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NEWS CLIPPINGS

16 June 2018

Saturday



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DU30 WANTS TALKS IN PH; JOMA SEES SABOTAGE

STORY BY DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

Peace negotiations scheduled for late June have been aborted and the Communist Party's founding chair, Jose Maria Sison, is accusing President Duterte of laying the ground for declaring martial law nationwide.

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FROM A1

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chair Jose Maria Sison on Friday accused President Duterte of sabotaging the peace talks to lay the ground for imposing martial law nationwide by indefinitely postponing the negotiations and insisting on holding them in the Philippines.

Mr. Duterte on Thursday said he wanted the resumption of the peace talks with communist rebels to be held in the Philippines next month, not late in June as was previously agreed upon during informal talks in the Netherlands, according to his peace adviser Jesus Dureza.

In response to the government's announcement, Sison late on Thursday reminded Mr. Duterte that the negotiators from the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) agreed

to resume talks on June 28.

The start of the talks would have followed a week after the announcement of a stand-down agreement, or a preliminary truce, between the military and the New People's Army (NPA), said Sison, the chief political consultant for the NDFP in the talks.

"Duterte has plans of sabotaging the peace negotiations so he could use the CPP, NPA and NDFP as scapegoats and fake reasons to declare emergency rule or martial law nationwide," Sison said in an online interview from Utrecht, the Netherlands, where he lives in exile.

He said Mr. Duterte knew that he would not return to Manila without the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (Caser), and sufficient legal and security guarantees for him.

During the back-channel talks, the two sides approved the agrarian reform, rural development, national industrialization and economic development components of Caser, according to Sison. Caser calls



Jose Maria Sison



President Duterte



Duterte has plans of sabotaging the peace negotiations so he could use the CPP, NPA and NDFP as scapegoats and fake reasons to declare emergency rule or martial law nationwide

Jose Maria Sison

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair

for, among other solutions to the country's social problems, free land distribution and rural industrialization.

Sison on Wednesday said he may return to the Philippines within the last week of July or first week of August.

But his plan was aborted by the cancellation of the resumption of the formal talks.

Public consultation

Dureza told reporters the government needed to first conduct a public consultation concerning the negotiations to end the nearly 50-year-old communist insurgency.

"Duterte and Dureza are lying when they said they are going to consult the people," Sison said.

He said both the government and the NDFP knew that the talks should be restarted in the last week of June so they would not be affected by the holidays for Norwegian officials in July.

Sison added that the cancellation of the talks "disrespected" the Norwegian government and the government's own peace panel led by Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III.

In a statement late on Thursday, he said that the cancellation of the talks showed that the Duterte government was only interested in the "capitulation" of the rebels.

He said a previous agreement required the talks to be held in a neutral country.

Because of this "the revolutionary forces and the people have no choice but to single-mindedly wage people's war to achieve the national and social liberation of the Filipino people," Sison said.

Dureza on Friday said Sison was "entitled to his own opinion and we respect it."

He argued that postponing formal negotiations would help strengthen and protect the gains achieved by both sides and "win public goodwill" for the talks.

Six senior CPP leaders, including one whom custodians had refused to release from detention despite orders from two courts, were unsure when they would be allowed to leave for Europe to participate in the talks, according to their lawyer and NDFP legal consultant Edre Olalia. —WITH REPORTS FROM JULIE M. AURELIO AND KRIXIA SUBINGSUBING INQ

Priest slay suspect falls

By EMMANUEL TUPAS

Police arrested on Thursday one of the suspects in the murder of Catholic priest Richmond Nilo in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija.

Chief Supt. Amador Corpus, Central Luzon police director, said Adell Roll Milan was identified by an altar boy as the one who shot Nilo while the priest was preparing for mass inside a chapel in Zaragoza last Sunday.

Milan, allegedly a drug personality and gun for hire, was arrested at around 6:30 p.m. in Barangay Malapit, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija.

"The suspect is also engaged in gun-for-hire activities in the province," Corpus said at a news briefing aired over radio station dzBB.

Milan was among the drug surrenderees in Nueva Ecija, Corpus added.

"This development will bring us closer to the real motive behind Fr. Nilo's death as we are still conducting follow-up operations for the possible arrest of other personalities involved," he said.

Corpus said they are also tracking down the owner of a Nissan car seen roaming in the area moments before the priest was killed.

Hundreds of supporters

Turn to Page 4

Priest

From Page 1

mostly clad in black shirts joined the funeral procession for Nilo from the College of Immaculate Conception to the Saint Nicholas of Tolentine Cathedral crypt in Cabanatuan City.

"His death is a great loss for all of us Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Cabanatuan. We grieve because

we lost a brother, shepherd, father and friend to a murderer's bullet," said Cabanatuan City Bishop Sofronio Bancud during his homily at the mass for Nilo.

Bancud said Nilo's death would remind the lay faithful of his advocacy to defend the Catholic Church, which stands for truth, peace and justice.

In Isabela, church bells rang at noon for three minutes in the Diocese of Ilagan City to show the people's grief over the death of the priest.

Diocese chancellor and vicar Greg Uanan condemned Nilo's murder, stating that the clergy will continue to advocate its stance against violence and Church persecution.

Chief Insp. Eden dela Cruz, police chief of San Isidro, said Milan did not resist arrest in

his house, which is situated in the town proper.

Milan was among five men who carried out the murder of Nilo last June 10.

As this developed, police served search warrants to 11 other individuals for firearms connected to Nilo's case in Barangay Luyus, San Antonio, Nueva Ecija.

Corpus said the suspects riding a motorcycle and a getaway car were spotted

through closed circuit television cameras installed near the crime scene.

Members of the police special investigation task group also have sketches of the faces of three of the suspects.

Police investigators are also verifying the name of the last registered owner of the getaway vehicle.

Corpus said it is important that the other suspects are caught so they could establish

the motive behind the priest's killing.

"Maybe we can come up with the real motive," he said.

Corpus earlier said they are looking at three possible motives behind Nilo's murder, one of which is his involvement in a land dispute.

The two other motives are his assistance to rape victims and the clergyman's criticism of other religious sects.

- With Raymund Catindig

LORENZANA REBUKED

WE DEFENDED WHAT IS OURS, INSISTS DEL ROSARIO

Former Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario on Friday took exception to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's claim that the Aquino administration had "mismanaged" its handling of the country's territorial row with China over portions of the South China Sea.

In a statement, Del Rosario disputed Lorenzana's remarks that the foreign policy implemented by former President Benigno Aquino III during his term only resulted in "chaos."

"In dealing with this powerful nation (China), we were being asked to acquiesce, but we did not. If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it," he said.

"At every opportunity, no matter what the odds, we spoke to defend what is ours ... We had garnered the support of many countries, which we presumed would have continued their support when we had won our case," he added.

Peaceful resolution

Del Rosario insisted that under the Aquino administration, the government "defended what is ours by resorting to political and diplomatic means while utilizing both bilateral and multilateral approaches to seek a peaceful resolution."

"That government did everything possible, which, as a last resort, included bringing our dispute to the ... arbitral tribunal at The Hague, resulting in



Albert del Rosario

an overwhelming victory for the Filipino people," the former foreign secretary said.

Invaluable victory

"Another government, after being awarded this invaluable victory, immediately announced the shelving of this most important outcome, thus avoiding for itself the task of managing what had been handed down," he added.

He surmised that Lorenzana, whom he described as "a very close friend," was only being used in the government's propaganda campaign because "he has the reputation of being straight as an arrow."

"We believe that Lorenzana is a very good man with the highest credibility in the Cabinet ... I also wish to add that he is considered by all people to be a patriot and to be objective at all times, and we hope that this sentiment will continue to be merited by him," he said.

—MARLON RAMOS INQ

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Defending what is ours could be chaotic – Del Rosario

By ROY C. MABASA

Former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert Del Rosario on Friday said defending what is “ours” against a powerful nation as China could be “chaotic.”

Del Rosario was reacting to the comments made by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana that the Aquino administration reportedly “mismanaged the sea dispute with China and that everything was chaotic.”

“Chaos is often looked upon as being negative and destructive, but it can also be looked upon as positive and constructive. It was chaotic when in the past we fought for our independence; it was also chaotic when we defended our democracy,” Del Rosario said in a statement.

The former DFA official also took exception of Lorenzana’s comparison that President Duterte was handling

the Philippine maritime row in the South China Sea “very well.”

Del Rosario said the Aquino administration defended what belongs to the country by resorting to political and diplomatic means while utilizing both bilateral and multilateral approaches to seek a peaceful resolution.

“That government (Aquino) did everything possible, which as a last resort included bringing our dispute to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Arbitral Tribunal at The Hague, resulting in an overwhelming victory for the Filipino people,” he said.

In contrast, he noted that the Duterte administration, after being awarded the landmark victory immediately announced the shelving of the ruling, “avoiding for itself the task of managing what had been handed down.”

Del Rosario, who once served as Philippine ambassador to the US, had

worked with Lorenzana when the latter was posted as the country’s veterans representative to the US capital.

In the statement, Del Rosario outlined the “illustrations of chaos” pertaining to several key actions taken by the previous administration in pursuit of a just and peaceful solution to the maritime dispute. This includes meetings with then Chinese Vice Premier Xi Jinping and top leaders of China’s foreign ministry; meetings with officials of the United States; the Scarborough agreement; meetings with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); the global campaign including United Nations resolutions; the filing of the case before the arbitral tribunal, and discussions of joint patrol with the United States.

“In dealing with this powerful nation, we were being asked to acquiesce, but we did not. If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it,” the former DFA chief said.

Cayetano calls Carpio, Alejano liars, won't go to Sandy Cay

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

Acting Chief Justice Antonio Carpio and Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano are "liars" using the country's territorial row with China to undermine the Duterte administration, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said on Friday.

Cayetano hit out at the two most vocal critics of President Duterte's policy on the South China Sea for insisting that China had control over Sandy Cay, a sandbar located about 4.6 kilometers from Philippine-occupied Pag-asa (Thitu) Island in the Spratly archipelago.

"They are absolutely liars," he told CNN Philippines, referring to Carpio and Alejano. "They are liars. They are trying to take down the government. They are lying left and right about it."

Cayetano, however, refused to take on Alejano's challenge

for him to sail to Sandy Cay and disprove the lawmaker's claim that Beijing had seized control of the sea feature.

'Not prudent for me'

"He wants to challenge me to go there to create an issue because a foreign secretary of one [of the claimant-states] is going there to claim [the area]," he said.

"It won't be prudent for me to go. But of the 110 million Filipinos, will our territorial claim be proven only if I go there? If any other Juan dela Cruz would go there, wouldn't their presence be enough?"

Carpio, a member of the Philippine legal team that won an arbitral court's landmark ruling invalidating China's claim to almost 95 percent of the South China Sea, had previously accused Beijing of "invading" Sandy Cay.

Last year, the magistrate said Beijing sent two Navy

frigates, a coast guard vessel and two fishing boats to the area to guard Sandy Cay.

"By any yardstick, this is seizure of Philippine territory," Carpio claimed.

Alejano also disclosed that China had planted its flag on another sand cay located 12.6 km northeast of Kota (Loaita) Island, near the limits of the country's 370-km exclusive economic zone.

But Cayetano reiterated that the Philippines still controlled Sandy Cay.

"No one built on Sandy Cay. It's uninhabited and it's just next to Pag-asa. So we're free to patrol there. Our fishermen can go there," he said.

Geopolitics involved

The country's top diplomat also said that the Sandy Cay issue involved "geopolitics."

"This is a battle of the superpowers. It [involves] the national security of the [United States]

in the region and the national security of China," he said.

Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the foreign affairs committee, said on Friday that in a bid to "diffuse tensions" in the disputed waterway, the Senate would determine how best to respond to China's aggressive actions.

Beijing has installed missile and radar systems on three Philippine-claimed reefs and Chinese coast guards have harassed Filipino fishermen in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal.

"We will soon conduct a public hearing and I will work with my colleagues, including the committee on national defense and security, in determining how best to support current initiatives to diffuse the tension, while at the same time protecting our sovereignty and territorial rights," she said in a statement. —WITH A REPORT FROM DJ YAP INQ

Cayetano: Duterte's handling of dispute with China 'beneficial'

By HELEN FLORES

The current diplomatic handling of the territorial dispute with China has benefited the Philippines, unlike the "loud" and "aggressive" approach taken by the previous Aquino administration, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said yesterday.

"When President Duterte came in, Philippines was speaking loudly, and maybe correctly so at that time against China, and harnessing public support and internationalizing the issues, (while) China on the other hand was gaining ground... completely controlling Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal and then of course the building and everything,"

Cayetano said in an interview with CNN Philippines.

"The Aquino strategy is loud but what's the end?" he said.

What resulted from the previous administration's aggressive approach was Filipino fishermen's getting barred from Panatag Shoal.

Cayetano said critics continue their attacks against Duterte apparently to force him to adopt the strategy of the previous administration.

"What will happen (if we follow the Aquino approach), our fishermen can't fish, our agricultural products will not enter their market, our tourism will not (grow). We're result-oriented, to talk is easy," he said.

"If that kind of action would give these results, I'll do that action," the country's top diplomat said.

Recently, Filipino fishermen at Panatag Shoal complained about Chinese coast guards seizing sizeable portions of their catch in exchange for noodles and bottled water.

Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua earlier said these were isolated incidents but promised to punish erring coast guards.

Panatag, one of the land features in the West Philippine Sea, came under China's control in 2012 after a standoff that resulted from Chinese surveillance vessels preventing Philippine Navy boats from arresting Chinese poachers.

Panatag is well within the Philippines' 200-mile exclusive economic zone.

The July 2016 ruling of the United Nations-backed arbitral tribunal declared Panatag Shoal a traditional fishing ground for Filipinos, Chinese and Vietnamese fishermen.

Asked whether the Philippines really benefited from the arbitral ruling, Cayetano said the country "won on paper but lost on grounds."

"Experts outside of the Philippines asked me who's the biggest winner in the arbitration, I said the Philippines, (but) they said the name of the other country and they told me why and they have a point," he said.

China carries out missile drills in SCS amid tensions

BEIJING - China's navy carried out drills in the South China Sea to simulate fending off an aerial attack, state media said yesterday, as China and the United States trade barbs over who is responsible for heightened tensions in the disputed waterways.

US Secretary of State Mike

Pompeo expressed concern during a visit to Beijing on Thursday over China's efforts to militarize the seas.

His remarks came after a flurry of US activity in the region, including reports last week that US Air Force B-52 bombers had flown near disputed islands that drew a

sharp rebuke from China.

China's navy carried out a simulated missile attack in an unspecified area of the South China Sea using three target drones making flyovers of a ship formation at varying heights, the official army newspaper said.

The drills were part of ef-

forts by an also unspecified training base to prepare for real-life combat against aerial targets after China's leadership said some training failed to prepare troops effectively, the paper said.

The United States and China have frequently sparred over who is militarizing the

South China Sea, with Beijing blaming tensions on actions such as the "freedom of navigation" operations carried out by the US navy.

Washington says such operations are necessary to counter China's efforts to limit nautical movement in the strategic waterway.

A US Navy destroyer sailed through waters claimed by China in May just days after the United States uninvited China from a major US-hosted naval drill.

Critics have said these operations have little impact on Chinese behavior and are largely symbolic. - Reuters

China carries out missile drills in South China Sea amid heightened tensions

BEIJING (Reuters) — China's navy carried out drills in the South China Sea to simulate fending off an aerial attack, state media said on Friday, as China and the United States trade barbs over who is

responsible for heightened tensions in the disputed waterways.

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►5

China carries... ◀1

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Critics have said these operations have little impact on Chinese behavior and are largely symbolic.

Pentagon officials have long complained that China has not been candid enough about its rapid military build-up and its use of South China Sea islands to gather intelligence.

China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines all have competing claims in the South China Sea.

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Lorenzana may have been propaganda tool — Del Rosario

By RIA LEE-BRAGO

The country's defense chief may have allowed himself to be used as a "propagandist" of China with his praises for the Duterte administration's handling of the territorial row with the Asian power and his rebuke of the previous Aquino administration's "mis-management" of the issue, according to former foreign affairs chief Albert del Rosario.

In a statement, Del Rosario said he felt sad about defense chief Delfin Lorenzana's defending the current government position on China and assailing the previous administration for allegedly mishandling the sea dispute.

"We had read with a heavy heart the interview of Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in which he declared President Duterte was handling the Philippine maritime

row in the South China Sea very well while insisting in comparison, Aquino mis-managed the Philippine sea dispute with China and that everything was chaotic," Del Rosario said. Lorenzana issued his defense of the current approach to the West Philippine case last Monday.

"We believe that Sec. Lorenzana is a very good man with the highest credibility in the cabinet. As I said earlier, we feel deeply sad because it appears that he is being used as a propagandist in his case, since he has the reputation of being straight as an arrow," Del Rosario said.

He and Lorenzana are close friends, having worked together for many years in Washington, DC.

"I have the warmest esteem for him and trust that he will consider what I have written as factual and helpful," Del Rosario said.

To respectfully differ with the Secretary of Defense

By Albert del Rosario

WE HAD read with a heavy heart the interview of Secretary Delfin Lorenzana in which he declared "President Duterte was handling the Philippine maritime row in the South China Sea very well" while, insisting in comparison, "Aquino mismanaged the Philippine sea dispute with China and that everything was chaotic."

Quality of management comparison

One government had defended what is ours by resorting to political and diplomatic means while utilizing both bilateral and multilateral approaches to seek a peaceful resolution. That government did everything possible, which as a last resort included bringing our dispute to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) Arbitral Tribunal at The Hague, resulting in an overwhelming victory for the Filipino people.

Another government, after being awarded this invaluable victory at The Hague, immediately announced the shelving of this most important outcome, thus avoiding for itself the task of managing what had been handed down.

Based on the above, we are left with no basis for comparison.

Everything was chaotic

Sec. Lorenzana moreover attributed "chaos on everything" related to the Aquino administration's handling of the South China Sea dispute. We fully agree that defending what is ours against a powerful nation as China could be chaotic.

Chaos is often looked upon as being negative and destructive, but it can also be looked upon as positive and constructive.

It was chaotic when in the past we fought for our independence; it was also chaotic when we defended our democracy.

Illustrations of chaos

Please allow me to provide a few examples of what may be chaotic:

1. Meeting with leadership of China

When I first met with now President Xi Jinping, he immediately brought up what contributions China was making to our economy and how much more we could benefit by fully cooperating in areas where there existed differing points of view. When I suggested that we move together in advancing our traditional bilateral agenda while abstracting contentious issues to be dealt with separately, he then strongly asserted that China had indisputable sovereignty over the South China Sea as represented by their nine-dash line. According to him, there were no disputes in the South China Sea.

I respectfully stated that the nine-dash line was an excessive claim which we believed was in violation of international law. The dialogue shifted to other topics but inevitably it came back to a staunch re-statement of China's position many times over and over, eliciting essentially the same response from us.

In dealing with this powerful nation, we were being asked to acquiesce, but we did not.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

2. Meetings with China's foreign minister and its foreign ministry

Our many meetings with both China's Foreign Minister and the Chinese Foreign Ministry were at all times more of the same. We were being influenced to be fully acquiescent to China's position but we were firm in asserting that what is ours is ours. The DFA had countless meetings with China, a great number of which included formal protests against China's unlawful acts. I am told that we can substantiate nearly 50 such formal written protests against China.

China continued manifesting its increasing anger against the Philippines which led us to more strongly defend our position.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

3. Meeting with the US

At some point in time, I was asked in Washington, DC by our treaty ally what the situation was with China. I explained to both the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense that I felt like a scrawny kid in a school yard controlled by a bully. The bully never fails to bring me to the back of the school yard to beat me up while warning me that I needed the bully's permission each time I enter

the yard and that I should not ever mention my being beaten. After being the object of physical abuse so many times, I thought this bully must have a vulnerability. And since the bully asked me constantly not to mention being beaten up by him, I then discovered his vulnerability. He did not want to be internationalized. From then on, we decided to tell the whole world about the bully and his power agenda and the importance of restoring a rules-based order.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

4. Scarborough agreement

During the impasse at Scarborough Shoal with China, we were approached by the U.S., an honest broker, for both China and the Philippines to agree to a simultaneous withdrawal of ships from the shoal. We therefore agreed. At the appointed time, we withdrew, whereas China did not—in violation of our agreement.

Adding to our challenges therefore was having to deal with a powerful China whose declarations were often inconsistent with the facts on the ground. Other nations, we began to discover, had the same difficulty in dealing with our northern neighbor.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

5. At Asean

Amid China's unlawful activities to promote their expansion agenda including their artificial island building activities, we led the campaign for upholding the Asean-China Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and adherence to the rule of law. Our efforts were opposed by China and its proxies in Asean. We did our best to appeal to the objectivity of the members, which achieved significant success when we made a passionate appeal for support by quoting Martin Niemöller, "First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

6. At Leaders Summit

At every opportunity, no matter what the odds, we spoke to defend what is ours. Prior to a leaders meet, I received word from Sec. Hillary Clinton that China was attempting to silence the Philippines and for me to secure my back. The organizers of the meeting had made sure that I would not be given an appropriate opportunity to speak. Realizing this, I asked Sec. Clinton if she would speak about the South China Sea and I would merge myself at the end of her talk. I was able to successfully intervene and began speaking about the South China Sea when the microphone suddenly went dead.

After persisting to go on by standing and raising the volume of my message to promote the position of the people of the Philippines, they decided to restore the power.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

7. More on Asean

On another Asean Leaders meet, we were able to speak fully and we were able to convince a number of Asean members to do so as well. When it was time, however, to release a final statement of matters discussed, the Asean chair decided at the behest of China to omit not only the discussion but the entire topic involving the South China Sea. The Philippines insisted that the matter be included to reflect the facts. The chair threatened that there would be no final statement if the Philippines did not support its proposal to exclude the South China Sea discussion. We decided not to move from our position, not only in protection of the Philippines' interests, but also that of other Asean members who were strongly in favor of doing what is right. At the end of the day, it was the first time in Asean's history that no final statement was issued.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

8. Global campaign including UN initiatives

Before I resigned, former President Aquino and I had a total of nearly 200 bilaterals in which we had promoted the

Philippines position on the South China Sea.

Having been given the opportunities, I was encouraged by former President Aquino to speak each year before the UN General Assembly for the purpose of promoting our rightful position in the South China Sea.

We had garnered the support of many countries, which we presumed would have continued their support when we had won our case.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

9. Filing of Philippine case at the UNCLOS arbitral tribunal

After pursuing all that is possible in arriving at a peaceful resolution on the South China Sea dispute, we filed as a last resort a submission to the UNCLOS Arbitral Tribunal at The Hague, the results of which are now history. Contrary to China's opinion, the UN had declared that the filing of an arbitration case is not an unfriendly act.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

10. Joint patrols with the US

In late 2015, we had travelled to Washington, DC a couple of times to seek further assistance in terms of responding to China's unlawful activities in the South China Sea. To my recollection, we had successfully convinced the State Department to undertake joint patrols which were subsequently objected to as instructed by President Duterte's government.

If this is being deemed as chaos, so be it.

Trade with China

Sec. Lorenzana had said that, before the Duterte administration, the Philippines had no trade with China. This statement, as the records would show, was gravely inaccurate.

What I recall is that, prior to my stepping down, China was either our second or third largest trading partner based on our records. If you believe our northern neighbor's claim, our number one trading partner would have been China. I am told that the differences can be explained by the extent of smuggling activities.

While it is true that certain banana exports were held up by China to punish the Philippines for filing our legal case, former President Aquino had mandated the cabinet to replace what was being lost by tapping non-traditional markets. As a result, under the able leadership of Sec. Greg Domingo, the reduction on banana exports were minimized.

Tourism from China

Sec. Lorenzana also mentioned that Chinese tourists were not coming in. We understood, again to punish the Philippines, that China had been unofficially limiting its group tourism to the Philippines. Under the proactive leadership of Sec. Mon Jimenez, the negative effects of China's limiting group tourism were likewise minimized.

13

Fishing at Scarborough Shoal

According to Sec. Lorenzana, Filipinos also could not fish at Scarborough Shoal.

The driving out of our fishermen from Scarborough Shoal was indeed the immediate cause of our filing of our case with the UNCLOS Arbitral Tribunal at The Hague, which led to a restoration of the rights of our fishermen there.

Our view of Secretary Lorenzana

We believe that Sec. Lorenzana is a very good man with the highest credibility in the cabinet. As I said earlier, we feel deeply sad because it appears that he is being used as a propagandist precisely since he has the reputation of being straight as an arrow.

Sec. Lorenzana and I are very close friends, having worked together for many years in Washington, DC. I have the warmest esteem for him and trust that he will consider what I have written as factual and helpful. I also wish to add that he is considered by all people to be a patriot and to be objective at all times, and we hope that this sentiment will continue to be merited by him.

Most recently, we are gratified to hear Sec. Lorenzana at his BBC interview reasserting Philippine sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea and the need to defend those rights with an abiding faith in the rule of law—truly the great equalizer among nations and the antithesis of chaos.

We wish him all the best always. AS

Mr. Del Rosario is the chairman of ADR Institute and is a former secretary of Foreign Affairs and Philippine Ambassador to the United States.

Senate panels to probe Duterte's China policy

By PAOLO ROMERO

Two Senate committees will jointly hold a public hearing to determine how effective the country's foreign policy is in the face of alarming developments in the West Philippine Sea, particularly China's military buildup and its harassment of Filipino fishermen.

No date has been set for the hearing to be led by the Senate committees on foreign relations and on national defense and security.

Foreign committee chair Sen. Loren Legarda welcomed the resolutions calling for the hearings, saying the Senate, "as an independent body, should assert our role in helping shape the government's foreign policy."

Sen. Gregorio Honasan chairs the national defense and security committee.

"We will soon conduct a public hearing and I will work with my colleagues, including the committee on national defense and security, in determining how best to support current initiatives to diffuse the tension, while at the same time protecting our sovereignty and territorial rights," Legarda said in a statement.

"I maintain the view that diplomacy plays a key role in finding long-term and durable solutions to the West Philippine Sea issue," she said.

Honasan said while the government is exhausting all diplomatic options to resolve its dispute with China, it should also consider taking part in joint military exercises with the US and other allies to show its solidarity with other nations against militarization and other provocative acts in the region.

He stressed joint military exercises were not meant to provoke hostilities but simply to show China the international community does not tolerate "abuse."

He cited reports of China's "aggressive" and "inflammatory" deployment of nuclear-capable bombers, fighter jets and missile systems to some islands in the Paracels and Spratlys, some of which are claimed by the Philippines.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros earlier called for a "foreign policy audit" in the light of China's continued militarization of the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon dared foreign affairs chief Alan Peter Cayetano to disclose to the public the 100 or so protests that the latter claimed to have filed against China.

In Bacolod City, Vice President Leni Robredo has appealed to the nation, especially its leaders, to take a tougher stand against China's provo-

cautions.

"Why do we have to seek permission from China for Filipino fishermen to engage in fishing activities in an area that belongs to the Philippines? Why are they saying the Philippines' request should be granted out of 'goodwill' when it has already been ruled by the international arbitration tribunal that the area belongs to the Philippines' exclusive economic zone?" Robredo said in remarks during an event at the Diocese of Bacolod on Thursday.

"We're not waging war. Protesting doesn't mean going to war; it's just fighting for our rights," she said in Filipino. "How can other nations help us when we cannot fight for what is ours?"

Secret backers

In Zambales, members of a militant group of fishermen have accused the military's Northern Luzon Command of using their supposed dialogue to talk them out of opposing or condemning Chinese bullying in the West Philippine Sea.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said its members felt the supposed dialogue last Thursday was "a way to pacify the anger and intimidate the fisherfolk from standing against Chinese harassment."

In an earlier statement, Nolcom commander Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat said the "forum aims to promote safety of life at sea, raise awareness among our countrymen and promote sovereignty over our maritime areas in Northern Luzon."

But based on how the meeting unfolded, Pamalakaya said Nolcom "seemed to have been commissioned by China to smoothly facilitate their (Chinese) intervention in the country." The fishermen's group did not give details, however, to back its claim.

"Nolcom's job is to guard our sovereignty against any foreign aggressor as mandated by the Constitution, not to create fear and coerce Filipino fishers," Pamalakaya said.

"Like Malacañang, the Armed Forces of the Philippines seemed to have been commissioned by China to smoothly facilitate their intervention in the country," said Pamalakaya chairman Fernando Hicap.

It also accused presidential spokesman Harry Roque of using fishermen "to justify and cover up the Duterte government's subservience to China and neglect in defending the West Philippine Sea" when he arranged for a group of fishermen to be presented to the media at Malacañang.

"What Roque did in presenting Zambales fishers ha-

passed by Chinese coast guards was nothing but to whitewash the incident. He wanted to make it appear that Filipino fishers prefer the present situation wherein they are able to fish in the area unlike before," Pamalakaya said.

"But the West Philippine Sea is indisputably ours in every aspect and we don't have to ask for the consent of anyone in order to fish there," it added.

"Roque obviously wanted to cover up the incompetence of the Duterte government to resolve the sea row and justify its servitude to China which aggressively grabs our marine territory," Hicap said. Critics said the Palace briefing with fishermen appeared staged or designed to downplay an incident last May where the Chinese seized a significant portion of the catch of Filipino fishermen at the Panatag Shoal.

Navy Commodore Nichols Driz, commander of the Naval Forces North Luzon (NPNL), said not all fishermen were complaining about being forced by the Chinese to part with their catch.

He said closer interaction among the fishermen and other concerned government agencies like the Philippine Navy, Coast Guard, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and local government units (LGUs) would

help in crafting ways to better address the concerns of local fishermen.

Rolly Bernal, a leader of a fishing group, said he hopes better relations with China would give them unrestricted access to Panatag Shoal.

Other problems fishermen had to deal with, he said, are illegal fishing practices like dynamite fishing, poaching and destruction of corals.

Roseller Latagen, 50, said Chinese coast guards would take as much as P3,000 worth of their fish catch in exchange for two small bottles of water.

Latagen said they are only allowed to fish near Panatag Shoal for two to three months in a year while Chinese fishermen, who even destroy corals, are allowed to fish all year round. As a result, they are forced to just fish near the coast where their catch is just enough to feed their family.

The same concern was raised by 72-year-old Angelico Pilon, who could only hope the government would step in to help them regain access to Panatag Shoal.

Floro Delegencia, another fisherman from Masinloc, narrated an incident where a group of Chinese boarded their vessel to get some fish in exchange for bottles of beer and cigarettes. - With Ding Cervantes, Bebot Sison Jr., Gilbert Bayoran

Senate to probe China's militarization in Spratlys

By MARIO B. CARAYURAN

After prodding by the Senate minority bloc, the Senate foreign relations committee will finally hold a public hearing on the controversial militarization by China of parts of the Spratly island chain legally owned by the Philippine government.

"I welcome the call for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct a public hearing on the government's policy towards China. I agree that the Senate, as an independent body, should assert our role in helping shape the government's foreign policy," declared Sen. Loren Legarda, committee chairwoman.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin M. Drilon had said it is up to the Legarda committee to assert the right of the Senate to conduct public hearings on foreign policy issues since the Upper House is the partner of the Executive branch on foreign policy matters.

Earlier, Sen. Gregorio B. Honasan II, chairman of the Senate national defense and security committee, had said his committee is willing to become Legarda's secondary committee should she call a public hearing on issues related to China's refusal to accept a decision of the United Nations (UN) Arbitration Court rejecting its historical claim over parts of the South China Sea.

Both Legarda and Honasan are members of the Senate majority bloc.

Opposition Sen. Riza Hontiveros, a member of the Senate minority bloc, had also asked Legarda to conduct a public hearing on the militarization of parts of the Spratlys and the confiscation by elements of the Chinese Coast Guard of the meager fish catch of Filipino fishermen at the Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal.

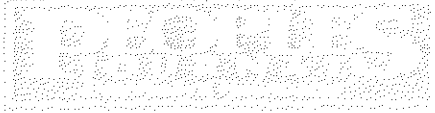
The Shoal is more than 200 nautical miles west off Zambales or more than 700 nautical miles east off Hainan, the easternmost territory of mainland China.

There are two Senate resolutions, PSR 722 and PSR 723, on the China issue that have been transferred to Legarda's committee.

"We will soon conduct a public hearing and I will work with my colleagues, including the Committee on National Defense and Security, in determining how best to support current initiatives to diffuse the tension, while at the same time protecting our sovereignty and territorial rights," Legarda said.

Yesterday in Quezon province, Senator Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson on Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food, said the government must protect our fishermen and their catch in Scarborough Shoal.

Speaking at the 71st commencement exercises of Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation, Villar said she will take the lead in tackling the issue and draw a stand on behalf of Filipino fishermen upon the resumption of Senate in July. (With a report from Danny J. Estacio)



West Philippine Sea issues probe set

SENATOR Loren Legarda will soon conduct a public hearing on government policy towards China amid issues arising from West Philippine Sea (WPS) dispute.

Legarda, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, will schedule a Senate hearing based on two Senate Resolutions 722 and 723.

"We will soon conduct a public hearing and I will work with my colleagues, including the Committee on National Defense and Security, in determining how best to support current initiatives to diffuse the tension, while at the same time protecting our sovereignty and territorial rights," said Legarda in a statement.

"I agree that the Senate, as an independent body, should assert our role in helping shape the government's foreign policy," she added.

Legarda stressed that diplomacy plays a key role in finding long term and durable solutions to the West Philippine Sea problem.

SR 722 was filed by Senator Antonio Trillanes IV following China's reported installation of missile systems on three fortified outposts in WPS. ~~Maritime Disputes~~

Isyu sa West Phl Sea iimbestigahan na ng Senado

iimbestigahan na ng Senado ang isyu ng West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Ayon kay Sen. Loren Legarda, chair ng Senate committee on foreign relations, bukas siya sa panawagan na magdaos ng public hearing ang kanyang komite tungkol sa polisiya ng gobyerno sa isyu sa China.

Sinabi pa ni Legarda na sumasang-ayon siya na ang Senado bilang isang independent body ay dapat igiit ang papel sa pagbuo ng foreign policy ng gobyerno.

"I welcome the call for the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to conduct a public hearing on the government's policy towards China. I agree that the Senate, as an independent body, should assert our role in helping shape the government's foreign policy," pahayag ni Legarda.

Nauna rito, sinabi ni Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon na dapat manindigan ang komite ni Legarda sa pagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon sa isyu ng foreign policy.

Bagaman at walang iinakdang petsa, sinabi ni Legarda na gagawin niya sa lalong madaling panahon ang imbestigasyon kung saan isasama ang Senate committee on national defense and security. (Maio Escudero)

JPE: PNoy warned on WPS

Trillanes advice led to loss of shoal

By Mario J. Mallari

Former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile warned former President Benigno Aquino III that the backchanneling efforts of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV with China was dangerous to the interest of the country and very unwise months prior to the start of the massive Chinese buildup in the West Philippine Sea.

It turned out to be a prophetic warning since

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said yesterday that it was the advice of Trillanes that led to the Chinese occupation of Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal off Zambales.

Exactly six years ago today (June 16), then President Aquino ordered the pullout of Philippine ships from Scarborough Shoal – ending a two-month standoff with China but, at the same time, resulting to the country losing control of the rich fishing ground to the Chinese.

Turn to page 2

JPE: PNoy warned on WPS

From page 1

The pullout order came after Aquino sent Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV to China as his emissary for backchanneling talks with Beijing officials, apparently to settle the conflict at Panatag Shoal.

Enrile was among the first individuals to learn of Trillanes' "secret mission" to Beijing.

Interviewed by the Daily Tribune yesterday, Enrile confided he first learned of Trillanes' trip to China during a meeting at Malacanang. Though he already forgot the exact date.

"The meeting was a briefing by (then Foreign Affairs) Secretary Albert del Rosario to President Aquino regarding the situation in the West Philippine Sea," Enrile told Tribune.

Apart from President Aquino, Del Rosario and Enrile, also present during the meeting was Trillanes.

During the briefing, Enrile recalled Trillanes whispering to him that the foreign affairs chief's briefing was not true.

"So I asked him (Trillanes), how did you know that it is not true, and he told me 'because I went to China,'" Enrile said.

In the course of the discussion, Enrile said that it was made clear that Mr. Aquino gave the go signal to Trillanes.

"So, I told him 'Mr. President these backdoor talks are dangerous to the interest of our country, they are not very wise,'" Enrile said.

According to Enrile, Del Rosario's briefing was halted due to the "snafu".

It was gathered that Trillanes

made 16 trips to Beijing at the height of the tension in Panatag Shoal.

Meetings can be used vs PH

"Whatever statements made during those meetings (Trillanes made) can be used against us in the future and may be against our country's interest," Enrile added.

In a broadcast interview yesterday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano solidified Enrile's recollection of the 2012 incident.

Cayetano said Trillanes indeed served as "adviser" to Aquino in the West Philippine Sea issue.

In fact, Cayetano said that it was Trillanes who told Aquino not to return to Panatag Shoal after the pullout of two ships from the Philippine Coast Guard and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

"President Aquino decided, through the advice of Senator Trillanes because he (Trillanes) was the one who did the backchannel to China, not to go back there (Panatag) even when the agreement was for both parties (Manila and China) to pullout," said Cayetano.

Cayetano stressed that upon the assumption of President Duterte, he exerted efforts to ease the tension with China to protect the country's interest, particularly the fisher folks.

In a recent press conference in Malacanang, no less than fishermen from Zambales confirmed that the Chinese have control of Panatag Shoal.

The Filipino fishermen accused the Chinese coast guard

of stealing catch from them when venturing into the shoal.

Malacanang had alerted Beijing over the issue and Chinese Ambassador to Manila Zhao has vowed investigation of the matter and that those who would be found liable will be meted out with government sanctions.

PNoy mismanaged row

No less than Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has said that the Aquino administration "mismanaged" the West Philippine Sea issue and the Duterte administration made huge strides to clean the mess it inherited.

Lorenzana said that due to the tension during the previous administration, there was no trade between Manila and Beijing, Chinese tourist arrival was very low and they harassed Filipino troops and fishermen.

Currently, Lorenzana said that trade between the two countries is flourishing, tourist arrivals have doubled and the tension is gone as Filipinos are allowed to fish in the area.

Lorenzana, who has supervision over the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), stressed that Philippine ships and aircraft are regularly patrolling in the West Philippine Sea to protect the country's sovereignty and territory.

This was contrary to claims by Trillanes' buddy Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano who said that the AFP has stopped patrols in the West Philippine Sea upon the orders of President Duterte.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. also belied Alejano's claim.

Kadamay deplores President's threat to harm its members

An urban poor group on Friday deplored President Duterte's order for the police to force out members who would occupy abandoned units at government housing sites, saying he was himself guilty of tolerating China's incursions in the West Philippine Sea. Mr. Duterte told police on Thursday they could, if attacked, "kill to implement" legal regulation. "Why are we being treated like we're the enemy? Is it not the Duterte government that is giving away the country's territory?" Gloria Arellano, chair of Kalipunan ng mga Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) said. —MELVIN GASCON

Duterte blasts Kadamay, leftist groups

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

President Duterte lashed out at leftists, including members of urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay), for insulting him and even burning his effigy during protest rallies.

Displeased by the way he is portrayed in protest rallies, Duterte issued an ultimatum to Kadamay to stop occupying government housing projects intended for police officers and soldiers.

"I will give you until noon tomorrow (Friday). Get out or I will order the Philippine National Police-Special Action Force (PNP-SAF) to go in. If you fight it out and you get killed, it's your problem," Duterte said in Filipino.

"If you carry firearms and

get killed, that would be for all," he said.

Duterte directed the PNP-SAF to augment anti-riot policemen in dealing with Kadamay, even as the group failed in its attempt to enter housing units in Rodriguez in Rizal last Wednesday.

After the failed attempt, Kadamay members have holed up near the National Housing Authority (NHA) at Quezon Memorial Circle to air their grievances against the government.

Duterte issued his warning during the oath-taking of newly elected barangay chairmen of Region 4-A at the Sta. Rosa Sports Complex in Sta. Rosa in Laguna on Thursday night.

"Mukha ko sinusunog ninyo, tapos manghingi ka sa akin ng

bahay, gago ka ba? Kayong mga left, sinusunog ninyo... ito may State of the National Address (SONA), gawain ninyo yan pero wag kayo maghingi ng tulong sa akin (You burn my effigy, but you ask for houses from me, are you crazy? You leftist groups, you burn...especially during SONA, so don't ask anything from me)," Duterte said.

Protesters have burned the President's effigy during his SONA in the past two years.

"I have the police and the military (at my disposal), and I ordered them to maintain peace and order in this country. If something happens to you, that's your problem," he added.

Duterte expressed displeasure at the actuations of left-leaning groups, reportedly urinating on his effigy to show their dissatisfaction with his administration.

"You urinate (and burn my effigy), and you ask help, son of a b****! That's your problem," he said.

The visibly irritated Chief Executive said he is not intimidated by the protesters.

"Sino ang tinaiakot ninyo? Ako? Wala na akong election na tutuparin... Bahala sila kung manalo ang kandidato or hindi (Who are you trying to scare? Me? I don't have an election to win... It's up to them if candidates will win or lose)," Duterte said. "Do not fl@# with me because I was once also like you."

"Let us be clear on that. I will not give you (the time of) day here. You have demonstrations, that's freedom of expression, I will allow you," he said.

"But if you ask help from me, go to Kuwait. Work there... (Then) you burn my (effigy) and urinate. Now, lay down on the road first, and I

will urinate on your faces," Duterte told the leftists.

But the leader of Kadamay yesterday clarified that there was no occupation of the idle housing units.

Kadamay national chair Gloria Arellano said their members just "guarded" some of the houses, which she claimed were given to beneficiaries who do not belong to their group.

She added that their members were worried they would lose their slots as nobody from the NHA has talked to them.

Arellano slammed the NHA for the slow process of acquiring the houses.

Meanwhile, police are readying a criminal complaint against Kadamay, a police official said yesterday.

Senior Supt. Lou Evangelista, Rizal police director, said they are preparing a case of trespassing against the of-

ficials and members of the group.

Evangelista told The STAR that the complainants would be NHA and the homeowners' association of the government housing project.

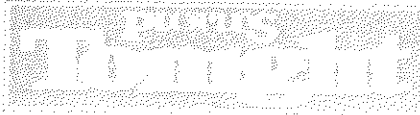
For his part, Sen. Joseph Victor Ejercito yesterday said there is no such thing as a free housing program in the country under the Constitution.

Ejercito, chairman of the Senate committee on urban planning, housing and resettlement, lamented that the group again forcibly occupied scores of government housing units.

The committee recently held hearings on the state of government housing programs for the poor and the proposed Department of Housing where the complaints of Kadamay were aired, he said.

— With Ed Amoroso, Paolo Romero, Emmanuel Tupas

Cayetano on landing of China plane: Nothing fishy about it
Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano on Friday said a Chinese military plane was given diplomatic clearance to land at an airport in Davao City after the military authorized it, contradicting an earlier statement by military officials that it was the other way around. "It's nothing irregular. There's nothing fishy about it. It is something that countries do," Cayetano said in an interview with CNN Philippines. In fact, he said the Philippines had extended the same accommodation to 243 US and 33 South Korean military aircraft. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said he learned of the presence of the Chinese military plane belatedly. —MARLON RAMOS



China plane Davao landing not irregular

By CRISTINA LEE-PISCO

FOREIGN Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday clarified there is nothing irregular with the Chinese military plane landing in Davao City last June 8.

Cayetano, who was interviewed by CNN Philippines, said that the Chinese followed the protocol by requesting for clearance before landing in Davao.

Philippine lawmakers have reacted negatively after learning about the presence of Chinese plane in Davao.

But Cayetano assured "It's nothing irregular, there's nothing fishy about it, it's something that countries do with each other."

He pointed out there are more than a hundred similar requests coming from other countries to the Philippines every year.

"Hindi lang tayo sanay na mayroong Chinese plane na

nagla-landing, 243 of this kind of applications from United States planes were granted, 33 from Korean planes, and marami pa sa iba, so far only two or three sa Chinese planes, but all of these dumaan sa proper channels including the military," he said.

"Normal ito, may proseso at may clearances from the military (This is normal. There is a procedure and clearances from the military)," he added.

Earlier, Defense Secretary

Delfin Lorenzana admitted he had no prior knowledge of the plane's landing.

Cayetano, however, said the procedure is already a routine, and such requests now usually fall under the assistant secretaries or concerned generals.

"You have about 300 to 500 applications in a year at least, it goes to our assistant secretaries or to certain generals then we'll just sign," he said. "Dati naman kasi walang isyu."

China plane Davao landing normal event — Cayetano

By Cristina Lee-Pisco

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Army opens recruitment for 6,000 new soldiers in Mindanao

By NILE U. CRISMONDO

PATIN-AY, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur – The Philippine Army (PA) on Friday started its aggressive campaign to recruit at least 6,000 new officers and enlisted men to bolster its manpower in Mindanao.

At least 1,000 of those who will be

recruited will be tapped as officers.

The additional Army soldiers will beef up forces deployed in various places in the country's second largest island of Mindanao, in addressing threats like terrorism and insurgency problem.

"It is open for those who would like to be part of the Army as sol-

diers," Capt. Jasper T. Gacayan, Civil Military Operation (CMO) officer of the Army's 401st Infantry (Unity) Brigade told The Manila Bulletin on Friday.

The new recruits will fill up units like infantry, cavalry and artillery, as well as engineering, communication, logistics, and other operation and administrative units.

The 401st "Unity" Brigade has set up a recruitment booth at the Naliyagan Festival ground to process applications.

The provincial government is holding the weeklong festival which marks the founding anniversary of the province.

The additional soldiers are also

expected to further strengthen the Army's capability in addressing the various threats, particularly terrorism and the remaining insurgency problem in some areas in the southern island, it said.

The recruitment is now ongoing and the written examination is slated on June 18-20 at the headquarters 401st Brigade, Camp Datu Lipus Makapandong, Barangay Awa, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, Gacayan said.

Initial requirements that need to be submitted to the Army Recruitment Office Proctors during examination day are a valid government ID, a 2x2 photo, original birth certificate, original college diploma and original transcript of record.

AFP holds safety, security forum for Zambales fisherfolk

By JONAS REYES

IBA, Zambales — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM) held a Fishermen's Dialogue and Consultative Forum in the capitol of Zambales on Thursday.

According to NOLCOM Commander Lt. Gen. Emmanuel Salamat, the forum will serve as an interagency and collaboration dialogue. He added that the event will be a venue for consultation of the fisherfolks about issues concerning their livelihood, safety of life at sea and security.

"The forum aims to promote Safety of Life at Sea, raise awareness among our countrymen, and promote sovereignty over our maritime areas in Northern Luzon," Salamat said.

"Likewise, this activity is aimed at engaging local fisherfolks in order to bring to the concerned government agencies for appropriate actions," Salamat added.

Aside from the fisherfolks and the AFP, the forum was participated by

the concerned local government units (LGUs), the provincial government of Zambales, other local government agencies, and stakeholders.

The forum was held after reports that Chinese coast guards allegedly harassed Filipino fishermen in Scarborough Shoal. The reports also state that these foreign nationals "confiscated" the fishermen's catch after boarding their vessels in the vicinity of the area.

'Rush processing of applicants on govt housing units'

By M. Nicol W. Cruz

A SET OF LEGISLATORS on Friday urged the National Housing Authority to speed up the processing of applications for some 12,000 unoccupied houses that are currently occupied.

House Minority Original Rep. Alfredo Benitez, chairman of the House committee on housing and urban development, said the NHA should act swiftly to process them because some groups are out to forcibly occupy these houses.

Benitez asked law enforcement agencies to secure all housing projects covered by Joint Resolution 2 that President Rodrigo Duterte signed last month.

"We recognize the need and growing desperation among urban poor for adequate housing. However, we put prime in the rule of law and the institutional process to address social issues," Benitez said.

"We cannot let desperation lead to anarchy," he added.

Benitez was referring to the attempt of some 500 members of a local urban poor group affiliated with the urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadiamay) to forcibly take over an NHA housing project in Rodriguez, Rizal last Wednesday.

Benitez said Joint Resolution 2 provides that the NHA will award the houses only to qualified urban poor

applicants.

"Pursuant to this measure, NHA should work double time to institute mechanisms for informal settler families, including KADIAMAY members, to avail low-cost housing formerly under the PNP-ATF housing program," he said.

Benitez said the joint resolution was expected to address the controversy surrounding the P26-billion AFP-PNP housing program that has failed to really benefit policemen, firemen and soldiers because the NHA housing units were originally intended.

He also warned against the determination of the houses should the NHA fail to award the housing units immediately.

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Homeowners prepare vs Kadamay

RODRIGUEZ, RIZAL: Residents of a government housing site in Rizal, which an urban poor group tried to occupy on Wednesday, vowed to fight back if the group returns and adopted measures to secure the area.

In a meeting between the homeowners' association and officials, led by Senior Supt. Leo Pina Evangelista, Rizal provincial director, the National Housing Authority (NHA), and site developers, each family agreed to contribute P1,000 for a fence around the site and conduct regular patrols at night, and requested troops to stay "indefinitely" in case members of the Kalipunan ng Dangayong Mahihirap (Kadamay) come back.

The residents also noted the lack of electricity in the neighborhood although it was not clarified how the problem could be addressed.

The Rizal Mobile Force Company said it would continue to watch over the neighborhood as long as the Kadamay threat remained.

An unidentified resident said that Kadamay members should not force the NHA to give them houses, but should learn to comply with the system.

"They are allowed to occupy the houses. There is no discrim-

ination from the community wherever they may come from. The housing was developed for the police, soldiers, and the homeless; they would just have to go through the necessary screening and submit the documents for processing," the resident said.

He said the houses in Barangay San Isidro have been awarded to police and soldiers and that Joint Resolution 2, which Kadamay was using as basis to occupy government-built homes, was only applicable if there were vacancies.

Signed by President Rodrigo Duterte on May 9, Joint Resolution 2 allowed the NHA to award unoccupied housing units by personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor).

Also covered were units whose ownership and possession were surrendered by

awardees and respective awards were cancelled.

The resolution cited the 2016 Commission on Audit (COA) report, which noted the low occupancy rate of completed housing units.

Corporal Reytez Gordon Esparagoza, a resident, claimed that Kadamay members had no documents, making their occupation of the housing units illegal.

He also said that these were not members of the urban poor group but were former residences of the South Bill BF Subdivision across the river who sold their houses.

Apprised of the situation last Wednesday, Duterte gave Kadamay members until noontime on Friday to leave and warned them that he would not be responsible for the consequences if they refused.

Interviewed by *The Manila Times*, troops and residents in the area said the militants had left even before Duterte's warning.

Gloria Arellano, chairman of the Kadamay group, said in a media interview on Wednesday that some members had applied for housing units through the Rodriguez local government unit and the NHA.

"We are holding a rally to force them to act on our re-

quests," Arellano said. The Kadamay members who had barricaded the San Isidro

housing site were those who applied for relocation based on a supposed Palace resolution

to be signed by the President to provide affordable housing units to the poor, she said.



'Mukha ko sinusunog, Inihian n'yo' **Kadamay, Leftist wala ng tulong na aasahan kay Digong**

Wala ng mapapalang tulong kay Pangulong Duterte ang mga Kadamay at iba pang makakaliwang grupo lalo't walang ginawa ang mga ito kundi batikusin siya.

"Kayong mga Kadamay, umalis kayo diyan. Pagka nagka*****-i***** ang buhay diyan, may matatay, before the nation sabihin ko, "Well, that is my order." Mahirap 'yang i-hostage mo ako na takutin mo ako ganun," sabi ng Pangulo kamakalawa sa oath-taking ng mga bagong hatal na barangay officials sa Sta. Rosa Laguna.

"Ngayon, sinong gustong mag-tulong sa inyo? 'Yung mukha ko sinusunog ninyo tapos maghingi ka sa akin ng bahay. G*** ka ba? Totoo-

Kayong mga Left. Sinusunog ninyo 'yung... Ito, may SCNA. O, p***** i** ninyo, gawain ninyo 'yan pero huwag kayong maghingi ng tulong sa akin kasi may pulis ako, may militar ako. Ang sabi ko sa kanila, Maintain law and order in this country," dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Magugunita na ipinamigay noong nakaraang taon ni Pangulong Duterte sa miyembro ng Kadamay ang inagaw nilang housing units na para sa pulis at sundalo sa Pandi, Bulacan pero nagbanta itong huwag na nilang uulitin kundi ay kakasuhan at aarestuhin sila.

"Kung madisgrasya kayo problema na ninyo 'yan. Ngayon... Inihian ninyo mukha ko tapos sinusunog pa ninyo...

Ngayon, maghingi kayo ng tulong? Problema ninyo 'yan. Sinong tinatakot ninyo?" dagdag pa ni Pangulong Duterte.

"Ang Left, galing ako diyan, adre. 'Yung magdemonstrate kayo na ano that's a freedom of expression. I will allow you. Sunugin mo 'yung mukha, ihian mo pa 'yung mukha ko tapos maghingi ka ng tulong? Maghiga ka muna sa daan, ihian ko 'yan lahat mukha ninyo. So 'yung lang po siguro. That's the most important really -- the thing that I wanted imparted to you is that there is no difference between me and you in terms of -- territorial jurisdiction [mine?] is an entire Philippines," gilid pa ng Pangulo. (Rudy Andaf)

KADAMAY, LEFTIST DEDMA KAY DUTERTE

Walang makukuhang tulong ang mga Kadamay at iba pang makakaliwang grupo na walang ginawa kundi bumatikos.

Ito ang sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte at hindi na muling payagan na ulitin ng Kadamay ang pang-aagaw ng pabahay ng gobyerno bagkus ay iunutusan nito ang pulisya na puwersahang paalisin sila sa inagaw na bahay sa Rodriguez, Rizal at kasuhan.

"Kayong mga Kadamay, umalis kayo diyan. Pagka nagkalamang buhay diyan, may mamatay, before the nation sabihin ko, 'Well, that is my order.' Mahirap 'yang i-hostage mo ako na takutin mo ako ganun," wika pa ng Pangulo kamakalawa sa oath-taking ng mga bagong halal na barangay officials sa Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Ngayon, sinong gustong mag-tulong sa

inyo? 'Yung mukna ko sinusunog ninyo tapos maghingi ka sa akin ng bahay. G*** ka ba? Totoo. Kayong mga Left. Sinusunog ninyo 'yung... Ito, may SONA. O, p**** i** ninyo, gawain ninyo 'yan pero huwag kayong maghingi ng tulong sa akin kasi may pulis ako, may militar ako. Ang sabi ko sa kanila, Maintain law and order in this country,' dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

"Kung madisgras-

Ni RUDY ANDAL

ya kayo problema na ninyo 'yan. Ngayon... Iniihian ninyo mukha ko tapos sinusunog pa ninyo 'yung... Ngayon, maghingi kayo ng tulong? T**** i** ninyo problema ninyo 'yan. Sinong tinatakot ninyo? Ako? T**** i**. Wala na akong eleksyon tutuparin.

Eh... Bahala sila kung manalo 'yung kandidato ko o hindi. Hindi ako interesado diyan," dagdag pa ni Pangulong Duterte.

"Ang Left, galing ako diyan, adre. Galing ako diyan. Tanungin ninyo 'yung matatandang mga komunista. So do not f*** it with me because I was once also like you. Mabuti 'yang magklaro-

klaro. I will not give you the day dito. 'Yung magdemonstrate kayo na ano that's a freedom of expression. I will allow you. Maski diyan mag-ano ng mga ano... O sige. Freedom of expression.

Sunugin mo 'yung mukha, ihian mo pa 'yung mukha ko tapos maghingi ka ng tulong? Maghiga ka muna sa

daan, ihian ko 'yan lahat mukha ninyo. So 'yun lang po siguro. That's the most important reality --- the thing that I wanted imparted to you is that there is no difference between me and you in terms of --- in the jurisdiction --- territorial jurisdiction [mine?] is an entire Philippines," git pa ng Pangulo.

Boracay land reform beneficiaries face raps if titles sold

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

This early, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has warned future beneficiaries of the land reform program in Boracay of criminal liability if they sell the lands that will be awarded to them.

The DAR said it has identified 80 Ali families as beneficiaries of the 25 hectares that can be immediately covered by land reform.

Section 73 (e) of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988 prohibits "the sale, transfer, conveyance or change of the nature of lands outside of urban centers and city limits either in whole or in part."

"Once the lands are awarded to the farmer-beneficiaries, they are given titles as to what are the dos and don'ts following land distribution. First is that they can't immediately sell the lands. The lands can only be sold 10 years after these were awarded to them," said DAR Undersecretary for policy, planning and research David Irujo.

"The lands will be taken away from the farmer-beneficiary and the latter can also be criminally liable," he added. "That is why after every land distribution ceremony, the farmers are reminded to cultivate their lands and make it productive for their own benefit."

The DAR said a total of 845 hectares of agricultural land on Boracay Island will be under the land reform program. However, only 25 hectares can be covered immediately. Other agricultural structures will still need to be relocated in the remaining

820 hectares.

President Duterte said placing the entire Boracay Island under land reform would benefit local indigenous peoples as they could eventually sell the lands to big businessmen.

He said by the time the natives would want to do business and investors come in, they already have the land titles and can sell the lands.

Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment slammed Duterte's pronouncement, saying that it is contrary to his initial pronouncements of rehabilitating Boracay.

"The agrarian reform of Boracay, coupled with its closure and militarization, is only intended to pave the way for more environmentally destructive 'development' projects and land-grabs in the island," said Clemente Baunsta, spokesperson for Kalikasan.

"Since there is no support mechanism in place to prevent the peasant beneficiaries from selling

their lands, the purported beneficiaries will only sell their lands to developers who would build more resorts, further exacerbating the environmental problems of the island," he added.

For the National Democratic Front (NDF), Boracay can serve as a testing ground for the agreement on agrarian reform and rural development signed by the government and NDF as part of the peace talks.

Julie de Lima, chair of the NDF's Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms, said there are applicable provisions in the NDF's Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER) that the government may find enlightening.

"After free land distribution, Boracay farmers should be given sufficient support services ranging from short- to long-term assistance to aid them in developing and making the land productive for the local and national economy," she said.

"We challenge the government to fast-track the negotiations on CASER as we resume formal talks this month," she added.

De Lima also noted that the Boracay case falls squarely within the ambit of agrarian reform and rural development because the government has classified a big bulk of lands either as agricultural or suitable for agriculture.

"A new and truly redistributive land reform program is necessary as it would pave the way for a truly just and equitable agrarian reform to benefit the most qualified beneficiaries in Boracay: those who are actually tilling the land or ready to till it, or to work the land in other productive ways such as agro-tourism, fishery, small-scale food processing and the like. The Aji community, including those that have been displaced but are willing to return, should be given priority," she added. — With Jose Rodel Clapano, Artemio Dumlao

Joma hits cancellation of peace talks

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison on Thursday criticized President Duterte for unilaterally cancelling the resumption of peace talks with the rebels.

Sison said it was "disappointing and frustrating" that Duterte decided to cancel the peace talks at

Norwegia, Norwegian? PCOO exec gets flak. See Page 10.

the last minute as preparations are underway for the formal peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front (NDF) in Oslo, Norway on June 28.

Sison said Duterte and his administration have simply shown

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no interest in serious peace negotiations.

As a result, Sison warned that communist rebels would "singlemindedly" wage the people's war.

Sison said the written agreements pertaining to the scheduled events have been signed by no less than the respective chairpersons of the government and the NDF negotiating

panels.

The agreements signing was witnessed by the final Norwegian special envoy Jun Tvedt on June 9.

"I urge the two negotiating panels to release to the public and to the press the written and signed agreements on June 9 and 10 signed by the chairman of the government and NDF negotiating panels and by

the members of their respective special teams," Sison said.

For their part, the military brushed aside the threat aired by Sison that the rebels would continue the people's war in the wake of the suspension of the peace talks.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military wants lasting peace but the troops should perform their mandate to restore peace.

"While we subscribe to the shared aspiration towards the

attainment of a just and lasting peace through dialogues and deliberations, the AFP shall continue to perform its mandate to protect the people, ensure the peace and the territorial integrity of the country," Arcvalo said.

Sources said the President had a change of heart after senior military officials reportedly requested him to delay the resumption of peace talks for three months after consultations with all stakeholders.

The militant group Bagong

Advasang Makabayan (Bayan) said the cancellation of the peace talks is not a good sign for the peace process as a whole.

"The reason offered by Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza, of the need to hold public consultations, appears flimsy and disregards years of public fora and consultations held on the peace talks," Bayan secretary-general Renato Reyes said. Reyes said several lawmaker and peace advocates have already expressed support for the talks.

"There have been signed agreements this June for the holding of formal talks at the end of the month which could lead to an interim peace agreement which includes important socio-economic reforms. We fear that the postponement will undermine the goodwill that has been created in the series of back channel talks and may waste an opportunity to address the serious economic crisis facing the nation," he said. — With Rhodina Villanueva, Artemio Dumlaog, Jaime Laude

No peace talks in PH, Joma insists

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte is "ruining" the peace negotiations between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), exiled Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison said on Friday.

"Duterte is the one ruining the peace negotiations. He also destructed the whole second year of term [of the talks]," Sison told reporters in an online interview, a day after the government decided to delay the resumption of talks earlier set for June 28.

"It seems like there would be no resumption of peace talks if he (Duterte) will insist to have the peace talks in the Philippines," he added.

At the same time, Sison belied Malacañang's claim that he had no arrest warrant, saying he was charged with multiple murder in Leyte in the 1980s, a case that he described as "fake."

Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza announced on Thursday that the government had decided to delay the peace negotiations with the communist rebels, saying the public needed to be consulted first.

Sison expressed disappointment and frustration over the decision announced by the government despite the "successful" back-channel talks held in The Netherlands last week.

Sison said rebels had "no choice" but to wage war to achieve "national and social liberation."

President Duterte on Thursday said the government needed more

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No peace

time before resuming formal negotiations.

"Sison said June. No, I'm not ready for that. I need more time," Duterte said in a speech in Laguna during the oath-taking of newly elected village chiefs.

Duterte arrived at the decision following a command conference with the military and the police on Wednesday in Malacañang, where he was briefed on developments in back-channel talks between government and rebel negotiations.

Military backs delay

The Armed Forces of the Philippines shrugged off the threats made by the top communist leader and backed the postponement of the peace negotiations.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, military spokesman, said the military was in favor of "lasting peace" in the country that would be acceptable to the Filipino people at large.

Dureza on Friday justified the government's decision to postpone the resumption of the peace talks with communist rebels, saying that public consultation "can win public goodwill."

In a text message, Dureza said he respected Sison's sentiment but pointed out that the postponement was meant to "strengthen and protect" the gains achieved by both parties during their back-channel talks.

"He (Sison) is entitled to his own opinion and we respect it. Our purpose in seeking more time is precisely to strengthen and

protect the gains achieved so far by both panels in the back-channel talks," Dureza said.

No specific date yet

Asked when the government intended to start the consultation, Dureza said, "We are in the process of formulating the process to do it as quickly as possible."

He said the government was also reaching out, not only to the parties involved, but also to sectors like the churches, youth, business, local government units and nongovernment organizations.

"We have no specifics yet except broad strokes in that direction. But ideally if both panels of their representatives come together and engage the public, a lot of public goodwill can be earned," Dureza said.

Both sides were supposed to sign an interim peace agreement if formal negotiations resumed later this month.

The deal was predicated on agreements on agrarian reform and national industrialization, an amnesty proclamation, and a coordinated unilateral ceasefire.

A stand-down agreement was to be simultaneously declared on June 21, which was a week later than what was previously agreed upon.

The talks fell through in November last year following clashes between government troops and communist rebels.

Duterte then moved to have the communist rebels declared a terrorist group.

The President, however, had a change of heart, saying he would like to give peace another chance.

**DEMPEY REYES AND
CATHERINE S. VALENTE**

Disappointing, Joma says of deferred talks

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) Chief Political Consultant Jose Maria Sison described as "disappointing and frustrating" the unilateral cancellation by the Duterte administration of the

scheduled start of the stand-down ceasefire on June 21 and the resumption of formal talks in the peace negotiations in Oslo, Norway on June 28.

In a statement, Sison said the written agreements pertaining to the scheduled events have been signed by Labor Secre-

tary Silvestre Bello and Fidel V. Agcaoili, chairpersons of the Philippine government and the NDFP negotiating panels respectively last June 9 and witnessed by the Royal Norwegian special envoy Ambassador Idun Tevdt.

"Turge the two negotiating panels ▶6

Disappointing, Joma says... ◀1

to release to the public and to the press the written and signed agreements of June 9 and 10 signed by the chairmen of the GRP and NDFP negotiating panel and by the members of their respective special teams," Sison said.

Sison said it is starkly clear that the GRP under President Rodrigo Duterte is not interested in serious peace negotiations with the NDFP.

He charged that the Duterte administration is interested mainly in obtaining the NDFP capitulation under the guise of indefinite ceasefire agreements and breaking the provision in the GRP-NDFP Joint Agreement on the Security and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which requires formal negotiations in a foreign neutral venue and therefore putting the negotiations under the control and under duress of an emerging fascist dictatorship and its armed minion.

"Because the GRP under Duterte is obviously not interested in serious peace negotiations, the revolutionary forces and the people have no choice but to singlemindedly wage people's war to achieve the national and social liberation of the Filipino people," Sison said.

Public consultation

Presidential Adviser on Peace Process (PAPP) secretary Jesus Dureza announced during a press briefing in Malacañang Thursday that the government has "reset" the scheduled

talks after President Duterte advised the peace panel to engage the "bigger table," to hear out the stakeholders through consultations to ensure all consensus points and agreements to be forged between GRP and NDFP peace panels would get the support of the people.

No date has been set by the government side for the resumption of the talks, Dureza said

Dureza explained that they could not just ignore the public as they "take full advantage of this last opportunity" given by the President to end to the decades-long communist rebellion.

He maintained that just, sustainable, and lasting peace could be attained if the people would understand and support these efforts.

"Our peace efforts to succeed should have good support from the general public, hence, it is necessary that all efforts be exerted to inform first and engage them in the same way as the government engages the rebels in addressing the root causes of conflict," Dureza added.

To ensure that the last chance will not be "squandered away," he said that they must learn from the failures of the 50 years of "intermittent and often times disrupted" peace talks to prevent similar pitfalls of the past.

Dureza added GRP panel would also consult several sectors, including the private sector, non-government

organization, local government units, and Regional Peace and Order Councils, on all consensus points and agreements forged in the negotiations, as they did for the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"We cannot have a peace agree-

ment and have a vacuum support from the public," he added.

Bayan Muna Party-List Rep. Carlos Zarate said the delay in the peace talks with the NDFP would only allow the peace saboteurs to their thing.

"The longer it takes for the [peace]

talks to restart, the peace spoilers and saboteurs would also have a longer time to sabotage the process," noted Zarate, a stalwart of the leftist Makabayan bloc. (With reports from Antonio L. Colina IV and Ellison A. Quismorio)

Du30 brings peace talks to 'bigger table'

By Mario Mallari

Eyeing the bigger "peace table" to chart the country's future with no rebels challenging the government, President Rodrigo Duterte wants to engage the public for support of peace negotiations with the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

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Presidential Adviser on Peace Process Secretary Jesus Dureza revealed yesterday the President's plan for a more proactive involvement of the public in citing the temporary postponement of the peace talks which are supposedly to start on June 28.

Both parties have also agreed to a ceasefire on armed hostilities on June 21. But Dureza said the June 21 and June 28 schedules will no longer take place.

He said the decision was

relayed during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting.

He said the NDF side, members of the backchannel team and the Norwegian facilitators have been informed of the decision to reset the talks for later.

"President Rodrigo Duterte instructed us last night to engage our bigger 'peace table' - the general public, as well as other sectors in government - as we work to negotiate peace with the communist rebels," Dureza said.

Dureza explained the success of the peace negotiations with

the NDF will depend on the broad support of the general public.

Dureza cited the ongoing public dialogues and consultations on the talks between government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) on the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"The government peace panel, in cooperation with the private sector, will continue efforts to engage those who earnestly seek peace," Dureza said.

"It's not like we're only going to engage the other table - which is the rebel group - and then ig-

nore the bigger table. If it is not supported by the public, nothing will happen," Dureza said.

"We have to go and listen to the public," he added. The presidential peace adviser also emphasized the urgent need to ensure government will not falter in its attempt to end the five-decades old protracted war by the Maoists.

"Just, sustainable and lasting peace will happen only when our people understand and support these efforts," he pointed out.

Before the suspension of talks, the GRP panel was already con-

ducting consultations and town hall briefings with the youth, members of the police and the military and other organizations.

The GRP-NDF peace panels reached the fourth round of talks since the resumption of the negotiations in 2016.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday expressed full support to President Duterte's decision.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman, said while the 130,000-strong military is supportive of the government peace

initiatives, it respects the Commander-in-Chief's decision for more consultations.

"The AFP is one with the nation in earnestly yearning for a lasting peace in our land," Arevalo said.

"It is for this reason that we support the desire of our Commander-in-Chief to afford more time for consultation with the public." Meanwhile, the AFP shall continue to perform its mandate to protect the people, ensure the peace and the territorial integrity of the country," Arevalo said.

Rebels' safety pass expires

Govt urges they turn themselves in as sign of good faith or be hunted down

By Joyce Pangco Pañares

THE safety and immunity guarantees extended to five jailed communist leaders no longer stands with the government poised to ask a Manila regional trial court to revoke their release order following President Rodrigo Duterte's decision to postpone the resumption of formal peace talks in Oslo.

The five communist leaders—Communist Party of the Philippines chairman Benito Tiamzon, Adelberto Silva, Rafael Baylosis, Randall Echanis and Vicente Ladlad—were earlier allowed to travel abroad to participate in the negotiations as consultants of the National Democratic Front.

“Since the peace talks were deferred upon orders of the President, the basis for the court order [for their release] no longer exists and the prosecution will consequently move for the revocation of said orders,” Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra told *Manila Standard*.

“The NDF consultants should thus present themselves to the courts for proper disposition as a sign of good faith,” Guevarra added.

A well-placed source earlier revealed that Tiamzon and Baylosis, in particular, appeared to have already gone underground.

In a separate interview, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said Tiamzon and his colleagues must turn themselves immediately “as a gesture of good faith and for them to continue to enjoy safety and immunity guarantees in the future” when the peace negotiations resume.

Philippine National Police chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Albayalde, for his

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Rebels'...

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part, said it will be "problematic" if the communist leaders refuse to present themselves before the Manila court.

"If they do that, not only the PNP but the Armed Forces of the Philippines as well are ready to hunt them down again," Albayalde said.

President Duterte announced his decision to scrap the resumption of formal negotiations with the CPP-NDF during Wednesday evening's Joint Armed Forces of the Philippines-Philippine National Police Command Conference in Malacañang.

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza said the postponement will allow government to engage a "bigger peace table" to include the public and other sectors in government.

But CPP founding chairman and NDF chief political consultant Jose Ma. Sison rejected Dureza's official explanation as "bullshit."

"The resetting of the planned peace talks is exactly for the purpose of protecting the gains achieved in the back-channel talks prior to formal resumption of peace negotiations. History teaches of many peace deals that suffered setbacks due to the lack of public support and this is precisely why we have decided to engage the public and have consultations with various sectors to protect those gains," Dureza said in a statement released on Friday.

"Getting public support and goodwill even while still in the course of peace negotiations is truly indispensable. Suddenly springing finished peace agreements upon a public who have been kept in the dark during the negotiations can certainly undermine those efforts," Dureza added.

A well-placed source who was privy to the command conference said Duterte reached the decision to "reset" the peace talks following Sison's several

pronouncements on the timetable of the negotiations.

"The President reviewed the recent statements of Joma because it was Joma who was announcing that there will be a week-long 'stand down order' between the NDF and the government that will begin on June 21 and that the formal peace talks will resume on June 28. Is he the spokesman of the government?" the source said.

Sison, however, insisted that the June 21 and June 28 dates that he announced in the media were contained in written agreements signed by government chief negotiator Silvestre Bello III and NDF chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili on June 9 and 10.

A member of the leftist Makabayan bloc in the House raised suspicions that "saboteurs" were interfering in the peace talks between the government and the NDF.

"I think that the issues raised by Secretary Dureza can be addressed at the same time that the peace talks are ongoing. They should not be used as stumbling blocks or preconditions for the resumption of the negotiations," Bayan Muna Party-list Rep. Carlos Zarate said.

"The longer it takes for the talks to restart, the peace spoilers and saboteurs would also have a longer time to sabotage the process," Zarate said.

Zarate, a Mindanaoan, said the Filipino people have long been hungry for peace.

"The Filipino people have long supported the peace talks for a just and lasting peace. Indeed, addressing the root causes of the armed conflict like landlessness, oppression and exploitation, among others, will certainly get the continued support of the majority of Filipinos," Zarate said.

"Resume the talks now. It is only those who benefit and profit from the current inequitable and unjust system will not support the peace talks and will do all they can to sabotage it," he added.

With Marical V. Cruz

IS harasses marsh fishermen

Army operations drive away terrorists, including Indonesians, who stopped fishing in parts of Liguasan

By Edwin O. Fernandez
@inqmindanao

CAMP SIONGCO, MAGUINDANAO—The military operation against Islamic State (IS) followers operating in Liguasan Marsh had freed fishing areas from the control of terrorists, including foreigners, according to the military.

The operation, which killed at least 23 of the gunmen, was prompted by pleas for help from fishermen who reported being driven away at gunpoint from the marsh by IS gunmen.

One of them was a fisherman who identified himself on-

ly as Jamadel, 40, who said he and his fellow fishermen were unable to fish for months in the SK Pendatun portion of the marsh because terrorists had been driving them away.

Different tormentor

"We're like the Filipino fishermen turned away from the West Philippine Sea," Jamadel said.

"This time, not by the Chinese but by Indonesians," Jamadel told reporters here on Friday.

He said he and his sons tried to catch fish in an area in the marsh near their village of Midpandacan but "there were Indong-Indong (Indonesian) armed

men who did not want us there."

"Me and the other local fishermen are angry," Jamadel said. "Our livelihood depended on catching fish," he added.

Fishermen usually catch mudfish and catfish in Liguasan Marsh, which has an area of at least 220,000 square kilometers that straddles 29 towns in two provinces—Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Suspicion confirmed

So what Jamadel and the other fishermen did was report to the military about the presence of the gunmen, some of whom were foreigners.

Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, head of the 33rd Infantry Battalion, said the fishermen's and residents' accounts confirmed military suspicion that the group, led by local terror leader Esmail Abdulmalik, had been harboring foreign terrorists.

Abdulmalik, also known as Abu Toraiife, bolted Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) along with another local terror leader, Esmail Abubakar, alias Commander Bungos, to pledge allegiance to IS, the military said.

The BIFF is a group of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas who split from MILF over disagreements on peace

talks with the government.

The BIFF had been insisting on a separate Islamic state, not just an autonomous region for Muslims, in Mindanao.

IS camp destroyed

Cabunoc said the military, prompted by the fishermen's reports, launched massive operations starting on June 10 that saw an IS camp in Liguasan destroyed by aerial strikes and artillery fire.

Cabunoc said the destruction of the IS camp and bomb-making facility had elated fishermen like Jamadel.

"They are now free to do what they used to do—fish in the

vast Liguasan," Cabunoc said.

"The gunmen had been making life difficult for fishermen when they were prevented from fishing in the area," Cabunoc said.

He said a soldier paid dearly with his life to make sure that fishermen in the Liguasan area were not harassed by terrorists.

Cabunoc said the military continued to hunt the remaining IS gunmen to prevent their return to the marsh and to protect fishermen.

"We have three enemies here—armed men, mosquitoes and man-eating crocodiles that abound in the area," he said. INQ

Eid'l Fitr: Duterte wants peace, Leni pushes BBL

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Friday joined the nation in marking the end of Eid'l Fitr (Feast of Ramadan), imploring Filipinos to unite in attaining "long-lasting peace" in the country, especially in Mindanao.

Vice President Maria Leonor "Leni" Robredo, on the other hand, renewed her

call for passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law at the end of Ramadan, saying approval of the BBL is a fitting recognition of the selflessness of the country's minority Muslim population.

In his Eid'l Fitr message, Duterte expressed hope that this year's celebration would inspire all members of the Filipino

Muslim community to "foster greater unity" in working toward peace and development in the country.

"I join our Muslim brothers and sisters as they mark the end of Ramadan and reaffirm their commitment to self-purification and jubilation... In the name of Allah, the

➤ **BBL A2**

■ BBL FROM A1

Eid' l Fitr

Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, may the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you all on the occasion of Eid' l Fitr," he said.

"This is in an opportune time to reflect on the progress we have made to achieve long-lasting peace across the country, especially in Mindanao. May this revered festival inspire us all to foster greater unity amid our differences in faith and culture," the President added.

Duterte said Filipino Muslims should thank Allah "for providing our nation the strength to endure the challenges of misguided ideologies, terrorism and violent extremism."

"I trust that the sacrifice of Muslim Filipinos during their month-long fasting has rekindled their faith and reawakened their sense of benevolence and empathy toward their fellowmen," the President added.

According to the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, the Eid' l Fitr, a three-day feast, includes a gathering of family and friends to pray and eat together.

Muslims put on their finest clothes for the celebration and some exchange gifts.

The commission said Eid' l Fitr is meant to celebrate happiness for completing a month-long abstinence from eating and drinking between dawn and sunset for Ramadan, one of the five pillars of Islam.

During Ramadan, Muslims are also required to increase their offering of prayers and recitation of the Koran.

In battling for the passage of the BBL, the Vice President, in a statement, said, "We hope that the Bangsamoro Basic Law will soon be passed, in a form that adequately reflects the hopes and dreams of our dear Bangsamoro brothers and sisters, to end their long-drawn suffering and fulfill their desire for lasting peace."

The proposed BBL abolishes the existing Autonomous Region in

Muslim Mindanao and replaces it with the Bangsamoro Region.

"The value of sacrifice for the good of others is one of the foundations of Islam. For one whole month, Muslims all over the world abstain from worldly pleasures and, instead, feed and clothe the poor. In the process, they renew their faith and show their commitment to service in the name of Allah. In the past year, we have seen first-hand, how our Muslim brothers and sisters were willing to sacrifice their own well being to help people in need," Robredo said.

"Many of our Muslim countrymen were willing to give food to those who had none to eat, to give shelter to those who had lost their homes, and to give comfort to those who were in despair in the midst of the crisis in Marawi. These were examples of selflessness that the rest of us Filipinos would do well to emulate," she added.

Robredo was referring to the Marawi siege wherein the terrorist Maute group violently took over the Islamic City from May

to October last year, leaving over 100 people dead and P53 billion worth of damaged property and livelihood.

In marking the end of the Feast of Ramadan, the chief of the military's Zamboanga-based Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) also on Friday said soldiers, sailors and airmen, Muslims and Christians, commit to serve and support efforts of all peace-loving institutions and assist in realization of the Bangsamoro dream of a peaceful and progressive Mindanao.

Lt. Gen. Arnel de la Vega, WestMinCom chief, in his message, said: "May the true message of Eid' l Fitr unite us as brothers and sisters under one flag and under one nation."

De la Vega said the military was praying that the country's security forces would show more compassion, religious tolerance, cultural sensitivity and cooperation for a peaceful society.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE
LLANESCA T. PANTI AND
DEMPSEY REYES

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PRRD calls for unity amid differences as Ramadan ends

By GENALYN D. KABILING

In observance of Eid'l Fitr or the end of the Ramadan feast, President Duterte has called for national unity and acts of charity despite the people's differences

in faith and culture.

The President recognized Eid'l Fitr as a time to reflect on the country's peace initiatives and take further steps to promote a "progressive and tolerant" future.

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PRRD calls for...

"This is in an opportune time to reflect on the progress we have made to achieve long-lasting peace across the country, especially in Mindanao. May this revered festival inspire us all to foster greater unity amidst our differences in faith and culture," Duterte said in a message on Eid'l Fitr celebration.

"Together, let us engage in acts of charity as we steer our nation towards a more progressive and tolerant future," and hopes "love and understanding" would prevail in the country amid efforts toward the genuine transformation of the Philippines.

In the same message, Duterte said he joins Filipino Muslims who marked the end of Ramadan and reaffirmed their commitment to self-purification and jubilation.

He said the nation collectively observes such event "to praise Allah in thanksgiving for providing our nation the strength to endure the challenges of misguided ideologies, terrorism and violent extremism."

"I trust that the sacrifice of Muslim Filipinos during their month-long fasting has rekindled their faith and

reawakened their sense of benevolence and empathy towards their fellowmen," he said.

Malacañang earlier issued Proclamation No. 514 declaring June 15, Friday, a regular holiday in observance of the Eid'l Fitr.

The holiday declaration was issued upon the recommendation of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos "to bring the religious and culture significance of the Eid'l Fitr to the fore of national consciousness."

Peace

Thousands gathered at the Rizal Park for the morning prayer and to bond with fellow muslims over food to celebrate the joyous occasion. Mohammad Sappari is one of them. For this year, his only wish is peace "so that Muslims will no longer be tagged as terrorists," he said in Filipino.

Like Mohammad, Simak Omar defended Islam as a religion of peace.

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"Islam is a religion, which always supports all humanity, gives charity to all people not only for the Muslims," said Omar who flew to the Philippines from Sudan to study.

Rushdi Rogong, whose family was displaced by the Marawisiege has this to say for those who use Islam to justify violence: "For our brothers waging war in the name of Islam, they are not muslims. Islam is peace-loving people. They do not destroy homes and the children's future."

For his part, Mohammad Mali believes passing the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law will resolve Mindanao conflicts.

"I hope all our revolutionary leaders will come together as one- the MNLF of Chairman Nur Misuari and the MILF under Haji Murad. Even the religious and the Sultanate. Let's give President Duterte a chance and perhaps the BBL will at last bring peace to Mindanao," Mali told Manila Bulletin. (With reports from Ria Fernandez and Hans Amancio)

Muslim leaders call for unity, peace

By ALI O. MACARALAN

COTABATO CITY – Muslim leaders have called for unity with more patience and resilience among their constituents amid the government's renewed drive in bringing lasting peace and growth in conflict-mired Mindanao communities through the enactment of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

Governors Mujiv Hataman of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Esmael Mangudadatu of Maguindanao made their respective appeals in statements issued few hours before the regional Darul Ifta (Islamic House of Opinion) announced Thursday night the sighting in Tawi-Tawi of the new moon signaling the end of Ramadhan and the conduct Friday morning of Eid'l Fitr congregational prayers.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte had declared Friday, June 15, as a regular holiday nationwide for Muslim Filipinos to have time in holding rituals for Eid'l Fitr, one of two important feasts in Islam. The other is Eid'l Adha, which marks the end of the yearly hajj (pilgrimage) to Makkah in Saudi Arabia.

More than four million of Muslim Filipinos are concentrated in ARMM, an autonomous region covering Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi provinces and the cities of Marawi and Lamitan.

Under the BBL, ARMM will be replaced by a new autonomous entity called Bangsamoro.

The proposed BBL was recently approved by both Houses of Congress, and is set for refinement in a bicameral conference before it is submitted for signature by the President in time for his July 23 State-of-the-Nation Address.

In his Eid'l Fitr message, Hataman said: "We rise today in jubilation and gratitude to Allah, who gave us the strength to overcome (trials), and remain righteous as we did. By His boundless benevolence, we (must) find

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solidarity... in greater purpose and resolve."

"I join the Bangsamoro, the people of ARMM, and the rest of the Filipino nation in celebrating Eid'1 Fitr. We extend our greetings to all peoples of goodwill as the blessed month of Ramadan comes to a close," he said.

"Our (Ramadhan) fast embodies the many choices we are faced with in this world: We are taught, at every moment, to submit to the will of Allah; to side with what is kind, just, and good; to cleanse ourselves of negativity; and finally, to emerge from every challenge with peace in our hearts and greater clarity of purpose," Hataman added.

Amid conflicting reactions on the recent BBL passage, Hataman urged his constituents to "move forward, truly united, as the Bangsamoro narrative unfolds."

Mangudadatu, for his part, appealed to his more than one million constituents to "remain resilient in our quest for a community worthy of peaceful and productive coexistence amid incessant man-made and natural trials."

"Let's sustain throughout our lifetime the teachings of Islam we learn in Ramadhan. Ideal virtues like patience, piety, conciliatory, utmost concern for fellow mankind, and strong faith

in God, among many others, should always guide us until our last breath," said Mangudadatu, who just completed umrah (minor hajj) late last week.

In his latest solemn umrah prayers in the holy lands of Saudi Arabia, Mangudadatu said, he and his children prayed fervently for "enlightenment of all Muslims to abide by the true essence of Islam and avoid radical beliefs that often redound to violent actions."

Hataman and Mangudadatu said they would host Eid'1 Fitr congregational prayers and thanksgivings at the ARMM compound here and in Buluan, Maguindanao, respectively.

MARANAOS WISH FOR SUSTAINED PEACEFUL WAY OF LIFE

MARAWI CITY: Thousands of people gathered at the ground of Mindanao State University main campus here for the 7:30 a.m. prayer on Friday for thanksgiving and wish for sustained peace as they celebrate the end of Ramadhan or the Eid'l Fitr.

"Eid Mubarak" is a greeting given to any Muslim who celebrates the feast of the last day of

Ramadhan.

Religious leaders, local officials, students, men, women and youth all joined in an act of unity that Salic Ibrahim, Maranao People Development Center, Inc., chief executive officer calls, "a day of healing, prayer and thanksgiving for a peaceful Ramadhan."

The Sultan of Tugaya Ashary Ma-

ongco said "our celebration of Ramadhan this year compared to last year has led us to realize that more than anything else, what Maranaos need today is a sustained peaceful life which Allah has given us."

Last year's Ramadhan was characterized by an armed conflict between the military and the Islamic State-inspired Maute ter-

rorist group. The five-month war in Marawi in May, the height of Ramadhan, led to the devastation of the Maranaos' homes.

Imam Khair Romapa, a religious leader, said "the violent conflict that happens during Ramadhan is one of the most painful events that a Muslim can experience and we hope what happened in Marawi

last year will not happen again."

Marawi still faces the challenge of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The national government has pledged to begin the crucial step of a full reconstruction this year.

Mayor Majul Gandamra expressed the hope of the Maranaos for the national government to pursue its plan to give the Ma-

ranaos a chance to fully recover from the embers of last year's war.

This year's peaceful observance of Ramadhan and the celebration of Eid'l Fitr is a sign that all will be well in the years to come. We still await the full support of the national government so that everyone can really move forward," he said.

TED KHAN R. JUANITE
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Eid Kabalu joins move for revolutionary govt

GERONA, Tarlac Former Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) spokesman Eid Kabalu joined the move for a revolutionary government being pushed by multi-sectoral coalitions.

Kabalu recently participated in the Luzon convergence of the "Rebolusyong Duterte for a Revolutionary Government" (#ReboDu304Revogo) of its partner organizations from different regions as well as those from Visayas and Mindanao.

"I am throwing my support to this move. It's about time that we remove the things that hamper development like red tape and too much bureaucratic processes

that President Rodrigo Duterte is resolving," Kabalu said.

He added that Duterte's drive against corruption is a vehicle to liberate Filipinos from the bondage of poverty and that he and his organization believe it is the way to achieve development.

"On our part, this is a way of letting the president freely do his political promises of change for the country," he added.

The convergence was the second wave of actions to form a common group into a quasi-military organization or people's militia to put an end to selfish regimes. It is led by the Filipino Guardians with 300 member

organizations.

Bishop Nilo Tayag, #ReboDu304Revogo chairman, said these regimes are controlled by the ilustrado and oligarchs who conspire with pseudo-patriotic leaders.

He said people have been robbed, plundered and kept in extreme poverty and ignorance from the time of [Emilio] Aguinaldo to [Benigno] Aquino 3rd, for a period of 119 years under what the group described as the "Tejeros Syndrome."

"This comes only once in a lifetime, a century in the making, and we have to take advantage of this opportunity to transform our society from its present state

of deterioration, degeneration, disintegration and possible demise," he said.

The multi-sectoral group aims to help the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, the National Bureau of Investigation, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency and other government agencies carry out the all-out war against illegal drugs, graft and corruption and criminality, as well as those carrying out the 10-Point Socio-Economic Program and Ambisyon 2040 of the Duterte administration, to advance the interests of the masses.

JERRY HERNANDEZ

Daddy

HIGH BLOOD

ANA CELIA A. VER-PAPA

When Daddy died in 1995, we his children put together our fondest recollections of him.

From Marcia, the oldest: "His support for each of his seven children was unique; each of us has a story to tell... and he was always there to pull us together whenever we almost fell apart."

In countless lighter moments, he was always there, too. He fetched us from school when we had no bus service. Until her college days, Marcia would wait for him even if home was very near, because "I guess I just loved his company." Likewise, Francis opted to wait for Daddy to fetch him, Eric and Tony from elementary school.

One day, as it was getting late, Eric and Tony decided to walk home while Francis stayed put. The two younger boys had reached University Avenue when a UP Ikot jeep stopped beside them. Daddy, his ride having broken down, had hired the jeep so he could look for them.

Daddy, as an army captain then, would bring the boys with him to Fort Bonifacio whenever he was the duty officer. They partook of fish from the then clean creeks, and fresh vegetables grown by his men. He also took them on certain trips out of town.

For Mariedel, our sixth, it was always Daddy bringing her to the doctor for check-ups. As a young lady, she would at times substitute for Mommy during Daddy's social functions. In one of these, a young military officer started courting her. Until they got married, Daddy kept a sharp eye on his youngest daughter.

Doy, our youngest, continued to sleep with Daddy and Mommy even when he

was already a big boy. One very sweet remembrance I have is seeing all three of them asleep. Doy squeezed between each parent. They had one arm each across his body, while their hands were clasped.

When Doy started working and Daddy was already retired, he would drive his son from our house to Timog Avenue, where the latter took another ride to the Department of Foreign Affairs. He is now ambassador to Bahrain.

Daddy did not prevent his children or our mother, a teacher in UP Diliman, from joining protest actions in those days leading to martial law. As I stepped down the bus from that huge, rain-drenched rally in Caloocan in 1972, Daddy was at the bus stop, anxious and furious, not because I went to the rally but because I took the wrong ride back while my fellow marcher friends had long arrived safely in their homes.

Later, I married an activist who had been imprisoned for almost two years during the martial law era. Daddy fully respected him and what he stood for. Once, when some "comrades" came to visit, he happened to peep into our apartment beside the main house. Sensing the "serious" discussion, he stepped back with his handsome smile and remarked, "*hinay-hinay lang, take it easy.*"

As he neared his end, despite his semi-conscious state, Daddy responded to

Marcia's recitation of the rosary by his side. And, to her great surprise, he recited the Memorare to the Blessed Mother almost in its entirety.

During the necrological service, Daddy's colleagues were very generous in their eulogy. Brig. Gen. Simeon B. Ver, a civil engineer, had retired as commander of the 51st Engineering Brigade for Luzon and Visayas, based in Camp Lt. Gen. Rigoberto J. Atienza, Libis, Quezon City. Then Col. Florentino Buenaventura said Daddy upheld unity, solidarity and cooperation in the ranks. Public officials sought his advice; he was readily available to those who sought his help.

Then Col. Nicetas Pareña focused on how Daddy "saw to it that every centavo of Juan dela Cruz should not go to waste... with utmost honesty and frugality... equipment, tools, vehicles were fully used."

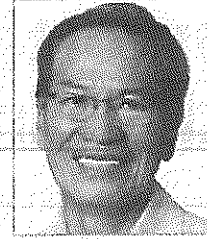
The late Gen. Gerardo dela Cuesta related how then Colonel Ver had led Task Force Bayanhan in constructing 850 schoolhouses to replace those destroyed by Typhoon "Yoling" in 1970, in Ilocos Norte, Cagayan, Isabela, Pampanga, Bulacan, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon. The task force completed its mission well and on time, "to the satisfaction of the fastidious building inspectors of the USAID." Still, there was enough money left to build decent quarters for the brigade's men fielded to Northern Luzon.

A relative, Max Edralin, said: "This man had integrity and this has to be acknowledged, because it is rare in this day and age."

Ana Celia A. Ver-Papa, 64, is the second child of the late Brig. Gen. Simeon B. Ver.

AT GROUND LEVEL

SATUR C. OCAMPO



Duterte: Delay peace talks, 'engage' the public first

In April, President Duterte called for resuming the GRP-NDFP peace talks he had arbitrarily "terminated" in November. Saying it's the "last chance" for achieving peace with the Left revolutionary movement, he gave the two sides 60 days to undertake informal/backchannel discussions to pave the ground for the fifth round of formal negotiations, which he had twice cancelled as these were about to start.

Yet after the two sides had agreed to resume the formal negotiations this coming June 28-30 and begin a "stand-down (stay where you are)" ceasefire on June 21 as a mutual goodwill measure, Duterte ordered the negotiations postponed indefinitely. Why?

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza, in a press briefing at Malacanang on Thursday, explained: "To achieve a conducive environment for peace, President Duterte instructed us to engage our bigger table, the general public, as well as other sectors in government. Consequently, the initial timeline that our backchannel team had worked on with their counterpart CPP-NDFP across the table has to be necessarily adjusted."

Furthermore, he said: "For our peace talks to succeed, it should have good support from the general public. Hence, it is necessary that all efforts be exerted to inform and engage them in the same way the government engages the rebels [to] address the root causes of the conflict."

Dureza's statements instantly raises the question: "In what manner, and for how long, will the government engage the general public - 'in the same way [it] engages the rebels' - in addressing the root causes of the armed conflict which has run for almost 50 years?" "Addressing the root causes of the armed conflict" has been the operative guideline for the GRP-NDFP peace

talks since 1986-87.

Another question: "Why is it only now that the Duterte government wants to 'inform and engage' the public in the peace talks?"

It needs pointing out that, in the course of the negotiations particularly on the second agenda of social and economic reforms, both the NDFFP and the GRP had conducted public consultations, eliciting inputs from the people on the key issues, such as agrarian reform and rural development and national industrialization and economic development. There were many instances where speakers from both sides had been invited in public forums to present their respective proposals, but the GRP often failed to send a representative.

Earlier, Duterte announced the fifth round of formal negotiations would start in July. But now he has asked for "more time" to study the matter, after receiving the report of his negotiators on the results of the informal/backchannel discussions on June 5-10.

Jose Ma. Sison, NDFFP panel chief political consultant, couldn't hold back his "disappointment and frustration" over what he called Duterte's "unilateral cancellation" of both the start of the stand-down ceasefire and the formal negotiations. "The written agreements pertaining to the aforesaid scheduled events," he said, have been signed by the respective chairpersons of the GRP and the NDFFP negotiating panels and witnessed by the Royal Norwegian Government [RNG] special envoy, Ambassador Idun Tvedt on June 9." Sison urged the two panels to release the signed agreements to the public and the press.

"It is starkly clear that the GRP under Duterte is not interested in serious peace negotiations with the NDFFP," Sison said. It is interested, he

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added, "vainly in obtaining the NDFP capitulation under the guise of an indefinite ceasefire agreement." Referring to Duterte's repeatedly intimating he wanted the peace talks held in the Philippines, he said the GRP would violate the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantee (JASIG) – which requires formal negotiations in a foreign and neutral venue – [thus] "putting the negotiations under the control and under duress of the emerging fascist dictatorship and its armed minions."

"Because the GRP under Duterte is obviously not interested in serious peace negotiations," Sison declared, "the revolutionary forces and the people have no choice but to singlemindedly wage people's war to achieve the national and social liberation of the Filipino people."

While calling the postponement a "setback" in the progress of the peace talks, Fidel V. Agcaoili, head of the NDFP peace panel, said the GRP panel had apprised him of Duterte's decision ahead of Dureza's announcement. Moreover, he added, the GRP will send a negotiating team this weekend to the Netherlands to explain the basis of the postponement and discuss the "adjustments" to the schedule to the NDFP panel, with the presence of the Norwegian third-party facilitator.

Looking back at how the peace negotiations under the Duterte regime proceeded apace in the first three rounds of formal negotiations – from August 2016 to January 2017 – one will note that the disruptions, initiated by the GRP, began after the two panels' reciprocal working committees on social and economic reforms (RWC-SER) arrived at a positive convergence point on agrarian reform.

In the third round of formal negotiations (January 2017), the RWC-SERs agreed in principle on the distribution

of lands to farmer and farm-worker beneficiaries, free of charge. Then in the fourth round (April 2017), they "firmed up their agreement on distribution of land for free as the basic principle of genuine agrarian reform." In bilateral meetings, the RWC-SERs further came closer and closer to consensus on other aspects of agrarian reform and rural development, as well as on certain aspects of national industrialization and economic development.

Julieta de Lima, NDFP panel member and chair of its RWC-SER, decried the scuttling of the peace talks in November. It came at a time, she said, "*when unprecedented advances have already been achieved in forging agreements on urgently needed social and economic reforms to alleviate mass poverty and resolve the roots of the armed conflict.*"

The GRP panel shared the same sentiment. When Duterte first cancelled the peace talks in February 2017, Dureza (who sat in all the formal negotiations) issued a statement calling the cancellation as "*unfortunate to the building of good relations we have with the CPP/NPA/NDFP.*" Then in November when Duterte issued Proclamation 360 "terminating" the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Dureza again issued an official statement saying: "*This is an unfortunate development in our work for peace. Never before have we all reached this far in our negotiations with the CPP/NPA/NDFP.*"

Now we can ask: If the peace negotiations were moving ahead with that highly positive note, as acknowledged by both sides, why should the Duterte government now claim they cannot be resumed without "going to the people first"?

* * *
Email: satur.ocampo@gmail.com

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SS

SEARCH FOR TRUTH

ERNESTO P. MACEDA, Jr.

Heckle and Jekyll

Our President was heckled on Independence Day. His long line of predecessors all faced this baptism of literal in your face criticism, some more gamely than others – the ultimate exercise of free speech and petitioning the government.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is ok with criticism. A cool customer, he welcomed the commentary and recognized their right. Recall that he even braved the protesters' stage at the 2017 State of the Nation Address. But the Kawit hecklers were arrested anyway. In this, the Duterte administration has proven no different than Aquino III.

There is an elaborate public forum analysis in disputes involving freedom of expression at events. There is treatment variance in the spectrum of private to public. The legality of time, place and manner regulation depends on the character of the forum. In PRRD's case, the Kawit balcony of the Aguinaldo shrine is part of a public museum and its frontage, a freedom park. It turns out, the maximum tolerance he benevolently assured was the applicable rule, after all.

Hecklers tend to forget that their target has the equal freedom to speak. There is no automatic freedom to hijack a speaker's space.

But liability for arrest really depends on how much of a disorder was created. In Kawit, there was hardly any. The local police should heed the President's message of leniency. Pursuing the case shows weakness, not strength.

None are so blind as those who refuse to see. One week from the time Delfin Lorenzana, Secretary of National Defense (SND) publicly disavowed the criminality that PRRD himself acknowledged to exist, we have seen a priest gunned down, a judge murdered, etc., etc., etc. This week's public statement from the SND on the West Philippine Sea (WPS) is a continuing question mark on his department's intelligence capabilities.

The temptation to assign blame is one that even military men are not immune to. There must be as many interpretations of Honor Codes as there are soldiers. But, suspending the disbelief in seeing this fighting man mouth appeasement scripts, we are surprised at: (1) his public indictment of the WPS situation being mismanaged; and (2) his claim that we should be happy with more tourists, trade and fish. Were it not for his highly visible face to face with Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jian Hua at Kawit, we would be forgiven for believing that he is thankful that China, in it's goodwill, allowed us to fish.

It wasn't always like this. SND's public persona has usually been on that side of valor. He has had his mo-

ments: the visit to Pag-asa (Thitu) in Kalayaan (Spratlys) island group, oblivious to the threat to his personal safety; Martial law administrator in Marawi; his vocal protest of the Kagitingan (fiery cross reef) militarization. In this last caper he was even publicly corrected by Secretary Herminio Roque and gently reminded that he is SND and not Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

It is when he moves from National Defense to Press Secretary that SND finds trouble. Defending a country is not easy but neither is defending unpopular policies.

Happy with crumbs? Former Senate President Frank Drilon handily trotted out the statistics that SND could have had in hand while espousing the *crumbs* justification. Vietnam has been defiant at no economic cost for its audacity. With respect to China, Vietnam's trade, FDI and tourism figures dwarf our numbers. Here we are, swallowing the bitter pill with nothing to show for it but sour faces.

Foreign policy should serve the national interest. When it doesn't, it becomes the duty of our elected Senators to point this out, weighing short term political and economic gains against long term consequences. We are thankful that some national leaders like Senator Drilon have not abdicated their duties in this regard.

He hates drugs, whiffs and ... priests. It is not only the religious who are violated when attacks are heaped on men of the cloth. Priests represent the best of us, apart from being representatives of the higher power they symbolize. It's not easy to become a priest. Apart from the self limiting vows, it takes a longer time to matriculate. Typically, five to six years after college. Doctors and lawyers are the only other professions given that elevated stature – owing to their vows to learning. You assault them and you assault the values of charity, compassion and excellence they represent. *CJ*

Bullying the pulpit. PRRD immediately condemned the killings of the Catholic priests in Nueva Ecija and Cagayan. But his inner Jekyll could not let go of an abiding abhorrence of the clergy. Recall that even "the Kiss" in Seoul came on the heels of his freebie book on church scandals.

Once again, we are seeing an unconventional use to which the prestige of his office is put. The phrase bully pulpit's connotation is that of using the President's high station to inspire or preach lofty ideals. The sort of preaching that we are now seeing is clearly not that.

The Jeffersonian "wall of separation" between Church and State is not just a barrier prohibiting government's support of a religion. It also serves to protect the religious from persecution. The idea is to respect the freedom to choose your religion and practice your faith.

PASSAGES. Alma Maceda Calleja, Pepito Vera Perez, Manuel M. Calanog Jr. Towering figures in the lives of one impressionable young boy and his brothers. Apart from the generous surrogate assistance to our parents, their extraordinary lives served as road maps. They belonged to a generation that bore out the importance of living lives of purpose; how we can be better than ourselves and do more for others. We will never forget you. Tomorrow, Fathers Day, we celebrate this critical role of shepherd that you all so ably performed. If we do not lose our way, it will be because we are guided by the compass of your good examples. When you see him, please greet our Dad for us a Happy Fathers Day.

Panatang is back in the news

PANATAG Shoal – also known locally as Bajo de Masinloc and internationally as Scarborough Shoal – was again in the news, after some Filipino fishermen said that the Chinese Coast Guard had seized the catch of the fishermen last month.

It is located about 230 kilometers west of Zambales, a favorite fishing site for fishermen of various nations over the years. In 2012, it became a flashpoint in Philippines-China relations when Filipino troops attempted to apprehend a Chinese vessel fishing in the area and ships of the two nations faced each other for two months, before President Benigno S. Aquino III ordered the withdrawal of the Philippine ships to end the standoff. But the Chinese ships remained -- to this day.

It was this incident which prompted the Philippines to file a case in 2014 in the Arbitral Court in The Hague which ruled in 2016 rejecting China's claims to most of the South China Sea. As for Panatang, the court ruled that it has always been a traditional fishing ground for fishermen from various nations – Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc. – and should remain so.

Last Monday, demonstrating Filipino fishermen at the Chinese consulate in Makati held a placard of protest saying, "I can't fish in our own seas." Panatang is not Philippine territory but it is within the 300-kilometer Exclusive Economic Zone under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) whose resources we have a right to develop and exploit.

However, since Panatang has always been a traditional fishing area for fishermen of many nations, the Arbitral Court ruled that it should remain so.

Against all these points, however, is China's claim to sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, as defined by a nine-dash loop curving south from China close to Vietnam's coastline, down to the sea off Malaysia and Borneo, up the western coasts of the various Philippine islands, on to the north, including Taiwan. In China's view, the South China Sea is Chinese territory.

There have long been fears that China would build Panatang Shoal into an island complete with runways and a military base, like the ones it built in the Paracels near Vietnam and in the Spratlys west of Palawan. Panatang would be its outpost marking the easternmost boundary of the territory China claims.

We have the UNCLOS on our side, along with the Arbitral Court ruling. But as long as China maintains its claim of sovereignty over most of the South China Sea, the problem of Panatang and all the other islands in the vast resource-rich area will keep cropping up.

President Duterte, ever the realist, has opted for a policy of cooperation with China, which has already agreed to extend so much assistance to the Philippines in many ways. We can only hope that people of goodwill on both sides will continue to prevail and avoid making Panatang a cause of bloody confrontation.

The 'war' for the West Philippine Sea



POWER POINT
ELIZABETH ANGSIOCO

I YIELD my space to activist, chef and writer Giney Villar. This piece that she wrote after attending a lecture of former Solicitor General Florin Hilbay (which had her all riled up) in my opinion, deserves to be read by more people.

"Two years ago, the arbitral tribunal under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea [Unclos] decided in our favor on the case we filed against China over incursions in our territorial waters. This is a fact, and not an opinion. The ruling gives the Philippines a concrete foundation by which to assert our right to our territorial and exclusive economic zones worth trillions of dollars with its rich natural gas and marine resources.

While we won the case, it is still imperative to protect our territories because the ruling has no implementing mechanism. China knows this and has taken full advantage of this gap to continue, and even make more aggressive its incursion into our territories. Thus, it is up to us to uphold that victory by finding ways to enforce it. It is, after all, not merely a matter of a few islands and rocks, but a matter of sovereignty.

Our victory should have inspired our government to vigorously protect our territories. This victory has provided us with strong moral and legal grounds to act against any violation by any claimant country. Instead, our government has chosen to downplay the ruling's importance—touting war as the only consequence of standing our ground against China.

War, even for a rich and powerful country is not always a first option because it entails significant economic and related costs. War also does not seem to be necessary at this point, as our government action (and inaction) does not really give China a reason to rattle its spears. From publicly saying that we should deal with China in "meek and humble" ways, to calling the West Philippine Sea "disputed waters" despite a clear ruling in our favor, to secret personal meetings rather than official actions.

There is also the rapid militarization in the last two years of three out of seven reefs seized from the Philippines since 2002, the destruction of our coral reefs and harassment of our fisherfolk. This administration has tried to prove its case by saying that China will provide us with grants and loans, lauding China for "allowing" our fisherfolk to fish in "relevant" waters, and announcing a "suitable legal framework" for offshore oil and gas exploration that does not appear to take into

context the sovereignty issues over Philippine territories.

It is unthinkable that an independent country, that has won its case will turn back from its victory and go as far as defending China in subverting its own sovereignty. The Philippines already stands on a bedrock of fact from which it can take diplomatic action. And China, despite its alleged refusal to take part in the arbitration process, remains a member of Unclos. As a member, China is bound by its rules—one of which is that all members must submit themselves and abide by all arbitration decisions. Thus, there is no logical reason for our government's subservient stance vis-à-vis China. The burden to

As

The 'war'...

From A4

heed the ruling is squarely on China's shoulders.

The threat of war appears to be a strategy by this administration to sow fear in our hearts. It wants us to believe that resistance is futile—that it is either we die, or we accept the inevitability of Chinese "occupation."

Is war inevitable if we decide as a country to fight for our sovereignty? Not if we choose to hold a vision of independence and sovereignty, and challenge this situation strategically.

The government should continue to invoke our legal claim to our territories using the arbitral ruling by firing off diplomatic protests and cases for violations committed by China. Recently, Acting Chief Justice Carpio noted that Chinese occupation of Woody Island, puts at risk 80 percent of our exclusive economic zone. Diplomatic protests will provide documentation of our resistance to Chinese expansionist moves, and demonstrate to the international community that we are faithfully upholding the ruling in our favor. Government inaction on the contrary, can be used as proof that we waive our rights under the ruling.

The Philippines must find ways to avoid fighting a battle from a disadvantaged position. Revisiting our formal and informal agreements and alliances with partners and neighbors can be employed to pressure China to abide by the tribunal decision, or at the very least slow them down. It cannot be overemphasized that whatever happens in West Philippine Sea will affect the fulcrum of the world's economic and military powers in the future.

As a country, we have gone through so much. We continue to question our identity, highlight our differences and

divide ourselves along those lines. Here we are at the precipice overlooking a landscape that will change our lives in ways unimaginable if we allow it. This government can use this threat to our sovereignty, and turn it into an opportunity to rally our citizens under one flag.

It is unfortunate that we have missed out on building our military and economic might through the years, but we cannot and should not be held back by this. We still have a powerful arsenal composed of a legal and recognized claim to our territories and lessons we must now quickly parlay into a clear vision, policies and action.

We used to be the envy of our Asian neighbors, sadly most of them have surpassed us in economic and military might (even Vietnam which until the mid-70s had been at war), I will not begrudge our citizens for this. We had a very different context. Our archipelagic landscape had proven to be both a blessing and challenge.

Here, in a very unusual way, we are presented with an opportunity to show our courage and leadership in Asia. An opportunity to also show ourselves that we know what to do with the freedom we enjoy. To overcome, we can take inspiration from former Solicitor General Florin Hilbay who said, "think long term and match the vision of the opponent." China has lain in wait for decades to execute their vision. We know that now, and it is a lesson we can take well to heart.

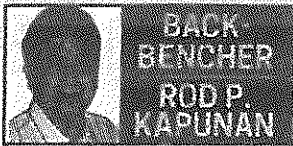
We have a duty to demand that our government defend our country. And it is our responsibility to be relentless. We owe it to ourselves, our heroes who fought for our freedom, and our future generations.

We should avert war at all cost, but to keep the peace we have to fight."

@bethangsiaco on Twitter Elizabeth Angsiaco on Facebook

AB

The Bangsamoro Basic Law experiment



THE approval by Congress of the Bangsamoro Basic Law is more of an experiment than a milestone. Muslims in Central Mindanao have long aspired for this. Nobody really knows what will happen once it is ratified, whether it will satisfy or run short of everybody's expectations. Right now, the government is hoping that its enactment will finally bring about peace and prosperity in that troubled land.

Some say, and rightly so, that the ap-

proval of the BBL is more of an appeasement to regain the trust of the people in the provinces that will be included as territories in the so-called Bangsamoro Land after that bloody putsch led by those hot-head Maute groups with the aid of the Abu Sayyaf and their foreign adventurers. Maybe the month-long attempt to take hostage the city of Marawi

“ Nobody really knows what will happen. ”

was the dramatization of their frustration to establish a sort of caliphate state in Mindanao.

The defeat of the motley Maute group exposed the truth of just how far they would go in their ambition to create a separate Islamic state. The outcome led to the destruction of the only Muslim-dominated city in the country. The siege proved that many of their own people are unwilling to carry on the brunt of fighting to a cause that revolves only to the unhinged ambition of their leaders mainly operated by their foreign brokers.

The lack of overwhelming support revealed that the issue of being treated

Turn to A5

Editorial

Turuan ng leksiyon ang Kadamay

SABI ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte sa Kadamay members noong nakaraang taon makaraang okupahin ng mga ito ang housing units sa Pandi, Bulacan at iba pang lugar, huwag na nila itong uulitin pa dahil babasokahin niya. Pero umulit muli noong Martes ang mga miyembro ng Kadamay nang pasukin ang housing units sa Rodriguez, Rizal. Nakatiwangwang lang daw kaya dapat ibigay na sa kanila. Karapatan daw nilang magkaroon ng sariling bahay.

Pero nagalit na si Duterte at pinag-utos sa mga pulis na upakan na ang mga umokupa sa mga bahay. Binigyan niya ng taling ang mga ito na lisanin ang lugar at kung hindi aalis, bahala na ang mga pulis dito.

Mahigit 2,000 miyembro ang sumugod sa mga hindi pa natatapos na housing units sa Pandi noong Abril 2017. Ang mga housing units ay nakalaan para

sa mga pulis at sundalo. Pero sabi ng Kadamay, nakatiwangwang lamang ang mga bahay at matagal nang walang gumagawa sa mga ito kaya nila inokupahan. Matagal na raw nilang hinihiling sa gobyerno na bigyan sila ng bahay pero hindi sila pinakikinggan. Kaya kaysa raw mabulok ang mga bahay, okupahan nila ang mga ito.

Nagtagumpay ang Kadamay sapagkat kinam-pihan sila ni President Duterte. Inintos ni Duterte na ipagkaloob na sa Kadamay ang mga unit at bibigyan na lang nang mas malaki ang mga pulis at sundalo.

Ang pagkampi ni Duterte ang nagpatapang sa Kadamay members para tumapang at kumapal ang mukha sa pang-aagaw ng bahay. Wala na silang ka-hihiyan at nagmamatigas na ngayon. Hindi raw sila aalis. Magkakamatayan daw kapag pinalis sila.

Bakit kaya hindi sila ngayon i-bazooka ni Duterte. Ipakita niya ang tigas ng kanyang mga kamao para mapigilan ang kanilang pangangamkam. Turuan ng leksiyon ang Kadamay. Hangga't hindi nakakatikim ng kamay na bakal, patuloy silang mang-aagaw ng bahay. Dapat nilang malaman na hindi tama ang ginagawa nilang paraan para magkaroon ng sariling tirahan. Dapat silang magsikap na magkaroon ng sarili at hindi sa paraang mang-aagaw. Pagnanakaw ang kanilang nalalaman.

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ONLINE NEWS

16 JUNE 2018

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AFP backs gov't move to delay peace talks

By: Frances G. Mangosing

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Friday expressed support for the decision of President Rodrigo Duterte to cancel the resumption of peace talks with the communist rebels supposedly set this month.

The military "subscribes to the shared aspiration towards the attainment of a just and lasting peace attained through dialogues and deliberation," said AFP spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo.

"It is for this reason that we support the desire of our Commander-in-Chief to afford more time for consultation with the public with regard to the matters discussed during the back channel talks and ensure that its substance enjoy the support of a broader mass base," he added.

Presidential Peace Adviser on the Peace Process, Secretary Jesus Dureza, said on Thursday that the President had ordered the suspension of talks to allow more public consultation on the issue.

It was not clear when the peace talks would resume. The talks were supposedly set on June 28. /jpv

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Delay in peace talks could embolden peace saboteurs, warns solon

By: Patricia Ann V. Roxas

Apparently dismayed over President Rodrigo Duterte's cancelation of the peace talks again, a party-list lawmaker cautioned on Friday the delay would only make room for spoilers and saboteurs to damage the process.

According to Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate, issues raised by Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza for the postponement could be addressed even while the peace talks are ongoing.

He pointed out that these issues "should not be used as stumbling blocks or preconditions for the resumption of the negotiations."

"The longer it takes for the talks to restart, the peace spoilers and saboteurs would also have a longer time to sabotage the process," the opposition lawmaker said in a statement.

The government and communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) were supposed to return yet again to the negotiating table on June 28.

But Dureza announced its postponement anew on Thursday, saying there was a need to "listen" to the public first before finalizing a peace deal with the communists.

But Zarate stressed that the Filipino people have long supported the peace talks in order to achieve "a just and lasting peace."

"Indeed, addressing the root causes of the armed conflict like landlessness, oppression, and exploitation, among others, will certainly get the continued support of the majority of Filipinos," he said.

Zarate then urged both panels to resume the talks at the soonest time possible.

READ: Duterte on resuming peace talks in June: I'm not ready for that

NDFP peace panel chair Fidel Agcaoili had earlier expressed their disappointment over the cancelation of the negotiations.

However, despite the latest postponement, Agcaoili said the NDFP welcomes the government's explanation for the cancelation, and subsequent schedule adjustment.

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Peace talks resumption, 'rescheduled' lang – NDF chief negotiator

Posted By: Bombo Reymund Tinaza

Nilinaw ngayon mismo ni National Democratic Front chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili na ipinagpaliban lamang ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang pagbabalik ng peace talks na nakatakda sana sa June 28.

Sa inilabas na statement, sinabi ni Agcaoili na inabisuhan siya ng government peace panel kaugnay sa intensyong magkaroon ng adjustment sa schedule na napagkasunduan sa nakaraang informal talks noong June 5 hanggang June 10.

Ayon kay Agcaoili, maging ang Norwegian government na nagsisilbing third party facilitator ay nasabihan din bago ang anunsyo ng pagpapaliban sa peace talks resumption.

Inihayag pa ni Agcaoili na nais ng NDF at ng Norwegian government na linawin ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas ang tinatawag na coordinated unilateral ceasefire at ilang section ng Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms on agrarian reform and economic development.

"Nagpaabot sila sa akin ng kanilang intensyon o unilateral decision na magkaroon ng adjustments sa schedule na aming napagkasunduan nitong nakaraang informal talks from June 5 to 10," ani Agcaoili. "Kinausap din nila ang Third Party Facilitator, ang Royal Norwegian Government, tungkol sa kanilang decision. Sinabi din ng GRP na magpapadala sila ng team dito sa Netherlands this weekend para ipaliwanag sa amin ang batayan ng kanilang decision at dadalo sa usapan ang Third Party Facilitator."

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Sundalo, patay sa ginawang 'harassment' ng mga rebelde sa Northern Samar

Posted By: [Bombo Radyo Taclobanon](#)

TACLOBAN CITY – Patay ang isang sundalo sa ginawang “harassment” ng mga pinaniniwalaang miyembro ng New People’s Army (NPA) sa mga sundalo ng 20th Infantry Battalion sa Brgy. Senonogan de Tubang, Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar.

Ayon kay Maj. Renen Mondog, Executive Officer ng 20 IB, nagsasagawa sila ng community support program sa naturang barangay nang umatake ang higit sa 10 mga rebelde.

Hindi naman daw nila inaasahanng aatake ang naturang grupo dahil marami ang sibilyan sa naturang lugar.

Bukod dito, ang naturang lugar daw ay kabilang sa mga areas na nagpagkasunduaang may suspension ng offensive military operations.

Dagdag pa ni Mondog, umabot sa limang minuto ang palitan ng putok sa pagitan ng dalawang kampo.

Maswerte namang walang may naitalang sugatan sa mga residente ng naturang barangay.

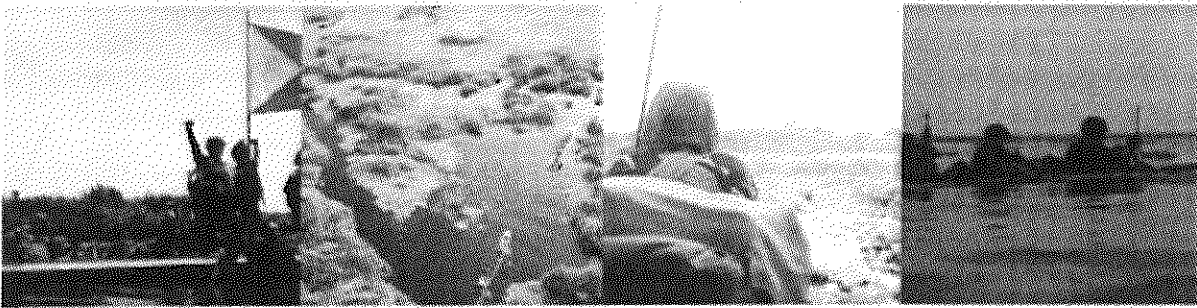
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CHALLENGING TERRAIN | 33IB Combat Operation vs IS-inspired Terrorist Group

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

LIGUASAN MARSH, Maguindanao (DWDD) – Footages of the Combat Operations against ISIS-Inspired Terrorist Group in Liguasan Marsh, Maguindanao.



The Makabayan warriors have learned the techniques, tactics, and procedures in waterborne operations in a challenging terrain like the Liguasan Marsh.



The operation aims to stop the IED attacks against civilian populations in urban centers in Maguindanao and neighboring provinces. **33IB Makabayan / MCAAG**

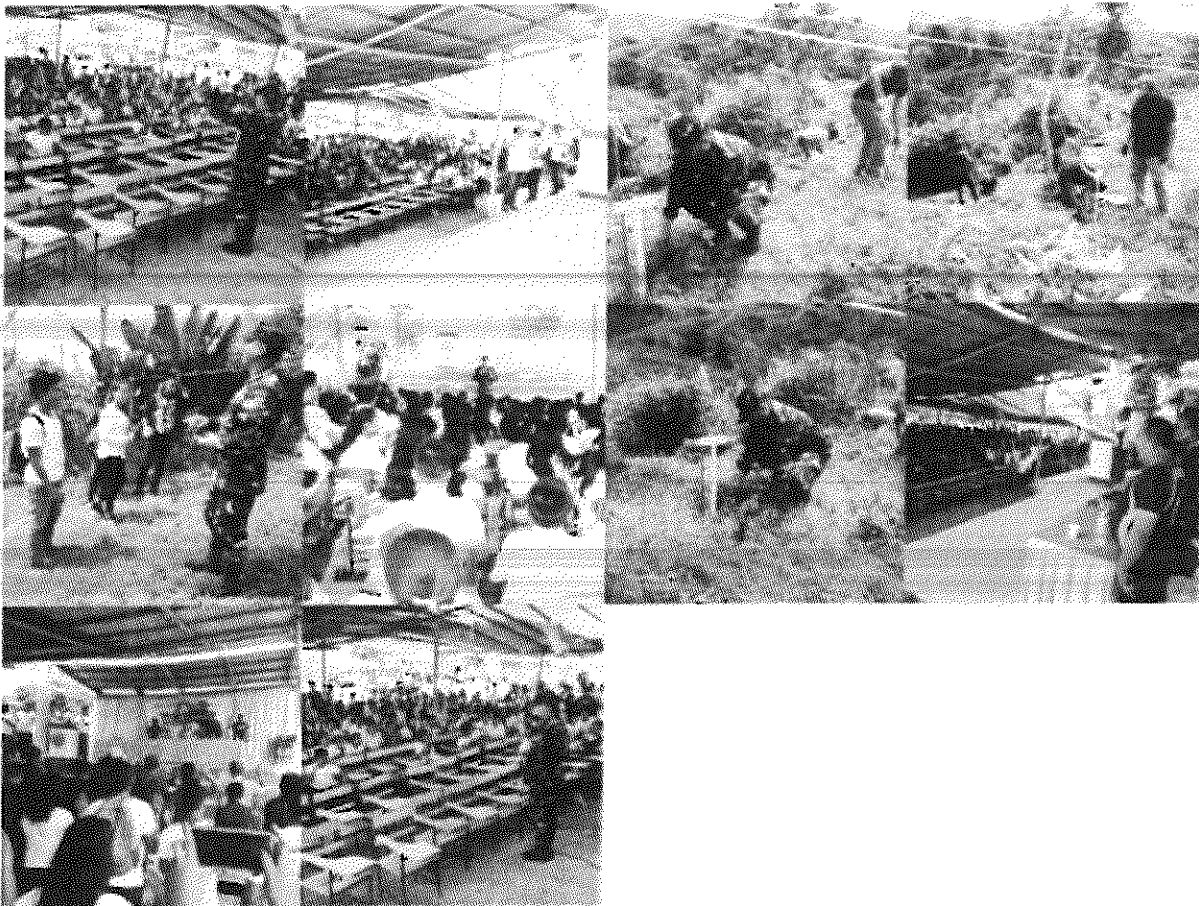
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GREENING THE PHILIPPINES | 3ID joins NIA Nationwide Tree-Planting Activity

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

CALINOG, Iloilo (DWDD) – The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), through the 3rd Infantry “Spearhead” Division (3ID) participated the conduct of National Irrigation Authority (NIA) Nationwide Tree Planting Activity with a theme: “TREES, WATER, LIFE 2018” at Binulosan Pequeño National High School, Calinog, Iloilo in celebration of its 55th Anniversary together with Engr. Gerardo P Corsiga-Regional Manager/JRMP II, Project Manager, Brgy Officials, BFP, Students and Staffs of BNHS. **3DPAO / MCAG**



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MEDCAP | 44IB conducts Medical – Dental mission in Kabasalan, ZSP

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

KABASALAN, Zamboanga Sibugay Province (DWDD) – In partnership with the Local Government Unit of Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay Province, this unit led by LieutenaNT Colonel Jonathan P Obena INF (GSC) PA, Commanding Officer, 44IB represented by 1Lt Jestoni V Labarosa (INF) PA, Acting Civil-Military Officer, 44IB; together with 1Lt Rommel P Galvez (INF) PA, Commanding Officer, Alpha Company, 44IB and 2Lt Ma Melva G Logrono (INF) PA.

44IB participated in the Medical and Dental Outreach Program at Barangay, Penaranda and Barangay Lachapan, Kabasalan, Zamboanga Sibugay Province.

The activity benefitted a total of more or less 300 beneficiaries from the said barangays who all belong to the marginalized sector of the society. **44IB Agile and Stable / MCAG**



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PUBLIC WARNED | 3ID Troops recovers bomb-making materials in Capiz

Reported by Alvin Santiago

CAMP GEN MACARIO B PERALTA JR, Jamindan, Capiz (DWDD) – The Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry "Spearhead" Division cautions public to be more vigilant following the recovery of bomb-making materials belonged to the CPP-NPA Terrorist in an abandoned nipa hut in Barangay Putian, Cuartero, Capiz on June 9, 2018.



Aside from the bomb-making materials, troops of 61st IB also recovered 13 backpacks containing personal belongings, medical kit, NPA flag and subversive documents with high intelligence value.

This Command believes that these terrorists have been making landmines to attack not only the soldiers but also the helpless civilians who embrace a peaceful way of life and refused to support a violent and bloody armed-struggle. The use of landmines, was a clear violation of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Geneva Convention banning the use of the explosive devices where the Philippines is one of the signatories

This is yet another proof that the CPP-NPA terrorists are anti-people, anti-peace and anti-development cold-blooded criminals who irreverently cast economic sabotage, destruction and killings of innocent civilians.

Troops of 61IB are currently conducting a Community Support Program in the said area in collaboration with the local government units and stakeholders, but the CPP-NPA Terrorist is trying to hinder these peace and development efforts of the government where, the direct beneficiaries are the local populace who are longing for sustainable progress.

In this regard, we are calling the people to continue supporting and cooperating with your Army and PNP and report the presence and activities of the CPP-NPA terrorists in your area to prevent them from staging attacks. We are also calling the CPP-NPAs to lay down your arms and abandon the senseless and failed armed-struggle and return to the folds of the government. Your government is much willing to help and assist you to start a new and peaceful life together with your family. **61IB / MCAG**

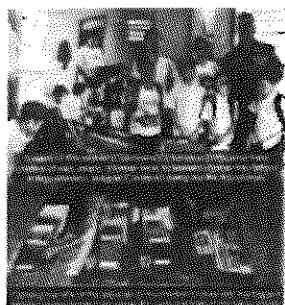
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BETTER LIFE | 19IB Troops sends ex-rebels children to school

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

MAGPET, Cotabato (DWDD) – Soldiers of 19th Infantry “Commando” Battalion (19IB) sent three children of Alias Janjan, a former rebel, to Manobo Elementary School in Brgy Manobo, Magpet, Cotabato during the first day of class, last June 4, 2018.



The said children, two boys and a girl, were enrolled at an elementary school with the help of the Community Support Teams (CSTs) of Alpha Company of 19IB, who also bought them school supplies and uniforms.

Jane (not her true name), 14yrs old, the eldest of the three, is attending Grade 3 class. Her younger brothers, 12 yrs old and 10yrs old are attending Grade 5 and Grade 3 classes respectively.

“They are just like any other children of former NPA rebels that were left in the care of their mother when their father – Janjan joined the armed movement of NPA terrorists. They did not pursue their studies because they were transferring from one place to another.” Lt Prolen Bonacua, the Alpha Company Commander of 19IB said.

Alias Janjan surrendered to 19IB two months ago and was former team leader of Squad 2, Pulang Bagani Command (PBC) 3 of the NPA’s Southern Mindanao Regional Committee (SMRC).

“Ang pagsulod sa armadong kalihukan ug pagka-angin sa kaugmaon sa akong mga anak, ang pinakadakong sayop nga akong gibuhay sa tibuok nakong kinabuhi. Respitado ko sa akong mga kauban kay tungod mayo akong pagdumala kanila. Apan, akong mga anak, wala nako maatiman. Wala nako damha ang paghikaw nako sa saktong edukasyon angay kanila. (Joining the NPA at the expense of my children’s future was the biggest mistake I have made in my whole life. I was a leader to my fellow rebels, but not to my three children. Unwittingly, I have already deprived them of their right to education)” Janjan said.

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Alias Janjan brought one M16 rifle upon his surrender. He was among the bulk of NPA surrenderees during the early phase of 19IB's campaign in Magpet, Cotabato.

"Janjan's documents are already being processed as well as with the other surrenderees. They are entitled to receive financial and livelihood assistance through the Enhanced-Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP)." Lieutenant Colonel Ehrlich Noel Paraso, Commanding Officer of 19IB said.

Meanwhile, Ms. Aneolyn Bargamento, Head of Manobo Elementary School stated that the attendance of their students dwindles when NPA enters the community and when encounter with government forces occur. She is grateful that soldiers' CSTs are around their area because they feel secured and now school children are attending classes.

On the other hand, Major General Ronald Villanueva, Commander of Army's 4th Infantry Division said that *"4th Infantry Division deploys Community Support Program teams to conflict affected areas in order to assess and determine the issues in the barangay that will be relayed to the local government agencies and Chief Executives for it to be resolve in the level of barangay, municipal or provincial level. Moreover, I commend the initiative of 19IB in helping the family and children of our former rebel. For the NPA terrorists who are thinking to surrender and experience a life away from hunger and fear, the government has Enhanced-Comprehensive Local Integration Program that will assist you in your reintegration to the mainstream society."* **19IB Commando / MCAG**

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STORY OF HEROISM | LTC Ryan Servero, Leads from the Heart

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

FORT ANDRES BONIFACIO, Taguig City (DWDD) – Lt Col Ryan Severo of the 10th Infantry Battalion (10IB) best exemplifies servant leadership among his troops. His transitioning role as the incoming commander of the 44th Infantry Battalion (44IB) and then eventually as the commander ordered to replace the relieved commander of 10IB is a story that needs to be told.

His assignment in Marawi City was unforeseen and a lot had already been happening prior to his actual deployment to Marawi, including the high number of casualties, wounded soldiers, thousands of civilians trapped in the conflict zones, and civilian hostages held by the enemy. But these challenges did not make him any less of a leader. He exemplified adaptability, flexibility, and readiness under pressure.

Amidst the low morale of his troops, Lt Col Severo encouraged the battalion to move on, initiated moves to motivate his personnel, incorporated the opinions/suggestions of his subordinates in their plans, trained his troops, organized sustainment for his soldiers for the long haul, recognized/awarded good performance, and brought back spunk to his men which transformed them into a highly charged battalion. **ORCPA / MCAG**