ni Justice ang problema ng South China Sea sa executive branch. Mas maraming problema sa Supreme Court na dapat alupagin.

Sa isang video documentary, mamim ng mga mangingisdang

Pinoy na matapos ang 5 taon, noong 2017 lamang sila mala-yang nakapasok at nakapangisda. Nung panahon ni Presidente Aquino, hindi nakapasok ang mga mangingisda dahil hinaharangan sila ng mga Chinese vessels.

Ano bang ginagawa ng Philippine Coast Guard para maprotektahan ang mga mangingisdang naglalayag sa Bajo de Masinloc? Hindi Arbitration case ang sagot sa problema kundi pagtupad sa tungkulin ng coast guard. Baka talung gipim ang ating mga mangingisda kung magkagayon.

Ang pamahalaang Duterte ay naglaan ng P2 Billion para sa Maritime Safety Capability Project at modernisasyon ng Philippine Coast Guard. Nagdagdag din ng pondo para sa pagrecruit ng 4-libo pang bagong Coast Guards. Malinaw na ang kawalan ng kakayahan ng ating Coast Guard na bantayan ang mga ating mga karagatan ay nag-ugat sa kapabayaan ng mga nakalipas na administrasyon.

Ito y bagong isyu na itatupakan ni Magdalo Party List Representative Alejano. Bilang isang dating sundalo, dapat pagtutunang pansin ng Kongresista ang kawalan ng pondo para sa modernisasyon ang AFP o ng Philippine Coast Guard. Tingin ko naninay ang pinaka-ugat ng problema at wala sa panimisi sa administrasyon na nakarama lang ng problema na dulot ng mga nakaraang pamahalaan.

ONLINE NEWS

11 June 2018

No truth on Duterte order to stop WPS patrols: AFP

By Priam Nepomuceno June 10, 2018, 3:23 pm

MANILA -- There are no orders coming from President Rodrigo Duterte directing the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

This was the remark of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo in an interview with DZBB radio on Sunday, after opposition lawmaker Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano claimed that Duterte ordered the AFP to stop patrolling the disputed West Philippine Sea.

"We did not receive such information, we have contacted our AFP chief (Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr.) and our Western Command in Palawan, and all of them said that the Commander-in-Chief did not issue such an order," he said in Filipino.

Arevalo added that military air and sea patrols are ongoing as it is part of its mandate of protecting the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"Your AFP is continuing to perform its mandate," he stressed.

Special Assistant to the President Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go had earlier clarified that Duterte did not order the AFP to stop guarding the disputed area.

"The president will not order that. First of all, what's ours is ours. We will patrol in those areas," Go said on Saturday. **(PNA)**

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1037812>

Military air strike kills 15 BIFF gunmen in Maguindanao, N. Cotabato

By: Edwin Fernandez - @inquirerdotnet

Inquirer Mindanao / 12:49 AM June 11, 2018

Published: 12:15 p.m., June 10, 2018 | Updated: 12:49 a.m., June 11, 2018

COTABATO CITY – The military on Sunday claimed it has killed at least 15 Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) gunmen when it launched air strikes against the group near the SK Pendatun, Maguindanao and Pikit, North Cotabato portions of the Liguasan Marsh.

Officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) said hundreds of individuals near the area targeted by the air strikes had fled, but the exact number had not been ascertained so far.

Brig. Gen. Cirillito Sobejana, the commander of the 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said the BIFF casualty figure was based on reports they had been getting from the ground.

He said eight BIFF gunmen were also injured and that a BIFF bomb expert and his wife had been captured.

But Abu Misri Mama, BIFF spokesperson, said there were no casualties on their side.

“We are not affected by the air strikes,” he said.

Tahira Kalantongan, the Pikit, North Cotabato disaster officer, said in her town alone, at least 10,000 individuals from Barangays Buliok, Talitay, Bago-inged, Barongis and Rajamuda had fled.

The ARMM Humanitarian Emergency Action Response Team said it was preparing provisions for the displaced individuals and could deliver it on Monday.

Capt. Arvin John Encinas, speaking for the 6th Infantry Division, earlier said the target of the air strike was the group being led by Esmail Abubakar alias Commander Bungos.

Encinas said the bomb, which started at around 2 a.m., run was a “surgical strike” and that no civilian had been affected.

“It was surgical and the targets are specific and outside civilian areas,” Encinas added.

Kalantongan agreed that no civilian community was hit in her town but that residents had evacuated anyway.

“They feared for their lives, they hurriedly left their barangays after they had their early morning meal for the day’s fasting,” she said, adding that the vacated villages were known to be within an area of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Sobejana said the MILF had been told of the impending bomb run.

The MILF also maintains forces around the marsh, which straddles 29 towns in Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

“Our operation was coordinated well with the MILF ceasefire panel,” Sobejana told the Inquirer.

Encinas said a ground operation was also being conducted against Bungos’ group.

“There is no let up in our manhunt against the BIFF. We want to be one step ahead of them,” Encinas said, adding that major highways remained passable despite the operation.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, the commander of the Western Mindanao Command based in Zamboanga City, said the bomb run also targeted a suspected BIFF bomb factory.

Sobejana said the bomb run had successfully destroyed the BIFF bomb factory.

“We ease the fear of our people and assure them that safety procedures were undertaken and deliberately planned by (the military) giving due concern to the safety of the civilian populace,” he said. *—With a report from Julie Alipala*

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