

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



ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com
OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

18 June 2018

Monday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

TABLE OF CONTENTS

18 JUNE 2018

Weather Forecast- http://pagasa.dost.gov.ph/weather/daily-weather-forecast		
PAGE NR.	TITLE	SOURCE
NATIONAL NEWS		
1	Bishops won't allow priests to be armed	PDI-A1
2	NBI may probe priests' slays	P Star-1
AFP/ SECURITY RELATED NEWS		
3	Lawmaker says president endangering PH security	PDI-A18
4	DU30: Oil need driving China sea expansion	PDI-A18
5	'Claim damages from China for ruined reefs'	P Star-6
6	Oil behind China's presence in South China Sea – Duterte	M Bulletin-9
7	Stronger PH military pressed amid sea dispute	M Bulletin-2
8-9	No grandstanding in WPS meet	D Tribune-1
10	DILG justifies arming b'gay execs, to issue guidelines	P Star-5
11	Clans settle 2 decades' feud in Liguasan Marsh	M Times-A7
12	Gordon seeks more budget for military	M Times-A8
13	AFP acting on soldiers' debt problems	Malaya-B2
14	Peace talks doomed if held in PH-Sison	PDI-A4
15	Agreement on DU30-Joma meeting in PH revealed	PDI-A4
16-17	Planned military offensives behind peace talks cancellation – CPP	P Star-4
18	CPP blasts govt halting of peace talks	M Times-A2
19-20	Resetting talks with Reds meant to protect peace gains – Dureza	M Bulletin-1
21-22	Stand-down review set	D Tribune-1
23	Gov't forms 3 consultative teams on peace	M Standard-A1
24	Another NPA member yields to Army in Bukidnon	M Bulletin-12
25-26	Du30 promise: If there's oil in marsh, Moros will own it	PDI-A12
27	Rody ready to quit during transition	P Star-14
28	Duterte reaches out to Misuari	M Times-A3
29	Du30 vows to pass BBL 'uncut'	M Standard-A2
30	Bangsamoro charter sent to Duterte	D Tribune-4
31-32	Duterte: Gov't needs more time to pass BBL	Malaya-B1
33	Abu bandit slain in Sulu encounter	P Star-14
34	Another Sayyaf killed in Sulu encounter	M Times-A7
35	Pregnant farmer killed by mortar fire in Maguindanao	M Bulletin-12
36	Mortar strike kills pregnant woman	Tempo-4
37	Buntis patay, binatilyo sugatan sa bomba	Balita-5
38	ASG member slain in Sulu encounter	M Bulletin-12

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

39	Abu Sayyaf bandit killed in Sulu	Malaya-B2
EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY		
40-41	'Our strongest weapon against a big nation like China is noise'	PDI-A18
42-44	Isn't a Chinese military invasion a redundancy	M Times-A1
45-46	Yes, Senate must investigate how Aquino, Trillanes and Del Rosario lost Panatag	M Times-A1
47	Kidlat ngayon	M Bulletin-10
48	Public opinion on peace talks	M Times-A4
49	Yes to peace, no to amnesty	D Tribune-4
50-51	Beware the lies	D Tribune-4
ONLINE NEWS		
52	Soldiers kill Abu Sayyaf bandit in Sulu encounter	www.inquirer.net
53	Villagers flee as military launches operation vs suspected Maute gunmen	www.inquirer.net
54	PAF earmarks P110.9-M for attack helicopter parts	www.pna.gov.ph
55	Navy needs more technically-skilled people for new assets	www.pna.gov.ph



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

BISHOPS WON'T ALLOW PRIESTS TO BE ARMED

STORY BY TINA G. SANTOS AND JEANNETTE ANDRADE

Because they are men of peace, not violence, the clergy should not bear arms despite recent attacks that left three of them dead and another injured, according to members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

Bishops oppose arming priests

FROM A1

Turn the other cheek just like what Jesus did.

The head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) made this stand amid proposals to arm priests in the wake of recent attacks on clergymen that have left three of them dead and one injured.

Priests are supposed to be men of peace, not violence, said Archbishop Romulo Valles, CBCP president, who "strongly" opposes the arming of priests.

"We are men of God, men of the Church and it is part of our ministry to face dangers, to face deaths if one may say it that way. But we would do it just what Jesus did," Valles said in a post on CBCPNews, the official news site of the CBCP.

In a statement on Saturday, the Philippine National Police spokesperson noted the CBCP opposition to the idea but said all Filipinos, including priests, had the right to legally own guns.

Like every citizen, any priest may apply for a license to own a firearm or for a permit to carry a firearm outside of his residence, said Senior Supt. Benigno Durana.

Cebu Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Florencio, apostolic admin-

istrator of the Military Ordinariate of the Philippines, said he could think of several scenarios in which arming priests could have negative consequences.

"It will create more chaos, it will not solve anything," Florencio said in the same CBCP-News post.

Inappropriate

Fr. Jerome Secillano, executive secretary of the CBCP public affairs committee, said in a statement that the Church was clear on the matter—priests are not supposed to be armed.

"It is inappropriate and unbecoming. Priests are preachers of the Word and not gun-toting law enforcers. They are peacemakers and not enablers of violence," Secillano said.

"But what if priests decide to arm themselves, especially in view of the killings of their kind? This is an exception rather than the rule. The Church does not approve of it," he added.

Priests who carry guns, Secillano said, would have to respect the decision of their bishops on whether to sanction them.

"Priests are not directly under the jurisdiction of the CBCP. They belong to a diocese, which is a juridically independent territory headed by a bishop. The bishop, in his wise and prudent judgment, is

juridically responsible what to do with his priests," he said.

Suffering part of calling

Balanga Bishop Ruperto Santos said he was also against arming priests.

"I will not allow it in my diocese. Sacrifices and sufferings are part and parcel of being priests. It is our calling, that is, to carry the cross and even to be crucified on the cross," Santos said.

He stressed that Jesus was the Lord and Master. "He calls us priests and we choose to follow Him. And we commit ourselves to Him and follow Him. We should never be afraid because He is with us."

Fr. Richmond Nilo, 44, was shot and killed inside a chapel in Zaragoza, Nueva Ecija province, on June 10 while he was preparing to say Mass.

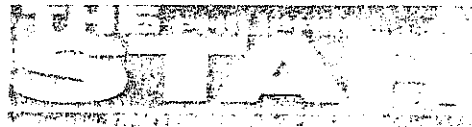
The attack occurred four days after Fr. Rey Urmeneta, 64, a former police chaplain, was shot and wounded in Calamba City, Laguna province.

In April, 37-year-old Fr. Mark Ventura, known for his antimining advocacy, was gunned down after celebrating Mass in Cagayan province.

In December last year, 72-year-old Fr. Marcelito Paez was shot dead in Jaen town, Nueva Ecija, after facilitating the release of a political prisoner.

—REPORTS FROM TINA G. SANTOS AND JEANNETTE ANDRADE INQ

10



NBI may probe priests' slays

By EDU PUNAY

Amid accusations that an arrested suspect is a fall guy, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra is considering ordering the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to probe the recent spate of killings of Catholic priests.

Guevarra said he is ready to direct the NBI, investigative arm of the Department of Justice (DOJ), to conduct a parallel probe, but will allow the Philippine National Police (PNP) to take the lead in the investigations first.

against clergymen.

Fr. Richmond Nilo was shot dead on June 10 while preparing for mass in a chapel in Zaragoza town, Nueva Ecija.

Police on Thursday arrested Adel Milan, one of the primary suspects in the killing

CBCP: Priests arming selves should leave Church. See Page 8.

"I will give the PNP ample time to do their job. But I will bring in the NBI any time as circumstances may warrant," he said in a text message yesterday.

He added that the necessity for an NBI probe would depend on developments in the police investigations.

The DOJ chief bared such plan in response to mounting public interest in the killings of three priests amid President Duterte's persistent tirades

that probers attributed to a land dispute.

Milan, 26, was arrested in his house in Barangay Malapit in San Isidro, Nueva Ecija. Chief Insp. Eden dela Cruz, San Isidro police chief, said Milan did not resist arrest.

The PNP has been accused of presenting a fall guy.

A fraternity brother said Milan was with them in a drinking spree. He also pointed out that the triggerman

Turn to Page 8

NBI From Page 1

caught on CCTV was heavily built, unlike Milan.

The suspect's mother, overseas Filipino worker Mylene Milan, said in a television interview that her son does not resemble the artist's sketch presented by the police.

PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde said "Milan was identified by the altar server."

"The clergy took custody of him not us in the police. The altar server was sure because they've seen eye to eye," he added.

But Albayalde said until the rest of the five suspects in the murder are taken in, the police

are not ruling out the possibility that Milan is a fall guy.

"We are still investigating the matter, we are tracking down the other suspects," Albayalde told The STAR in a text message.

Nilo was the third priest killed in recent months.

Last April 29, Fr. Mark Ventura was killed in Cagayan after celebrating mass. Fr. Marcelito Paez was shot dead in Nueva Ecija last Dec. 5, 2017.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros has called for a Senate inquiry and filed Resolution 764 for the Senate committee on public order to look into the murders of

Nilo, Ventura and Paez.

The resolution also includes the case of Fr. Rey Urmeneta of Calamba, Laguna, who survived an attack.

In filing the measure, Hontiveros said there is a "dangerous pattern" emerging with the spate of killings and attempted killings of members of the clergy.

Hontiveros believes that the killings are not isolated cases as there have been three priests killed in the last six months.

She also echoed the sentiment of senior clergymen that the President's verbal attacks might feed violence against priests.

"These killings further reinforce the culture of impunity

to silence valid Church-led criticisms on state policies, particularly those with respect to human rights and due process," she said.

In several instances, Duterte has lambasted the Catholic Church, questioning its teachings and even accusing priests of engaging in corruption. At one point, he said that the Catholic Church is "full of sh*t."

The Palace, on the other hand, claimed that the spate of killings of priests was an attempt by "lawless elements" to discredit the administration's strides in the peace and order situation in the country.

- With Raymond Catindig

MARITIME PATROL ISSUE

LAWMAKER SAYS PRESIDENT ENDANGERING PH SECURITY

Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano on Saturday lashed back at high government officials, saying it was President Duterte himself and not he who was endangering the security of the country.

"It is Duterte and his cohorts who endanger our national security by allowing the blatant encroachment of China on Philippine territory. By kowtowing to China, they neglected and forgot the welfare of the country. They are prioritizing the selfish interest of a few," Alejano said in a statement.

The lawmaker was reacting to a statement made by Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano, who said last week that Alejano and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV were endangering the country's security by saying Mr. Duterte had ordered the military to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea.

West Philippine Sea is part of the South China Sea within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone in the hotly contested waterway.

Military source

"I only spoke what was relayed to me by a source of authority when I said that Malacañang ordered our armed forces to desist from patrolling the West Philippine Sea," said Alejano, a former Marine officer.

"The information was relayed to me toward the end of last year, but I believe it is continuing as can be clearly gathered from the testimony of the Filipino fishermen in Malacañang this week," he added.

Three fishermen were brought in by presidential spokesperson Harry Roque and they confirmed news reports that Chinese coast guards were taking the best of Filipino fishermen's catch at Panatag Shoal and giving the fishermen noodles, wines and cigarettes for

these in a barter trade that could be called forced because of the language barrier.

The fishermen also confirmed that China controlled the shoal, despite a 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague that Panatag is a common fishing ground for the Philippines, China and Vietnam.

Dubious patriotism

Alejano also chided Cayetano for dismissing the West Philippine Sea controversy as motivated by politics.

"I'm a former soldier, I will not endanger my colleagues in the Armed Forces. As a military man, I was trained to serve and fight for the country. I have put my life in danger several times to defend our nation. I cannot accept someone who has dubious patriotism himself to question my intentions," he said.

Lack of PH presence

The lawmaker said the abuses experienced by the fishermen at Panatag Shoal was due to the lack of Philippine presence there.

"Do you think China does not know the number and frequency of patrols in the West Philippine Sea? Of course, they do, given their advance surveillance and monitoring capabilities," Alejano said.

"This is also the reason why they are emboldened to bully our fishermen knowing that we have weak presence in the area. You in the Duterte administration are the ones who are blind to China's abuses," he added.

The lawmaker warned that "time will come that those government officials fiercely defending China's interests will be exposed on their concessions with China." —JEROME ANING INQ

Du30: Oil need driving China sea expansion

By Allan Nawal
@inquirermindanao

DAVAO CITY—Its need for oil to fuel its growing industries is the force that drives China to expand into the South China Sea, President Duterte said on Saturday.

"China, for all of its, whatever, posturing there is, is also interested in oil," the President said in a speech during the Eid al-Fitr celebration attended by some 650 Moro leaders, officials and representatives of various groups at SMX Convention Center in Davao City.

Mr. Duterte said all of China's activities in the South China Sea were related to its search for oil. He said oil was so important that Western countries wanted to dominate even other oil-producing countries such as those in the Middle East.

"[Everything depends on] oil. Vehicles produced even by the primitive lathe machines that is a product of an equipment or machine using oil. If there is no oil, we won't have electricity," he said.

Geopolitics

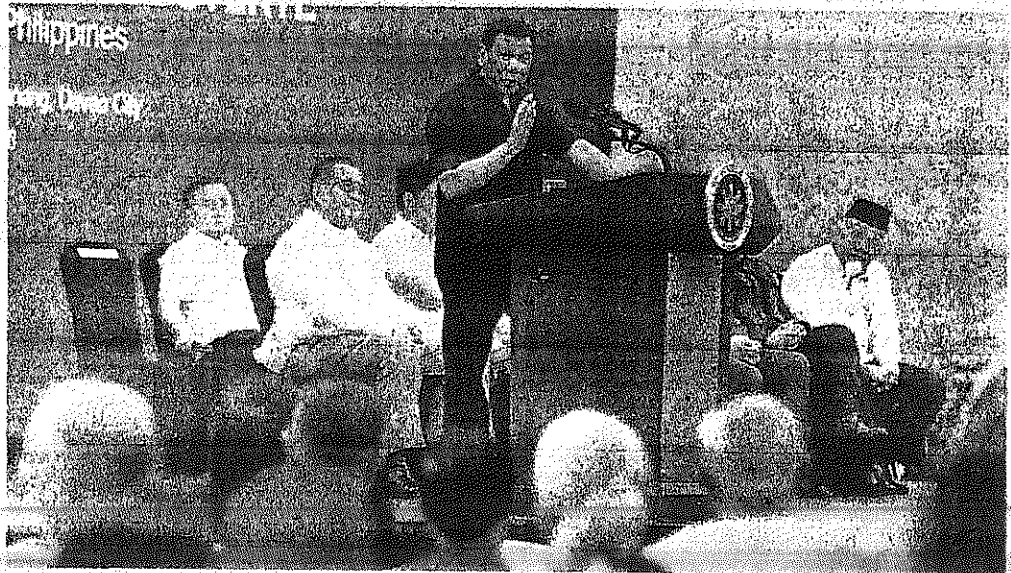
"So it's the resources, eventually, it's geopolitics," Mr. Duterte added.

Beijing has played down the geopolitics angle in its aggressive moves in the South China Sea.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said his country was only trying to "protect the peace and the stability of the South China Sea."

Tim Daiss, a Southeast Asia oil market analyst, wrote in an article on oilprice.com that it was too obvious that China's aggressive stance in the South China Sea was always "the case in geopolitical power plays: oil, and likely plenty of it."

Daiss, a former columnist



SEARCH FOR OIL Speaking during the Eid al-Fitr celebration in Davao City on Saturday, President Duterte says China's activities in the South China Sea are related to its search for oil. —MALACAÑANG PHOTO

for five newspapers in Georgia and a former talk show host on WTOG-TV Savannah, said Chinese estimate "places potential oil resources in the South China Sea [at] as high as 213 billion barrels."

He said China even referred to the area as "a Second Persian Gulf and will undoubtedly continue to not only build there but defend it with rhetoric and if push comes to shove, by force."

Estimated reserves

"A conservative 1993/1994 US Geological Survey (USGS) report estimated the sum total of discovered reserves and undiscovered resources in the offshore basins of the South China Sea at 28 billion barrels—yet, this estimate, for its part, seems particularly low," he added.

Natural gas also abound in the area, Daiss said, quoting a USGS estimate of 798 trillion cubic meters.

Based on a newer USGS study conducted in 2010, he said, "there is a 95-percent chance that there is at least 750 million barrels of oil in the South China Sea Platform, a median chance of around 2,000 million barrels, and a low probability (5 percent) of over 5,000 million barrels."

"Geologists have recently stated that the South China Sea Platform is an area rich with source carbon and has the perfect geological conditions necessary for hydrocarbon development, particularly oil," Daiss added.

Despite its posturing in the West Philippine Sea—part of the South China Sea within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone—Mr. Duterte said he would not take on China.

Instead, he said he had chosen to deal with China diplomatically, a strategy that has not failed to draw howls of objection in the Philippines, with

critics accusing him of selling out to the Chinese.

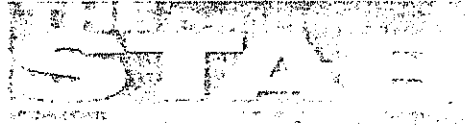
Joint exploration

Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano claims the strategy is paying off, telling reporters in Hong Kong in April after attending the Boao Forum, that the Philippines and China were finalizing a deal for a joint oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea.

He said the exploration would start very soon. He mentioned nothing about the administration asking Congress to approve the proposal.

For Mr. Duterte, the Philippines needs to have oil to attain progress.

"You know, first time I really wanted to cry in public. This is the first time that we got oil," Mr. Duterte said in Talisay town, Cebu province, after the switch-on ceremony of the Aleria oil field in May. **INQ**



'Claim damages from China for ruined reefs'

By PAOLO ROMERO

The Philippine government should demand compensation from China for the damage its coast guard and fishermen caused on the endangered coral reefs in Panatag or Scarborough Shoal, Sen. Richard Gordon said yesterday.

Gordon said the govern-

ment can cite the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and international environmental measures in seeking damages from China as Panatag Shoal is within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

"We have reasons to hold them (China) accountable but we must pursue it the

diplomatic way," the senator told *dzBB*.

He also asked Malacañang to give congressional leaders a full and private briefing on the administration's policy towards China to allow the government to speak in one voice with regard to recent incidents in the disputed South China Sea.

"Foreign policy is subject to perpetual review," Gordon said, adding the government should also press for a code of conduct with China and other claimant countries to the disputed waters.

He also asked the Duterte administration to spend more for a minimum credible defensive capability.

Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and the Law of the Sea, earlier reported that Chinese clam diggers have considerably damaged the Scarborough Shoal since 2012.

Based on Google Earth pictures, he said some 552

hectares of the inner reef of the shoal have been "visibly destroyed" by clam-diggers.

The UN Permanent Court of Arbitration has declared Scarborough Shoal as a common fishing ground open to all, but the Chinese coast guard has effectively maintained control over it.

5

Oil behind China's presence in South China Sea – Duterte

By GENALYN D. KABILING

China is interested in finding oil resources to fuel its industrial development. President Duterte recently said amid the Asian superpower's controversial presence in the South China Sea.

The President made this observation as he talked about the practice of rich countries to exhaust oil resources elsewhere in the world to boost industrialization.

"It's really the resources, eventually it's geopolitics. China, with all of its whatever posturing there, is also interested in oil. So lahat 'yan because it fuels industrialization," Duterte said during the celebration of Eid'l Fitr, the end of the Muslim feast of Ramadan, in Davao City last Saturday.

The Philippines and China are locked in a dispute over ownership of some islands in the South China Sea. The President however has refused to wage war with China and instead agreed to a joint oil exploration in the region.

Duterte noted that western nations want to conquer oil-rich countries like those in the Middle East to propel the economic growth.

"The secret is the oil. 'Yung ang problema. And they used the resources of that country

and the fat of the land to reach or arrive now on their present level of industrialization," he said.

"Anywhere you look in this world, even the mic in front of me and the glass of water, and the paper that I will be reading or I may not. Lahat 'yan, it's oil. It's oil there outside. You'd see many vehicles produced by the -- even the primitive lathe machines and that is a product of an equipment or machine using oil," he said.

Duterte said the problem is that the massive industrialization of the world's richest nations has caused climate change.

He said the Philippines and other developing nations could no longer catch up with the industrialized states especially after countries are being compelled to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent further global warming.

"Ang problema dito is the western countries, the democracies they have reached this height of industrialization. Now we are trying to catch up. But the Philippines and the rest could not because mataas na sila," he said.

"And so it created a monster in the lives of the people on earth, and that is the destruction of environment and puts into jeopardy the next generation. Maghirap 'yan sila [They will become poorer]," he said.

Stronger PH military pressed amid sea dispute

By HANNAH L. TORREGOZA and ROY C. MABASA

Senator Richard Gordon on Sunday urged the Duterte administration to beef up the country's military capability so that China and other nations won't look down on the Philippines as a pushover.

Meantime, the Philippine government does not agree with the recent statement of the Chinese government that it is

allowing Filipino fishermen to fish in Scarborough Shoal area as a gesture of goodwill.

Gordon said the government must seriously make every effort to improve the country's defense and security assets to convey the message that the Philippines, too, is a force to reckon with.

"They can easily intimidate us knowing we have nothing to prove. I suggest that we should have some kind or level of deterrence. Let us show that we also can stand up against anything,"

Gordon said in a radio interview, reiterating the need to beef up the country's armed forces.

Show of force

The senator cited Vietnam's similar maritime territorial dispute with China but was able to assert its rights on its claimed territory.

He also pointed out even India has a border spat with China but was likewise able to show a level of assertiveness against Beijing.

"How can we face them when we don't even have warships. Our worst enemy is ourselves; we don't even have any equipment. We don't have any warfare capability," Gordon pointed out.

Scarborough fishing issue

"No we don't accept that," Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said over the weekend amid criticism that the government is acquiescing to the Chinese

bullying of Filipino fishermen in the Scarborough Shoal.

Cayetano said while the government has put its objection on record, it opted not to engage in megaphone diplomacy "because we want to look at the totality of our relationship."

'Goodwill'

In a statement last week, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said China has made "appropriate arrangement" for the Philippine fishermen to fish in relevant waters out of goodwill.

This policy, according to the Chinese foreign ministry, remains unchanged.

Beijing was reacting to complaints by Filipino fishermen that Chinese coast guard members have been habitually taking their catch and paying them 'peanuts.'

Diplomacy

"They know that we don't (agree). Okay? But why did they say it? They said it because

when President Xi and President Duterte talked, ano [ang] sabi noong dalawang leaders? It's very hard for us or impossible to go beyond our stand," he said.

He stressed that the Philippine stand is that the Scarborough is "ours" and China is also taking a similar position.

"So either we don't talk... or we talk and have a tentative agreement. But both sides will give their own reasons," Cayetano said.

Code of Conduct

Gordon said he understands President Duterte and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) stand on the West Philippine Sea issue.

"I really doubt the President will give up our claims. We are into talks. But still China should respect our President," he said.

Hence, Gordon said he believes it is time for the Duterte administration to press for a Code of Conduct between China and other claimant countries in the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea.

No grandstanding in WPS meet

Rody: It's all about oil

By Angie M. Rosales

No grandstanding will be allowed in a meeting among members of the Executive and Legislative branches that Sen. Richard Gordon has proposed to discuss the administration's policy toward China's aggressive buildup in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

"The talks should not

be made public, there should be no grandstanding. The issue should be discussed to make it clear. If there's disagreement, then we can do a legislative review anytime," Gordon said.

"There are game plans which Congress should know. The problem is that we are lacking on that front. So we have to start fixing such lack," he said.

"[Do it] in a proper way because you cannot conduct diplomacy before the eyes of

the media because there will be a tendency, even on the part of the President to play a macho game. Same with us [lawmakers]," Gordon said.

Instead of calling for a Senate hearing, Gordon said a meeting in Malacañang should be resorted to, explaining lawmakers cannot be kept in the dark regarding the situation with China.

While the President is considered as the chief architect in foreign policy, Gordon said the foreign policy is subject to perpetual review.

"The foreign affairs (department) should reveal to Congress its every move to guide the Legislature on what it can do. The review should be constant to guide Congress and the President on their actions. It can't be possible that we only react," he said.

As it is, the senator said there's also a need to speak with one voice as there are just too many who speak about the issue.

"The foreign affairs (department) should reveal to Congress its every move."

The country's dealings with China and problems that had cropped up

Turn to page 2

No grandstanding in WPS meet

From page 1

recently such as the alleged harassment suffered by Filipino fishermen in the hands of the Chinese Coast Guard should be part of the discussions, he said.

"We should have a unified voice. We can't have so many personalities talking, most of whom do not appreciate the totality of the issue. It is too easy to ignite public emotion," Gordon said.

"The subject here is not the territory but the fishing grounds. Our problem is when the giant vessels of the Coast Guard of China arrive, Filipino fishermen do not have protection so we need an intense discussion with China. Who would help us? Will the United States fight for us to protect our fishing rights? I don't think so. I don't think so," the senator said.

Gordon said there seems to be no clear position and this has been going on even in the past administrations.

And even if the country is lacking in logistical support, in terms of military capability to deal head-on with China, the government should not back down in asserting its territorial rights, he added.

After all of the diplomatic means have been exhausted, pursuing formal protests can be resorted to, the senator added.

"We should speak softly but carry a bigger stick," Gordon said.

Bottomline is oil

In a speech in Davao City, President Duterte attributed the aggressive posture of China in the disputed region to its interest in finding oil resources for industrial development.

The President indicated a growing need among rich countries to find oil resources to meet the growing demand in their country.

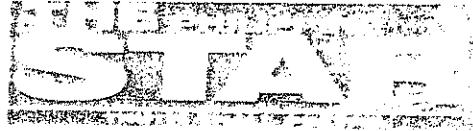
"It's really the resources, eventually it's geopolitics. China, posturing there, is also interested in oil. So they need it because it fuels industrialization," Duterte said during the celebration of Eid'ul Fitr, the end of the Muslim feast of Ramadan.

"The secret is the oil. And they used the resources of that country and the fat of the land to reach or arrive now on their present level of industrialization," he said.

"Anywhere you look in this world, even the mic in front of me and the glass of water, and the paper that I will be reading or I may not. All of that, it's oil. It's oil there outside. You'd see many vehicles produced or even the primitive lathe machines and that is a product of an equipment or machine using oil," he said.

Climate change backlash

Duterte said a related problem with massive industrialization is climate change which the Philippines is being made to suffer due to regulations now that was meant for industrialized states which are being compelled to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



DILG justifies arming b'gay execs, to issue guidelines

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) justified plans to arm barangay officials as part of the government's anti-crime effort.

DILG Assistant Secretary Jonathan Malaya over the weekend said Section 387 of the Local Government Code allows the issuance of firearms to barangay officials.

"The law provides that in the performance of his peace and order functions, the Punong Barangay shall be entitled to possess and carry necessary firearm within his territorial jurisdiction subject to appropriate rules and regulations. Therefore, we have legal basis," said Malaya, concurrent DILG spokesman.

Malaya said the planned policy will be backed by DILG guidelines to ensure its correct and proper implementation.

"We are looking at this possibility as we have been working and studying the mechanics to ensure its proper implementation. We will issue the directive in due time after considering the perspective of various stakeholders," he added.

President Duterte said he was considering arming barangay chiefs to ensure their protection in the war against drugs and crime when he led the mass oath-taking of Central Luzon barangay chiefs recently.

As soon as the DILG guidelines are issued, he says, local government units may also issue firearms to barangay captains. "But it all depends on the guidelines that shall be issued," he said.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año is supporting Duterte's proposal of arming barangay captains as a form of self-protection depending on the gravity of existing threats for their personal safety.

Año explained that arming village chiefs is a viable plan depending on the gravity of the threat the barangay captain is receiving. The source of the threat, such as drug syndicates and terrorists, is a factor.

"As they are our first line of defense in the grassroots level, their exposure to various scalawags and criminal elements is high. The need for urgent protection is therefore imperative," he said.

"Arming them would be more of self-defense purposes since we have enough police forces to operate against lawless elements," Año added.

According to Año, barangay officials may buy their own guns legally and can be granted a permit to carry so they can defend themselves.

Barangay chiefs, he said, may also be accepted as CAFGUS or Special Civilian Armed Forces so that they can be issued government firearms and mission orders.

"As such they can fully support law enforcement units in eliminating armed lawless elements threatening the lives of the people in the community they are mandated to protect," he explained.

Malaya maintained the DILG's primary concern is the safety and security of barangays and their residents.

"For the meantime, let's keep an open mind. Rest assured that the safety and security of the

barangays and the residents are our outmost concern," he said.

10

Clans settle 2 decades' feud in Liguasan Marsh

BY JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: Warring clans in the vicinity of Liguasan Marsh within General Salipada K. Pendatun town settled their 20-year-old dispute during the celebration of the Eid'1 Fitr through peaceful intervention of the Philippine military.

Lt. Col. Harold Cabunoc, commanding officer of the 33rd Infantry (Makabayan) Battalion, on Sunday said he brokered the peaceful settlement of the violent feud between the families of Guimadel Sinumagan and Castro Mohammad, both of Barangay Midpandacan in Gen. Salipada K. Pendatun (GSKP).

"I would like to help in settling all disputes that had claimed numerous lives. 'Rido' [clan wars] are drivers of armed conflicts that pave the way for the rise of violent extremism in Central Mindanao," he noted.

Guimadel, 50, was teary-eyed

when he expressed gratitude to the military for helping them end the long-running family dispute and allow peace to reign in their village.

"I am tired fighting against blood relatives and fellow Muslims. We need to give a brighter future for our children," he said.

Mohammad, 47, also thanked the military officials who settled the problem as neutral parties.

"As newly elected *barangay* [village] chairman, I will serve you all faithfully. Let us put all these bad memories behind us," he said.

Held in a makeshift waiting shed

beside an abandoned school, the rido settlement was witnessed by Lt. Col. Lauro Oliveros, commanding officer of the 1st Mechanized Infantry Battalion, GSKP Vice Mayor Salman Kali and Datu Bimbo Ali.

Cabunoc and Oliveros had also settled two clan wars in the past months.

The recent settlement led to the surrender of five high-powered firearms including 1 cal. 50 sniper rifle, an M14 rifle and three M1 Garand rifles.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, 6th Infantry commander, commended the two battalion commanders for their recent feat.

"You have made a mark during the Eid'1 Fitr celebration today. You have demonstrated that peace has a chance," he said.

Clan wars, according to academic studies, are one of the conflict issues in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao where feuding families resort to killing their enemies. ~~17~~

11

Gordon seeks more budget for military

THE Philippine government needs to beef up its maritime capability to protect its fishermen from intimidation and harassment in the Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal and other parts of the West Philippines Sea South China Sea), Sen. Richard Gordon said Sunday.

Gordon urged "everyone" to "sacrifice" so that government can allot more funds to upgrade the maritime capability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"We must be willing to make a sacrifice to fund our military for the procurement of submarines and even missile systems," he said in a radio interview.

Gordon, a member of the Senate Committee on National Defense and Security, explained that while Panatag Shoal was declared by the Arbitral tribunal as a common fishing ground where the Philippines, China and Vietnam could freely fish, the country is still in a disadvantageous position because it has no capability to protect its fishermen.

"We are in a disadvantageous position because we are not ready to patrol the area," he said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs recently denied claims made by opposition lawmakers Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th and Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary

Alejano that President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the AFP to stop patrolling the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

"We can assure the people that we have regular patrols, but I can tell you now that it is very irresponsible of Sen. Trillanes and Rep. Alejano to say that there was none, they have endangered our security," Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said.

Gordon also cited the problem faced by the Philippines in the Recto (Reed) bank, which the country plans to drill for oil and natural gas.

He said the Philippines was not able to start the project for lack of capability and technology.

"Our enemy is ourselves. Because of our lack of planning and willingness to sacrifice portion of our budget to be used in military capability upgrading," the senator lamented.

Gordon also raised the need for all concerned countries to come up with a code of conduct to avoid incidents of harassment and intimidation at sea.

He said it is not proper for members of the Chinese Coast Guard to board fishermen's boats and demand part of their catch.

"There should be a code of conduct in Panatag shoal because we cannot allow intimidation and harassment in the area to continue," Gordon said.

JEFFERSON ANTIORDA

AFP acting on soldiers' debt problems

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez said the military is coming up with strict regulations to address the indebtedness of soldiers to loan sharks or persons or entities that lend money at extremely high interests.

Galvez said the soldiers' financial woes, along with those of policemen, have reached President Duterte.

"The President has formed a technical committee in order to resolve the issue of too much exposure of our soldiers, policemen and teachers to indebtedness," Galvez told a radio interview.

Galvez said the military is implementing measures on how to put an end to the loan problem.

President Duterte increased the salary of soldiers effective

last January, leaving the lowest-ranking soldier, a private, with nearly P30,000 pay a month.

"What we are doing now is we are going to come up with very stringent regulations so that we can protect our soldiers from the loan sharks and other (lending) institutions," Galvez without elaborating.

The military establishment has several financial institutions that offer loans to soldiers, including the AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc, which charge over 10 percent in loan interest.

AFP spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said Galvez has advised soldiers to have at least P15,000 a month take-home pay. "The chief of staff believes that's the amount needed for them to live decently as a soldier."

Arevalo said military financial

institutions are also instituting reforms.

Asked if the financial institutions will no longer grant a soldier a loan if that will leave him with less than a P15,000 in take-home pay, Arevalo said: "That is the concept."

Told that soldiers may consider borrowing from institutions outside the military if that measure will be implemented, Arevalo said the military is also holding lectures for soldiers about "financial literacy and financial management."

Arevalo said the lectures are also needed because soldiers may not give emphasis on how they should control their finances.

"In the past, our soldiers have the tendency of borrowing, not worrying how they are going to pay for it. So we want to correct that mindset," Arevalo said.



GALVEZ

Peace talks doomed if held in PH—Sison

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallariJRNQ

LUCENA CITY—Holding formal peace talks in the Philippines as President Duterte insists will spell doom for negotiations between the government and communist rebels, the exiled founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said on Sunday.

"It's the end of peace negotiations if Duterte will dictate the venue where he can conduct surveillance and control," Jose Maria "Joma" Sison said in an online interview from Utrecht, the Netherlands, where he has been living as a political refugee since the mid-1980s.

Sison added: "The most effective way for the [government] to end the peace negotiations is to dictate that the venue is under the control of Duterte and his military brutes."

Revolutionaries do not negotiate under the terms and conditions "of an emergent fascist dictatorship and in a place where mass murders are occurring with impunity," said Sison, chief political consultant to the



Jose Maria Sison

National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), the CPP's political arm that is negotiating with the government.

On Thursday, the President canceled the resumption of formal talks in Oslo, Norway, scheduled for June 28. The date was agreed upon by government and NDFP negotiators in a

series of back-channel talks.

Mr. Duterte insisted that the talks be held in the Philippines next month but gave no specific dates.

Public consultations

Gen. Carlito Galvez, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, maintained that the deferment of formal peace talks was meant to give way to public consultations on "substantive issues" raised during the back-channel negotiations.

In an interview aired on Friday over AFP radio dwDD, Galvez said, "We support the President and the Opapp (Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process) to have more time so we could at least consult our constituents."

National security officials met with Mr. Duterte on Wednesday night.

Neutral venue

Sison said the talks could still proceed even if delayed for one or two months as long as these were held in a neutral venue abroad as agreed upon by both parties in the Joint Agree-

ment on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (Jasig) they signed in 1995.

Under the agreement, consultants and staff of the NDFP who are part of the negotiating team are granted immunity from arrest and detention and are provided safety guarantees.

Lessons of 1986 talks

Sison said the experience of the rebels during a ceasefire and failed peace negotiations in the Philippines in 1986 had taught them life-and-death lessons.

"The NDFP negotiators, auxiliary personnel and peace volunteers were all placed under surveillance. When the negotiation broke down in early 1987, lots of them were arrested, detained, tortured and killed," he said.

Disappointed with the cancellation of the resumption of formal talks, Fidel Agcaoili, NDFP peace panel chair, said one prerequisite for ensuring that gains in the peace talks were protected "is for both sides to stand by agreements." —WITH A REPORT FROM JEANNETTE LANDRADE INQ

BACK-CHANNEL TALKS

AGREEMENT ON DU30-JOMA MEETING IN PH REVEALED

By **Karlos Manlupig**
@kmanlupigINQ

and the NDFP by its chief negotiator, Fidel Agcaoili.

DAVAO CITY—The government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) had agreed to set a meeting between President Duterte and communist leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison in the Philippines, documents obtained by the Inquirer on Sunday showed.

The back-channel talks and signing of the documents were witnessed by Norway's special ambassador to the peace process, Idun Tvedt.

Visit of Sison

That was the plan as early as June 9 until Mr. Duterte on Thursday decided to postpone the talks, citing a need to "consult" the public.

"Both parties shall cooperate in facilitating the visit of Prof. Jose Maria Sison to the Philippines to confer with ... President Rodrigo Duterte and discuss the peace process and other matters, celebrate the conclusion of an interim peace agreement, as well as hold a peace conference at the earliest possible time, subject to the necessary political, legal, security and technical requirements," the agreement said.

In a document signed by the government and the NDFP, the parties agreed to form a bilateral preparatory committee to lay the ground for the temporary return of Sison to the country after years of exile in the Netherlands.

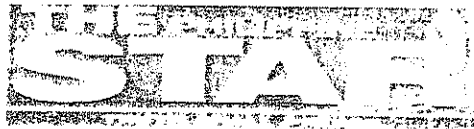
Mr. Duterte has been asking Sison, his former professor, to come home so they could meet and discuss ways to end the five-decade conflict. Sison has also expressed interest in meeting him.

After a series of back-channel talks, the parties signed an agreement setting guidelines for the resumption of peace talks between the government and the NDFP in Utrecht, the Netherlands, on June 9.

On Saturday, the NDFP made public the agreement on a stand-down for the resumption of peace talks with the government. INQ

The government was represented by Hernani Braganza

K



Planned military offensives behind peace talks cancellation — CPP

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

The unilateral cancellation by President Duterte of the scheduled resumption of peace negotiations on June 28 was made in view of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP)'s plan for an all-out military

offensive until the end of 2018, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) said yesterday.

"By calling off the scheduled peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front, Duterte aims to give the AFP more time to complete its military

campaign plan for 2018 of mounting bigger offensives under Oplan Kapayapaan in the hope of crippling the NPA (New People's Army) and inducing the NDF to negotiate a surrender," the CPP said in a statement posted on its website.

Last Friday, Duterte unilaterally cancelled the scheduled talks with the NDF after being briefed on the status of Oplan Kapayapaan in a meeting with the top brass of the AFP and defense officials.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana has publicly announced

that the military wants three to six more months before talks resume with the NDF.

In cancelling the talks, Duterte said he first wants to hold public consultations.

"This narrow pretext is a thin veil that fails to conceal his real aims," the CPP said.

The CPP said Duterte wants the AFP to rush its all-out offensives against the NPA.

The CPP said the AFP has recruited at least 5,000 troops last year and seeks to add 10,000 more until the end of the year.

Duterte is enabling the AFP to employ Marawi-style tactics of employing an overwhelming force to wage all-out war against civilian populations in order to claim and control their land, the party said.

"Even now, the AFP is mounting large-scale offensives nationwide, laying siege on several hundred rural barangays, targeting civilian populations, occupying schools and barangay halls, and unleashing its fascist brute force against unarmed people. The AFP carries out aerial bombings, artillery shelling, drone flying and other methods of intimidating the masses," the CPP said.

"Extrajudicial killings and other grave abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law run rampant," the CPP said. "Tens of thousands of peasants and national minority groups have been forced to leave their lands."

The CPP said that in Talaingod, Davao del Norte, one of the AFP's "focus areas," three battalions of army troops swarm the town's three barangays.

16

The CPP said that Talaingod is nestled in the Pantaron mountain range where the Manobo are struggling to defend their ancestral land.

"With their overwhelming presence, fascist combat troops of the AFP aim to intimidate the people, force them to 'surrender,' force them to leave their communities in order to seize control of the people's land and resources," the CPP said.

The group said other focus areas of the AFP are the Moro areas surrounding Liguasan Marsh, Quezon town, Bukidnon; Bilar town, Bohol, General Nakar and several towns in Bondoc peninsula in Quezon.

"Clearly, Duterte does not want the AFP's military campaign plan disrupted by the peace talks," the CPP said.

Formal peace negotiations were scheduled to resume on June 28 as agreed upon by the NDF and government negotiating panels after close to four months of back-channel talks.

A stand-down agreement was signed on June 8 and supposed to take effect one week before the opening of formal talks.

Agreements on a timetable and guidelines for resuming talks and forging an interim peace agreement (IPA) were also signed by both parties and witnessed by the Royal Norwegian special envoy.

The Interim Peace Agreement was expected to integrate three components: an agreement on agrarian reform and rural development and national industrialization and economic development, an amnesty proclamation to be certified as urgent to effect the release of all political prisoners, and a coordinated unilateral ceasefire.

A

CPP blasts govt halting of peace talks

THE Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on Sunday slammed the government's cancellation of peace negotiations, saying the decision was made to allow the Armed Forces of the Philippines to mount bigger offensives against the rebel group.

"By calling off the scheduled peace negotiations with the NDFP, Duterte aims to give the AFP more time to complete its military campaign plan for 2018 of mounting bigger offensives under Oplan Kapayapaan in the hope of crippling the NPA and inducing the NDFP to negotiate a surrender," the CPP said in a statement.

Last week, Duterte unilaterally cancelled the scheduled talks with the National Democratic Front, saying public consultations should first be held. The formal peace negotiations were scheduled on June 28-30.

"This narrow pretext is a thin veil that fails to conceal his real aims," the CPP said. "Duterte wants the AFP to rush its all-out offensives against the NPA (New People's Army). The AFP has recruited at least 5,000 troops last year and seeks to add 10,000 more troops until the end of the year. In doing so, Duterte is enabling the AFP to employ

Marawi-style tactics of employing an overwhelming force to wage all-out war against civilian populations in order to claim and control their land," it said.

"Clearly, Duterte does not want the AFP's military campaign plan disrupted by the peace talks," the group added.

NDF negotiator Fidel Agcaoili said his group was not remiss since it also held consultations.

"The NDFP has certainly not been remiss in consulting with the public at large, especially the oppressed and exploited classes and sectors of Philippine society," he said in a statement last week.

AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. reiterated the military's support to the government's decision to cancel the peace talks.

"This is because we have proposals, our friends have proposals during the backchannel talks and they have some substantial issues that should be consulted on the ground," Galvez said in a radio interview over the weekend.

He added that the government is also evaluating the provisions stated under the stand down agreement.

"I think the President is looking for more time to review the provisions," Galvez said.

12 DEMPSEY REYES

18

Resetting talks with Reds meant to protect peace gains – Dureza

By FRANCIS X. WAKEFIELD, HANNAH L. TORREGOZA, and CHARISSA M. LUGA-ATIENZA

Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Secretary Jesus Dureza said the resetting of the planned

peace talks with the communist side is exactly for the purpose of protecting the gains achieved in the backchannel talks

prior to the formal resumption of peace negotiations.

In a statement, Dureza said ▶ 6

Resetting talks with Reds... ◀ 1

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."

"We have even planned on inviting resource persons who participated in the recent back channel talks from both sides to engage the stakeholders together. We have already witnessed how this helped in the Bangsamoro peace efforts where leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front participated actively in the effort," Dureza said.

"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," he added.

Dureza said both sides of the negotiating table must be hand in hand in this effort, and they truly hope that the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) will join them in this crucial endeavor as any negative reaction can only further jeopardize the gains so far jointly achieved.

Represented at the talks are the CPP, along with its armed wing – the New

People's Army (NPA), and the National Democratic Front (NDF).

"While we do respect whatever stand they may have on the matter, we do hope our peace partners in the CPP-NPA-NDF will view all these developments in this light," Dureza said.

"Our people, in whose service and for whose benefit, all our efforts are for, must be with us in the quest for a just and lasting peace in our country," he explained.

Lorenzana chided Joima

Earlier, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said that NDF Chief Political Consultant, Prof. Jose Maria Sison, is acting like a "spoiled brat" and proving that he is very out of touch with reality.

It was a reaction to Sison commenting "that it is both disappointing and frustrating that the Duterte regime has unilaterally cancelled the scheduled start of the stand-down ceasefire on June 21 and the resumption of formal talks in the peace negotiations in Oslo a week later on June 28."

He also claimed that no less than President Duterte is the one destroying the peace talks.

"Instead of rationally talking with our panel to discuss how to move forward the resumption of the peace talks, he goes into tantrum and orders the NPA to wage

19

a people's war," Lorenzana said.

"His ego is robbing many Filipinos whom he has misled all these years, of what could be their best chance ever to rejoin their families and live productive lives," he added.

Lorenzana said it's easy for Sison to order the NPA to wage war and get killed while he is safely in the Netherlands enjoying a life of comfort and leisure.

"Your so-called army no longer listens to you. They are sick and tired of your lies and rhetoric, and are in fact heeding the call of President (Rodrigo) Duterte to come down and live peaceful lives and they are doing just that," Lorenzana said.

"They have been surrendering in droves since November last year. So you think you can force the government to the peace table by waging war? Don't underestimate President Duterte," he added.

Talks in PH

Senator Richard Gordon said yesterday that he supports calls for the resumption of peace talks between the government and communist rebel groups to be held on Philippine soil.

Gordon said bringing back the negotiating table in the country would primarily help the government save funds.

He said holding the peace talks within the Philippines would also help the government ascertain whether the CPP-NPA founder (Sison) still has control over their

armed wing (NPA).

"We need to know whether he still has control over his people. Because most of the time, even if there are peace talks, NPA elements still kill soldiers here," Gordon pointed out.

Duterte had earlier offered to shoulder the trip of communist leaders as soon as they agree to hold the peace talks within the country.

The President said he rejected Sison's suggestion that they meet in Vietnam and gave him 60 days to come home. He also said he would make sure that Sison does not get killed when he comes back to the country.

Earlier, Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said he supports the President's decision that the venue of the next round of peace talks be in the Philippines.

Drilon also suggested that the next round of talks should not include any international third party to accelerate the discussion.

"The peace talks have always been held in an international ground but it did not seem to accelerate discussion. Let the real peace talks begin in a local arena. No third party this time," Drilon said.

Peace saboteurs

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate is urging President Duterte not to give in to the whims of peace saboteurs and spoilers and immediately resume the

peace talks between the government and the communist rebels.

He said peace saboteurs are "already working hard now" in delaying the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)" scheduled supposedly on June 28.

"The peace saboteurs monkey-wrenched the peace negotiations even if there is already a joint stand-down agreement the NDFP signed with the government on June 8, as proof that the peace panels are serious in resuming the stalled talks," he said in a statement.

The Agreement on a Stand-Down for the Resumption of the Formal Peace Talks has been signed between the government peace panel, and the NDF panel.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Belló III, who heads the government peace panel, and members Hernani Braganza and Angela Librado-Trinidad signed the pact, while NDF chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili and panel members Julieta de Lima and Asterio Palima signed it for the NDFP panel.

"It is obvious that the peace saboteurs are trying all they can to pressure or arrest the consultants so that no talks can happen," the Davao-based solon said.

"President Duterte should not listen to these peace spoilers, reject their hawkish overtures, and immediately resume the peace talks," Zarate said.

Stand-down review set

More time needed to look at vague proposal

By Mario J. Mallari

A review of the vague stand-down agreement which was the brainchild of Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founding chairman Jose Maria Sison was among the issues that triggered the suspension of the resumption of the peace negotiations, AFP chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez said yesterday.

Government and communist group negotiators agreed on the stand-down agreement during the 600-channel talk in Utrecht, The Netherlands last June 8.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is evaluating provisions of the "stand down" agreement between the government of the Philippines (GPH) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) peace panels, Galvez said.

"We are evaluating the provisions, that's why I think the President is looking at more time to see the provisions," Galvez said.

The President has called off the resumption of formal peace talks between the GPH and NDFP peace panels scheduled June 28.

Mr. Duterte also wanted more public consultations before the formal talks resume.

The NDFP also revealed the contents of the "Agreement on a Stand-down for the Resumption of the Formal Peace Talks" have become a sticking point in the planned resumption of the talks.

A portion of the two-page document stated that "stand down shall be understood to mean temporary cessation of hostilities in which the contending armed units and personnel of the parties stay where they are (as is, where is), take

Turn to page 7

Stand-down review set

From page 1

active defense mode, and shall not commit any offensive action or operation against combatants and civilians."

"Stand-down shall be understood to mean temporary cessation of hostilities".

It added the stand-down shall be declared and announced simultaneously by both parties one week before the agreed date of the resumption of the formal talks.

Along with the stand-down agreement were drafts of the interim peace agreement and a general amnesty declaration on all political prisoners which the NDFP has demanded as condition to the signing of the peace deal.

The AFP chief supported the President's move for more consultations to ensure that the outcome of the negotiations is acceptable to the public.

"They have more substantial issues to consult on the ground," Galvez said.

Galvez, however, was mum on the discussions in Malacanang last Wednesday before the President announced the postponement.

"I will not divulge anything," he stressed.

The stand-down agreement was supposed to take effect June 21 to pave the way for the smooth resumption of the talks. It will eventually lead to a bilateral ceasefire based on the deal.

Earlier, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana had called for the clear definition of the term "stand down," noting the New People's Army (NPA), the armed

wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), has the penchant for taking advantage of a ceasefire.

Lorenzana expressed fears the NPA would exploit the stand-down agreement to intensify recruitment and regain control of barangays already cleared by the government from communist influence.

Galvez also stressed it should be both sides, meaning AFP and the NPA that will abide by the agreement instead of only the military.

Deal to get Congress nod

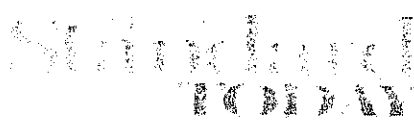
Chairman of the government negotiating team Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello said aside from public consultations, the draft peace agreement will also be presented to Congress.

Bello described the stand-down agreement as a "lower form" of ceasefire.

"After more than 30 peace negotiations, after five presidencies, we have drafted a final draft of an interim peace agreement. Although we call it an interim peace agreement, this will be the final peace agreement that we have been dreaming of," he said.

"Aside from the interim peace agreement, we are also discussing a Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms which is a component of the interim peace agreement. The Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire has become the stand-down. That would be included in the interim peace agreement," he added.

Bello said the government would not want to sign the interim peace agreement into a final one without knowing the position of lawmakers and other stakeholders.



Gov't forms 3 consultative teams on peace

By Joyce Pangco Pañares and Macon Ramos-Araneta

THE government panel negotiating a peace accord with the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front has created three teams to conduct consultations with local government units, Congress and the Supreme Court. *Next page*

Gov't... From A1

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, who is also the government chief negotiator for the peace talks, said this was in accordance with the decision of President Rodrigo Duterte to postpone the resumption of formal negotiations to allow the government to engage a "bigger peace table."

"The President does not want us to sign a final peace agreement that would just get rejected by Congress and the Supreme Court," Bello said in a phone interview from Doha.

The government and the CPP-NDF peace panels, Bello said, have already drafted an interim peace agreement, which once signed will form the meat of the final peace pact.

Both panels were supposed to meet on June 28 in Oslo, but Duterte decided to scrap the resumption of the peace talks Wednesday last week.

The President was reportedly irked with the media pronouncements of CPP founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison where

he announced the date of the negotiations as well as the June 21 date for a stand-down order for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, and New People's Army to take effect.

Bello admitted that while he signed the stand-down order together with his NDF counterpart, Fidel Agcaoili, it was agreed that they would jointly announce it in Manila on June 21.

He said Sison should have been "more prudent" instead of prematurely announcing the dates.

A well-placed source privy to the Joint AFP-PNP-Command Conference held in Malacañang where Duterte announced his decision said the media blitz of the exiled communist leader did not sit well with the President.

"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? Baka akala niya nanalo na sila sa giyera (Perhaps

he thought they already won the war)," the source said.

"How can Joma say there will be a ceasefire effective June 21? Sinong kausap niya? (Who is he talking to?) There are backchannel talks but nothing has been approved by the principal yet. Is he trying to preempt the government?" the source added.

Bello admitted that Duterte has yet to see a copy of the stand-down agreement and the draft interim peace agreement.

"We will move forward with the consultations. The President just wants to make sure that whatever document we sign will be acceptable to all stakeholders," he said.

With the President's decision to postpone the peace negotiations, five of six rebel leaders with standing arrest warrants who were supposed in the talks have gone underground.

Sison, however, said Duterte is to blame for the situation. "Duterte has made it impossible for our consultants to present themselves before the proper courts. Duterte removed the safe environment for them to face the court again."

23

Another NPA member yields to Army in Bukidnon

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City – A New People's Army (NPA) member surrendered to the commanding officer of the Army's Eighth Infantry Battalion (8th IB) in Bukidnon province, regional Army spokesperson Lt. Tere Ingente told The Manila Bulletin on Sunday.

Ingente said the former rebel, whom she identified as "Ka Tikboy," also turned over his M16 Armalite rifle and assorted live ammunition to the 8th IB commander Lt. Col. Ronaldo

Illana.

Ingente added the surrenderer was a regular fighter of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPA's North-Central Mindanao Regional Committee.

He is now currently being assisted by the 8th IB for his formal enrollment to the Comprehensive Local Intervention Program (CLIP) so that he can avail of the cash and livelihood support from the government.

Meanwhile, local officials have vowed to help the military campaign in ending the insurgency problem in Compostela Valley.

In a statement sent to The Manila Bulletin yesterday, Lt. Col. Esteveyn E. Ducusin, commanding officer of the Army's 71st Infantry (Kaibigan) Battalion said officials of the provincial government of Compostela Valley (ComVal) province, led by Gov. Jayvee Tyron L. Uy who is also the concurrent chairperson of the Southern Mindanao Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC); ComVal Rep. Ruwel Peter S. Gonzaga, and municipal mayors made their commitment when they visited the unit's headquarters in Mawab town on Friday morning.

"Purpose of their visit was to discuss the current thrust and programs of the battalion in support to the governments' peace and development initiatives particularly in the municipalities of Maco and Mawab (which are both) in ComVal province," the 71st IB commander said.

During the visit, Uy and local officials committed to rehabilitate and repair additional transient facilities for former rebels at the headquarters of the 71st IB so that it could accommodate returnees.

18 10-10-2019 INQUIRER Page 112

Du30 promise: If there's oil in marsh, Moros will own it

President makes commitment in pitch for BBL at gathering for end of Ramadan

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

Any oil or gas found in the 330,000-square-kilometer Liguasan Marsh belonged to Moros, President Duterte said on Saturday.

In a pitch for the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), Mr. Duterte said one of the sources of anxiety among Moro communities was the supposed untapped resources of Liguasan Marsh.

"If there are trillions of cubic meters of oil, do not be worried at all," the President said in a dialogue with Muslim communities during the celebration of Eid al-Fitr in Davao City.

'I promise you'

"The government will not claim that, that's yours," he said, referring to oil and gas reserves believed to be untapped at Lake Buluan in Liguasan Marsh. The deposits were believed to be 68

billion cubic meters worth at least \$1 trillion.

"I promise you, and that's my commitment, it belongs to the Moro people. That's yours," Mr. Duterte said.

But the President said should the area yield that much gas and oil, the Moro people should not "forbid others" from partaking of the bounty.

"My God, all of them will come flocking [to Liguasan]," Mr. Duterte said.

"Christians, Muslims, 'lumad' will join the fray to enjoy progress and development," he added.

He also reminded Moros that they would need to pay taxes to the national government if oil and gas were found in Liguasan.

Oil and progress

Under the BBL, the area "will remain in your control and possession," Mr. Duterte said. "But you just have to pay taxes," he said.

After starting the operations of an oil field found in Alegria town, Cebu province, Mr. Duterte blamed lack of oil for the Philippines' slow progress.

But the proposed BBL was unclear over control of Liguasan Marsh.

The Senate and House versions of the proposed measure stated that fossil fuel deposits found in areas covered by the new autonomous region proposed by the BBL shall be "co-managed" by the autonomous and national governments.

Congressman's claim

The two bills stated that there shall be "joint exploration, development and utilization" of resources within the autonomous area.

But income from all other resources, including metals, shall "pertain fully to the Bangsamoro government."

The House and Senate passed their versions of the BBL.

earlier this month.

Excitement over resources in Liguasan was generated by the claim made by Rep. Zajid Mangudadatu, who had said the area beneath Lake Buluan contained 68 billion cubic feet of gas, citing a government survey.

In his pitch for the BBL, Mr. Duterte said he would try to convince Congress to pass the proposed measure without "cuts."

"I'm sure the Speaker would agree with me," the President said at the gathering of at least 650 Moro leaders and government officials.

He said he was consulting with Moro leader Nur Misuari because he wanted to make the new autonomous setup "inclusive."

More power

A12

Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front also has a peace agreement with the government.

The BBL, crafted under a peace agreement with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), seeks to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao with a new autonomous government that would have more powers and bigger territory.

The MILF expressed frustration at the slow pace with which Congress was deliberating on the BBL, blaming the delay on "political interests."

MILF leader Murad Ebrahim said the BBL should be compliant with the peace agreement signed by the MILF and the government under the administration of Benigno Aquino III.

Ebrahim said the BBL faced hurdles like "parochial political interests, ingrained biases, ignorance and fear, and even arrogance from the powers that be."

He said, however, that the MILF continued to pursue the BBL to bring peace to Mindanao.

—WITH REPORTS FROM DJ YAP, ALLAN NAWAL AND KARLOS MANLUPIG INQ

Rody ready to quit during transition

By ALEXIS ROMERO

After a member of the consultative committee (Concom) said that President Duterte could seek reelection if allowed by the new Constitution, the Chief Executive stressed he is ready to step down during the transition to federalism.

"We're just trying to perfect everything and if you want a new leader during the transition, you can provide it in the law itself, creating the parliament, the system of the distribution of the regional autonomous region, and I would be happy to step down," Duterte said during the Eid al-Fitr celebration in Davao City on Saturday.

"During the transition... (if) you want a new leader, I am telling you now, I will step down if that is the wish of the Filipino people. Do not believe I intended to stay forever," he added.

Last week, former Senate president Aquilino Pimentel Jr said the Concom would recommend that the President be given a four-year term, with

the right to one reelection under a new Charter.

Pimentel, a member of the committee, said Duterte might be reelected "if allowed by the new Constitution."

Duterte described as garbage claims that he is using his influence to amend the Constitution to extend his term.

Transforming the government from unitary to federal is one of the campaign promises of Duterte, who believes that the system will bring peace and development in Mindanao.

Under a federal system, local government units will be given more powers including imposing taxes and creating courts.

Duterte said it's about time the Philippines adopts a fed-

eral set-up.

BBL passage

Meanwhile, Duterte ensured the passage of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) after certain kinks are ironed out by Congress.

He said he wants the BBL to be passed during his term.

"I hope Chairman (Nur) Misuari can be convinced to join the talks so that if there are corrections or maybe additions or provisions that would not sit well with Tausug and the rest of the southern part of Mindanao, we can ease the friction of the MI..., MN... and the rest of Mindanao," Duterte said referring to the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

He said the Muslims should give the government more time to thresh out their concerns if the proposed BBL fails to hurdle Congress.

He said he does not want to declare war against fellow Filipinos.

House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, who attended the Eid al-Fitr celebration, said the bicameral committee would work fast for the passage of the BBL.

"We will convene the bicameral committee before sessions start next month," Alvarez said, adding he hopes the BBL will be passed in time for Duterte's state of the nation address next month.

"As long as each provision of the proposed law would be constitutional, then we can work from there," Alvarez said.

Duterte also stressed the importance of the sacrifice and charity in the Islamic faith for the sake of unity and peace in the country.

"The Islamic faith reveals to us the importance of sacrifice and charity. Let these values guide us as we pursue real and lasting change through peace, unity, and prosperity," he said, as he urged Muslim Filipinos not to support Islamic militant groups. — With Edith Regalado

Duterte reaches out to Misuari

BY RALPH EDWIN U. VILLANUEVA

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte expressed hope that Nur Misuari, the founder of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), would take part in drafting the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

"We will try to pass the BBL. I hope Chairman Misuari can be convinced to join the talks," Duterte said.

He added that Misuari's inputs would be vital in case some of the provisions are contested by the MNLF, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, or other groups.

The BBL seeks to abolish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and replace it with a Bangsamoro region.

Duterte had repeatedly stressed the crucial role of the BBL in main-

taining peace in Mindanao.

"Are we ready to fight just like the Middle East? Look at Marawi. If the area will be made into a larger area of conflict, you really think we would be happy to see war in our country?" he said.

"A communal war is more cruel and it would be better [to fight against] other bloods, but an internecine within is really very deadly. And that is why I said, the time for [BBL is ripe,] at the very least that's the MILF is asking for,"

Duterte added.

"If we cannot reach a settlement, I am in the middle. I will have a hard time. Who will I shoot? The soldiers of the Republic of the Philippines or the soldiers of the MI(LF) and MN(LF) and the rest of the revolutionary groups here?" he said.

"That is why it is very important that we get together. We will try to pass the BBL with no catch," Duterte added.

The Senate and the House of Representatives passed their respective versions of the BBL in May.

The President received a copy of the draft Bangsamoro State Constitution prepared by a 19-member All Moro Convention.

Michael Mastura, president of the All Moro Convention and head of the drafting team, gave the copy during the Eid'l Fitr celebration held at the SMX

Convention Center on Saturday.

Another copy will be given to the Constitutional Committee that is currently working on a federal Constitution.

He also encouraged the MILF led by its chairman, Al Haj-Murad Ebrahim, to join and observe how the government is crafting federalism.

"If nothing really works out of BBL, then give us time because I do not want to fight. I do not wage a war against my own countrymen," he stressed.

Duterte urged Murad to wait for the passage of the final version of the BBL, assuring him that what is not included in the BBL can be added in the federal scheme of things.

"Ilagay na natin (Let's include it there). But it must be something like alongside the Philippine Constitution," Duterte said.

WITH PNA

Du30 vows to pass BBL 'uncut'

A DAY after Eid'l Fitr or the end of Ramadan, President Rodrigo Duterte on Saturday night reiterated his promise to try to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law "without any cuts," but at the same time sought more time in case it did not work out.

"We will try to pass the BBL with no cuts. I'm sure the Speaker will agree with me," Duterte said in his speech at the SMX Convention Center in Davao City, referring to House Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez.

The same day, Duterte received a copy of the draft Bangsamoro State Constitution, an alternative solution within the

framework of federalism drafted by a 19-member All Moro Convention.

Duterte urged Moro Islamic Liberation Front chairman Murad Ebrahim to wait for the passage of the final version of the BBL, assuring him that what was not included in BBL could be added in the federal scheme of things.

"If nothing really works out with the

BBL, then give us time because I do not want to fight. I do not wage war against my own countrymen," Duterte said.

Alvarez was one of the lawmakers who asked Duterte to certify the BBL as urgent, and Duterte acknowledged that request on May 29.

Duterte also expressed hope that Moro National Liberation Front founding chairman Nur Misuari would join the peace talks.

"We will try to pass the BBL. I hope Chairman Misuari can be convinced to join the talks so that if there are corrections or maybe additions or provisions that would not sit well with the Tausug and the rest of the southern part of Mindanao, then maybe we can realize alto-

gether the friction," Duterte said.

But he said if he remained stubborn and insisted on intransigence, it could result in war, which he said he did not want to experience during his term.

Duterte reiterated his commitment to shift to a federal form of government along with the BBL to alleviate poverty and the Muslim separatist insurgency.

"The time for federalism has come to our country. We have to move away from the unitary form of government, which has been in existence or set up originally by the Spaniards," Duterte said.

"Look, we're all human beings. Let us not abandon each other. Let us not forget that we belong to the Malay race." PNA

18

June 2018

Page 4

Bangsamoro charter sent to Duterte

A copy of the draft Bangsamoro State Constitution drafted by a 19-member All Moro Convention is already with President Rodrigo Duterte.

Lawyer Michael Mastura, president of the All Moro Convention and head of the drafting team, handed over to the President a copy of the Bangsamoro State Constitution during the 2018 Eid'ul Fitr celebration held at the SMK Convention Center on Saturday night here.

Another copy will be given to the Constitutional Committee

(ConCom) tasked to review the 1987 Constitution, the body which is currently working on a federal Constitution.

The draft Bangsamoro State Constitution was prepared starting December 2017 and signed by the members of the All-Moro Convention and the technical working group on June 2 at the Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) office.

Mastura said the 19 members of the All Moro Convention met in December 2017 and agreed that they must write a state

constitution for the Bangsamoro that would jive with the proposal of the President to shift to federalism.

"We have to move away from the style of a unitary form of government".

Speaking before Moro leaders including the members of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission, members of the Cabinet, House of Representatives and the Senate, Mr. Duterte reiterated that the time for federalism has come to the country.

"We have to move away

from the style of a unitary form of government, which has been in existence or set up originally by the Spaniards. It has always been a strong central government," he said.

Unitary outdated

The unitary government, Duterte said, was good at that time because the Philippines was developing as a nation amid the struggles of both Christians and Muslims in Mindanao.

"I am for federalism. I am for peace," Duterte stressed.

He also invited Moro National

Liberation Front (MNLF) Chairman Nur Misuari to join the talks so that corrections or additions that would sit well with the Tausug and the southern part of Mindanao could be corrected.

He also encouraged the MILF, led by its chairman, Al Haj-Murad Ebrahim, to join and observe how the government is crafting federalism.

The Congress is eyeing the ratification of a bicameral conference committee report on the BBL in July when Duterte delivers his state of the nation

address.

A bicameral conference will need to reconcile the versions of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

"If nothing really works out of BBL, then give us time because I do not want to fight. I do not wage a war against my own countrymen," he stressed.

Duterte urged Murad to wait for the passage of the final version of the BBL, assuring him that what is not included in the BBL can be added in the federal scheme of things. 4

Duterte: Gov't needs more time to pass BBL

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte on Saturday night asked for more time for government to pass the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) as he said, for the nth time, he is committed to the passage of the priority legislative measure along with the shift from the unitary form of government to a federal form.

The President, during the Eid'l Fitr celebration in Davao City, reiterated he does not like fighting with fellow Filipinos. Duterte has said some members of the Muslim community might be forced to take up arms again in case the BBL is not passed.

"If per chance, if nothing really works out dito sa (in this) BBL, then give us time because I do not want to fight, I do not wage a war against my

own countrymen," he said.

The President said government will pass the BBL which will pave the way for the creation of a Bangsamoro region in Mindanao, which will replace the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. The creation of the new region is part of a peace agreement signed by government with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in March 2014.

The MILF has said failure to pass the BBL could add to frustration in Mindanao, which could fuel extremism.

The Senate and House of Representatives passed their own versions of the BBL month before going on break early this month. The two versions will be tackled by a bicameral panel and a consolidated report is expected to be signed

by President Duterte on July 25 when Congress resumes session.

The original target was to pass the BBL by March, then before the congressional break.

Among contentious issues in the BBL are the "opt in" provision and setting up of regional armed and police forces in the Bangsamoro region, which the national government is opposing.

The President expressed hope that Nur Misuari, founding chair of the Moro National Liberation Front which signed a peace accord with government in September 1996, will join discussions on the BBL and the peace efforts in Mindanao.

"We will try to pass the BBL. I hope chairman Misuari can be convinced to join the talks so that if there are corrections or

maybe additions or provisions that could not sit well with the Tausug and the rest of the southern part of Mindanao, then maybe we can realize altogether the friction of MI (MILF), MN (MNLF) and the rest of Mindanao," he said.

The President stressed that the passage of the BBL and a shift to federalism would not just address the historical injustices committed against Muslims but also usher in peace and development in Mindanao.

"The time for federalism has come to our country. We have to move away from the style of unitary form of government which has been in existence or set up originally by the Spaniards," Duterte said as said Filipinos should "not forget that

DUTERTE

we belong to the Malay race.”

The President reiterated that he is willing to step down before his term ends in 2022 if the shift to federalism would be realized soon.

A consultative committee formed by Duterte to review and recommended amendments to the 1987 Constitution is expected to submit its proposals, including a draft Federal Constitution, to the President on or before July 9.

The committee is set to kick off its regional consultations in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental today and proceed to Baguio City for its June 25 to 27 presentations and consultations.

PLEBISCITE

Deputy Speaker Fred Castro advised the administration against holding the plebiscite for the proposed shift to federalism simultaneously with the 2019 midterm elections, saying the new constitution will surely be “half-baked.”

“There’s no need to do it in 2019,” he told dzBB. “If we’re talking about saving money, the quality of the amendments might be sacrificed because of time constraint.”

Castro proposed that the plebiscite for the proposed shift

to federalism be held before May 2022, or before President Duterte’s term expires.

“If we can’t really beat the 2019 election (deadline) and our President really wants to establish a federal government through the ratification of a new Constitution by the people (in a plebiscite), let’s not impose a time constraint on ourselves,” he said.

Castro, however, admitted that the 2022 national elections may still be cancelled as the government transitions to federalism. He said the election may be postponed for a year before an election of new federal officials be held.

Castro tried to disabuse the public’s mind that such no-election scenario in 2022 would only lead to the term extension of elected officials.

“That’s (election postponement) not for term extension as some detractors would say – that’s not an extension,” he said.

The administration lawmaker reminded the public that the election was also suspended when the Constitution was amended after the 1986 EDSA Revolution.

“That happens every time a Constitution is amended because you’ll need time for a transitory period to put in place the government under a new Constitution,” Castro explained. — *With Wendell Vigilina*



Abu bandit slain in Sulu encounter

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

A suspected Abu Sayyaf bandit was killed in an encounter with government forces in Patikul, Sulu on Saturday night.

The suspect, whose name was not immediately available, was killed in a pursuit operation in Barangay Panglayahan at around 6.30 p.m.

The firefight started at past 3 p.m. between the members of the Army's 32nd Infantry Battalion and some 40 bandits led by a certain Hajaan Sawadjaan, according to Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, chief of the Joint Task Force Sulu.

The initial encounter lasted 35 minutes after the bandits retreated toward the hinterlands.

No casualty was reported among the government security forces.

The military recovered improvised explosive devices and personal belongings of the bandits at the scene.

Pabayo said villagers inform the military every time the bandits come to the area.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, chief of the Western Mindanao Command, said the military has been implementing intensified operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

14
- With Roel Pareño

Nationinbrief

ANOTHER SAYYAF KILLED IN SULU ENCOUNTER

AN Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) member was killed on Saturday night in a pursuit operation following an encounter with government troops in Patikul, Sulu. Brig. Gen. Divino Rey Pabayo, Joint Task Force Sulu commander, said the encounter started at 3:20 p.m. at Barangay Panglayahan when the Philippine Army's 32nd Infantry Battalion engaged a group of about 40 ASG bandits led by Hajaan Sawadjaan. The gunfight lasted for 35 minutes resulting in the death of an unidentified bandit but there was no reported casualty on the side of the military who recovered improvised explosives and personal belongings of the bandits at the encounter site. Lt. Col. Gerry Basana, WestMinCom spokesman, claimed that almost a hundred ASG members from Basilan and Sulu have surrendered as operations against them were intensified.

AT DEMPSEY REYES

19 June 2018

19

Pregnant farmer killed by mortar fire in Maguindanao

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

COTABATO CITY—A woman, who was believed pregnant, was killed, while her 14-year-old co-farm worker was wounded Saturday by mortar fire at the height of resumed military offensives against members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao, according to civilian and Army officials.

Initial reports identified the fatality as Naano Mangintas and the wounded boy as Nene Mohammad.

The victims were reportedly tend-

ing to a rice farm in Lower Idig, Gen. Salada Pandatun town in Maguindanao when a mortar round hit Saturday morning, lawyer Maguifi Sinarimbo said in a social media post.

Mangintas was reportedly killed on the spot while Mohammad was rushed to hospital for treatment, added Sinarimbo, a former executive secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Soldiers, backed by air support and mortar fire on June 9, launched surgical offensives on a makeshift bomb-making factory and other lairs of BIFF

combatants led by certain commander Bungos and Abu Haraife in some sections of the Liguasan Marsh bordering Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Fifteen rebels were killed and the factory was overrun in the first day of operations, which were coordinated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Army's 6th Infantry Division (6ID) said earlier.

The military operations were suspended during the celebration of the Eid'l Fitr (end of Ramadan fasting) on June 15, but resumed last Saturday, according to Sinarimbo.

18 June 2018

Page 4

Mortar strike kills pregnant woman

COTABATO CITY – A woman, reportedly pregnant, was killed and a boy was injured on Saturday in mortar shelling amid resumed military offensives against members of the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Maguindanao, according to civilian and Army officials.

Initial reports identified the fatality as Naano Mangintas and the wounded boy as Nene Mohammad, 14 years old.

The report was later on confirmed by Army Capt. Ervin Encinas who spoke for the 6th Infantry Division.

The victims were tending rice

farm in Lower Idtig, Gen. Saliada Pendatun town in Maguindanao when a mortar round hit their location Saturday morning, lawyer Naguib Sinarimbo said his news breaking Facebook post.

Mangintas died on the spot while the boy was rushed to hospital for treatment, said Sinarimbo, a former executive secretary of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Soldiers backed by airstrikes and mortar fires on June 9 launched surgical offensives on a makeshift bomb-making factory and other lairs of BIFF combatants led by certain kumander Bungos and

Abu Toraife in some sections of the Liguasan Marsh bordering Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

Fifteen rebels were killed and the factory was overrun in the first day of operations, which have been coordinated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Army's 6th Infantry Division (6ID) said earlier.

The military operations were suspended during the celebration of the Eid' Fitr (end of Ramahan fasting) on June 15, but have been resumed last Saturday, according to Senarimbo. (Ali G. Macabalang)

61

SA GITNA NG MILITARY OPS

Buntis patay, binatilyo sugatan sa bomba

Nina **ALI G. MACABALANG** at **FER TABOY**

COTABATO CITY - Patay ang isang babae, iniulat na buntis, at sugatan ang isang lalaki nang masabugan ng bomba sa pagpapatuloy ng military operation laban sa mga miyembro ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) sa Maguindanao, sinabi ng sibilyan at Army officials nitong Sabado.

Kinilala ang namatay na si Naano Mangintas at ang sugatan ay si Nene Mohammad, 14 anyos.

Sa imbestigasyon, nagdidilig ang mga biktima sa palayan sa Lower Idtig, Gen. Saliada Pendatun, sa Maguindanao nang tamaan ng bomba sa nasabing lugar nitong Sabado ng umaga, ayon sa abogadong si Naguib Sinarimbo.

Dead on the spot si Mangintas habang isinugod sa ospital ang lalaki, ayon kay Sinarimbo, dating executive secretary ng Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Naglunsad ang mga sundalo ng surgical offensives sa isang pabrika ng bomba at iba pang kuta ng BIFF combatant sa pamumuno ng isang kumander Bungos at Abu Toraiife sa ilang bahagi ng

Liguasan Marsh sa hangganan ng Maguindanao at North Cotabato nitong Hunyo 9.

Patay ang 15 rebelde at nakubkob ang pabrika sa unang araw ng operasyon sa pakikipagtulungan sa Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), ayon sa Army's 6th Infantry Division (6ID).

Sinuspinde ang military operations sa pagdiriwang ng Eid'l Fitr (pagtatapos ng Ramadhan) nitong Hunyo 15 ngunit

ipinagpatuloy nitong Sabado, ayon kay Sinarimbo.

Ibinahagi ni Sinarimbo, na nagkaloob ng legal assistance sa MILF technical working group na nagsusulong sa Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) sa Kongreso, sa Facebook ang ilang larawan na nagpapakita sa pagbuhat ng mga residente sa bangkay ng biktima.

Kinumprima ngayon ni Army Capt. Ervin Encinas, tagapagsalita ng 6ID, ang pagkamatay ng babae at pagkasugat ng binatilyo.



NASABUGAN NG BOMBA SA PALAYAN Makikita sa larawan, na ipinagkaloob ni Atty. Naguib Sinarimbo sa pamamagitan ng Facebook, ang mga residente na bumuhat sa bangkay ng buntis na nasabugan ng bomba sa gitna ng military operations sa Maguindanao. 5

ASG member slain in Sulu encounter

By NONOYE LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY - An Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) gunman was killed during an intensified military pursuit operation conducted in Patikul, Sulu by troops of the Joint Task Force Sulu.

JTF-Sulu Commander Brig. Gen. Divino Rey C. Pabayo said that a 35-minute encounter that began at 3:20 pm, Saturday resulted in the killing of the still unidentified ASG member.

Pabayo said the encounter took place in Sitio Saalih of Barangay Panglayahan in Patikul, Sulu when elements of the 32nd Infantry Battalion under Lt. Col. Ronaldo Mateo chanced upon the group of ASG leader Hajaan Sawadjaan and 40 of his men.

In the clearing operations after the firefight, soldiers recovered the body of

the ASG member, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and some personal belongings of the bandits.

The military did not suffer any casualty during the encounter, the military said.

The military said "We are thankful for the information given by the local populace every time the bandits come to the area.

Armed Forces of the Philippines, Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) Commander Lt. Gen. Arnel Dela Vega said: "Our intensified security operation against the ASG is meant to finish off the bandits so that people in the area can live in peace.

"Aside from protecting the people, we also have to secure on-going government flagship projects there that are meant to deliver services to the communities," Dela Vega said.

For this year alone, almost a hundred ASG members have re-joined their families after yielding to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, in coordination with the local government units in various municipalities of Sulu and Basilan alone.

18 ... 10/20/15

PHOTO COPY

B2

Abu Sayyaf bandit killed in Sulu

BY VICTOR REYES

A MEMBER of the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf was killed and three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were recovered following a firefight with government troops in Patikul town in Sulu Saturday afternoon.

Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command, said soldiers clashed with about 40 Abu Sayyaf men, under sub-leader Haidi Hajan Sawadjaan, at around 3:25 p.m.

The Abu Sayyaf men withdrew after a 35-minute firefight, leaving

behind their slain comrade. Also recovered at the scene, were three IEDs and personal belongings of the group.

Lt. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, chief of the AFP Western Mindanao Command, said government forces are stepping up operations against the Abu Sayyaf to "finish off the bandits so that people in the area can live in peace."

"Aside from protecting the people, we (military) also have to secure ongoing government flagship projects there that are meant to deliver services to the communities," Dela Vega also said. B2

10

June 2018

INQUIRY

NC

GOLEZ'S THOUGHTS ON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTES

'OUR STRONGEST WEAPON AGAINST A BIG NATION LIKE CHINA IS NOISE'

As national security adviser to former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Roilo Golez urged an aggressive diplomatic campaign to counter China's increasing encroachment on Philippine territory in the South China Sea.

"Our strongest weapon against a big nation like China is noise," Golez once said.

He kept making noise about China's militarization of the South China Sea up to his last hours, in an interview on dzRH radio early on June 11.

The former Philippine Navy officer and member of the House of Representatives died of a heart attack later that Monday morning. He was 71.

He was buried at Heritage Park in Taguig City on Saturday.

Golez was a lecturer at the National Defense College of the Philippines and one of the three organizers of the West Philippine Sea Coalition.

He was also the founder and chair of the Movement and Alliance to Resist China's Aggression.

Below are some of his thoughts on the South China Sea disputes.

Multilateral forums

• "We should use multilateral forums to tell the world what China is doing."

Golez made that statement in a radio interview shortly after he assumed office as national security adviser in 2001. "Our strongest weapon against a big nation like China is noise," he said.

China at the time was massing fishing vessels near Panatag Shoal (international name: Scarborough Shoal), a rich fishing ground located 230 kilometers from the coast of Zambales province.

China eventually seized the shoal in 2012, forcing the Philippines to challenge Beijing's claim to nearly all of the South China Sea in the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which resolved the case in Manila's favor in 2016.

It's all about oil

• "The issue in the Spratlys is oil. Lots and lots of oil. Roughly around \$3 trillion worth of oil plus natural gas and other mineral resources. And China's huge military might is apparently to clobber its tiny neighbors, including the Philippines, to dominate the vast oil deposits believed to be in Spratlys."

As a member of the House of Representatives 20 years ago, Golez gave the reasons for China's oil motive in "The Spratlys: Challenges and Opportunities": "It is projected that China, pre-

viously a net exporter of oil as late as 1990, will need to import around 1,200,000 barrels of oil a day by the year 2000. China is obviously thirsting for the Spratlys' nearly 200 billion barrels of oil believed to be deposited in the area as estimated by the Chinese Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources."

He added: "The [Spratly] islands not only occupy an important strategic position, but every reef and island is connected to a large area of territorial water and an exclusive economic zone that is priceless."

The Spratly archipelago in the middle of the South China Sea consists of more than 100 small islands, reefs and atolls surrounded by rich fishing grounds. Many of them are believed to be sitting atop vast oil and natural gas deposits.

The Spratlys are claimed in their entirety by China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, while some parts of the archipelago are claimed by Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines.

About 45 islands are occupied by relatively small numbers of military forces from China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Fortified reefs

• "Using their superior

forces and technology, the Chinese have converted several of the reefs into garrisons and virtual minibases for their warships."

By 1998, Golez said, China already had a chain of fortified reefs over a 223-kilometer line pointing eastward like a dagger at the Palawan Passage and encircling the islands claimed by the Philippines, as well as acting as an observation post over Reed to (Reed) Bank.

"These fortified reefs include the Fiery Cross (known as Kagitingan in the Philippines) Reef, Chigua Reef [or] Johnson (South) Reef (Mabini), Gaven Reef (Burgos), etc., and the last target appears to be Mischief (Panganiban) Reef," Golez said.

"If unchallenged, the Chinese apparently intend to construct huge concrete structures similar to those already existing in the aforementioned reefs," he added.

Learning from Vietnam

• "We can learn from the Vietnamese, who have shown persistence and fortitude in fighting for their claims."

Golez said Vietnam, a Southeast Asian nation hardened by decades of fighting giant powers, had been engaged in near skirmishes with China in spite

of the mauling its naval forces received from the Chinese Navy in 1988.

In September 1988, it was China's turn to protest Vietnam's grabbing a few reefs in the South China Sea.

Joint dev't agreement

• "I also hope, however bleak the prospects are, avenues will be opened for a joint development agreement (JDA)."

A JDA has been proposed as a way forward for claimants in the Spratlys. By pooling resources, all could effectively exploit their offshore resources.

International outrage

• "I'm worried that without outrage, if the world will not be angry, China's next step is to go down south closer to us."

Golez expressed this worry a few months before the May 2016 elections after reports that China had deployed surface-to-air missiles on Woody Island in the Paracel archipelago and installed radars on Calderon (Cuarteron) Reef, part of the Kalayaan Group of Islands, and that China had sent seven ships to Quirino (Jackson) Atoll, preventing Filipino fishermen from accessing traditional fishing grounds.

Golez said that without suf-

ficient international outrage, Beijing's next move might be to deploy anti-aircraft missiles and install radars on territory closer to the Philippine mainland.

• "We cannot compromise our territorial integrity."

Just days before he died, Golez reminded the government of the importance of national security, saying "it cannot be compromised" for economic gains.

Golez's comment followed reports that China had deployed long-range bombers on disputed islands in the South China Sea.

In an interview on ABS-CBN, Golez said this was a "clear and present danger to the Philippines" that should prompt President Duterte to convene the National Security Council to assess how to handle the situation.

Golez said the landing of bombers was too big an escalation of the tensions in the South China Sea for the Philippines to ignore and predicted that more bombers would be deployed in the Spratly islands next.

"I strongly recommend for the Philippines finally to lodge a very strong diplomatic protest," he said.

—COMPILED BY INQUIRER RESEARCH
Sources: Inquirer Archives and ABS-CBN website

Isn't a Chinese military invasion a redundancy?

TWO major Senate committees—those on foreign relations and on national defense and security—have decided to inquire into President Rodrigo Duterte's policy on the People's Republic of China. This is long overdue. It is necessary for the nation to see not only what DU30 is doing and wants to do on



FIRST THINGS FIRST FRANCISCO S. TATAD

China, but also what China is doing and intends to do in
➤ TatadA5

■ TATAD FROM A1

the Philippines and to the Philippines. Former National Security Adviser and Defense Secretary Norberto B. Gonzales has suggested in a recent online article that China could ultimately invade the Philippines. I spoke with Gonzales about this on my weekly GNN Destiny cable TV program ("Una sa Lahat") yesterday evening, but did not have enough time for all my questions.

In his article, the former national security adviser says that while China does not have a history of invading other countries, it is not averse to using its military might to settle territorial disputes. He offers no details. There are tensions between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, between China and Vietnam over the Paracels, between China and India over their border, the McMahon Line, and there have been hostile incidents between the parties in these areas. But in fairness to China, it has not attempted to resolve these disputes by means of force.

A Chinese invasion?

Still, Gonzales suggests a violent confrontation could occur between China and the Philippines in the Spratlys where China has occupied, fortified and installed cruise missiles on islands, islets, reefs and shoals recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to lie within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone. He suggests that China could invade in order to permanently occupy these disputed areas.

And he believes that should China invade, Chinese bombers and missiles could easily destroy military and non-military targets before the UN Security Council or the United States, the Philippines' mutual defense treaty ally, could respond to the aggression. Nonsense, says a spokesman of the Chinese government. Because of China's exceptionally strong relationship with the Duterte government, such theory is absurd and unthinkable, he suggests.

Gonzales on the other hand insists it is not the least unthinkable. To him, China could use its military bases in the Spratlys as the beachhead of its invasion of the nation's heartland. This theory is obviously shared by some defense and security analysts and professionals, and even by plain, ordinary citizens. It would be useful to examine this theory in a joint Senate committee investigation.

A contingency plan

Whether or not there is reason to fear the possibility or imminence of a Chinese invasion, there is obvious merit in Gonzales's call for a national contingency plan that includes the formation of a citizens' army to improve the nation's capability to contain an aggressor. The potential aggressor need not be Chinese; the threat could come from any source. It is always better to be prepared should adversity strike than to be totally unprepared if and when it does.

But while our attention is being drawn to a possible Chinese armed

invasion that may or may not occur, we are also being shunted away from the actual invasion that is already taking place and already in its advanced stages. This is not military, but far more real than that which is yet to come. I am not convinced China will need to unleash its military might against us, in order to subjugate us or put us under its control. That would be a superfluity, given the master-client relationship that now obtains between Beijing and the Duterte administration.

42

The US will intervene

Under DU30, the Philippines has virtually become a Chinese province. An armed invasion would be an unnecessary act of madness that could kill so many resident and visiting Chinese nationals, and prompt the United States, the country's mutual defense treaty ally, to intervene. There is no reason in the world for the US not to intervene.

Under the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty, an armed attack on one party will be considered an armed attack on the other, which must be met with a timely and sufficient armed response. Although the treaty does not contain an "automatic retaliatory clause," it is idle to speculate that if the Philippines were attacked, Donald Trump or whoever is sitting as US president would for one moment hesitate and wait for the US Congress to declare a state of war before pushing the necessary buttons that must be pushed. We saw this in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria, where the US president acted without the prior authorization of Congress.

Because China threatens to displace America as the dominant Asia Pacific power, the war hawks in the US would most certainly welcome a convenient excuse to strike at China before it becomes a full-fledged political and military world power. There can be no danger of a delayed US response to a Chinese version of a Pearl Harbor. China has a standing army of 2.3 million men, an air force with over 3,000 fighter jets, bombers and other planes, a navy with 492 warships, 68 submarines, 710 naval aircraft, and at least one aircraft carrier. But it is still no match to the US, the mightiest military power the world has ever seen. Thus, the war hawks will want to hit China before it achieves complete military parity with the lone superpower.

China knows the odds

The Chinese know this. They know that as of now they cannot disable the US at the first exchange of intercontinental ballistic missiles. The last high-ranking US combat general who spoke about it was not exaggerating when he said the US Marines have a very long experience in removing offensive "islands" similar to those in the Spratlys where the Chinese have installed cruise missiles. The millennia-wise Chinese will therefore avoid a nuclear showdown.

Moreover, China does not have to attack and try to overrun the Philippines to get what it wants. Without

having to use force, it has already subjugated the country by political and economic means, and achieved the gains of effective "enemy occupation," without the population being aware of it. An estimated 800,000 Chinese individuals are reported to have already landed in the country to engage in what intelligence sources suspect could well include arms and drugs smuggling, money counterfeiting and laundering, gambling operations, illegal mining, illegal real estate acquisitions, and not the least, political party work for the Chinese Communist Party to help the local communists prepare for their eventual takeover of the Philippine government.

Large tracts of land and substantial mining operations, otherwise inaccessible to foreigners, are reported to have passed on to Chinese hands through Filipino dummies, and the clandestine arming and funding of communist armed groups are said to have exponentially increased. Informed sources expect two million Chinese "tourists" to visit the country next year, and every year thereafter, prompting a former tourism high official and some Department of Foreign Affairs bigwigs to propose outsourcing the issuance of Philippine visas to a private firm in Hong Kong, which has reportedly agreed to pay off the Filipino officials \$20 per visa.

No need to invade Ph

Aside from not wanting to risk a thermonuclear war with the US and its allies, China will likely not want to invade the Philippines, because it already considers the country a Chinese province under a president whose first allegiance is to China and who would like to turn the country into a communist vassal state. No more definitive proof is needed than DU30's decision to abandon the Philippines' sovereign rights to the islands, islets, reefs and shoals in the Spratlys within its exclusive economic zone, after the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, in a ruling that was welcomed by many nations around the world, upheld those rights, and struck down China's claim to the same areas as without any legal basis.

If that is not enough, what are we to make of DU30's refusal to protest China's militarization of the maritime features and installation of cruise missiles in those features in the Spratlys? And what are we to make of DU30's gratuitous claim that China's lifetime president Xi Jinping will not allow him to be ousted, even if he should commit such outrageous acts as to compel the Filipino people to throw him out?

Manchurian candidate?

More and more people are having no compunction in referring to DU30 as the "Manchurian candidate." They see him increasingly as a Chinese "political project" who was programmed to succeed Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in 2010 when she ended her term on a wreckage of multi-billion economic deals with Beijing. However, the plan ran aground when former President

Corazon Aquino, who had been president from 1986 to 1992, died after a short illness, and her death was used by her family to catapult Benigno Simeon Aquino 3rd to the presidency, with the help of Smartmatic, the Venezuelan election provider, which discarded all the legally required security and safety measures to win the election.

DUI30's first act was to disregard the arbitral decision at the Hague which ruled against China in favor of his own government. In October 2016, he visited China and declared he was "separating" economically and militarily from the United States and aligning himself with China and Russia "against the world." His visit was hyped in the conscript media to make it appear he was being drowned in Chinese aid and investments, when in reality the amount of Japanese aid and investments was several times bigger than that of the Chinese.

Our Japanese experience

During the Japanese occupation, the alien occupation force established the Second Philippine Republic, a puppet government run by Filipinos. On October 14, 1943, the new Republic was proclaimed, a new Constitution was promulgated, Jose P. Laurel became president, and a pact of alliance between Japan and the Philippines took effect. Most of the Filipino officials were patriots who were forced to "collaborate" in order to save their countrymen from Japanese atrocities.

On June 15, 1944, Foreign Minister Claro M. Recto wrote Lt. Gen. Takazi Wachi, Director-General of the Japanese Military Administration, to protest against such atrocities. At the behest of the Japanese High Command, President Laurel proclaimed martial law on September 21, 1944 and declared war on the United States on September 22, 1944. But the government never took up arms against the US. On October 20, 1944, Gen. Douglas MacArthur landed in Leyte Gulf to lead the liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese imperial forces.

Now we have a government run by Filipinos whose allegiance is primarily to China, and whose president considers himself a pawn, a proxy and a puppet of Xi Jinping. Since there is no resistance to this government, it may have rendered a Chinese military occupation completely redundant and superfluous. But all injury to the nation's sovereignty and national territory, let alone pride, honor and dignity, has been consummated. Can an alien power, taking over the State by military means, inflict upon it any more injury worse than that which has been inflicted by its own government? Can a military invasion, assuming China is foolish enough to risk it, do anything more to the Filipino people, which has not yet been done or is not yet being done to them by their own government?

This, I believe, is the question that must be absolutely clear to all Filipinos at this time.

fstatad@gmail.com

Yes, Senate must investigate how Aquino, Trillanes and Del Rosario lost Panatag

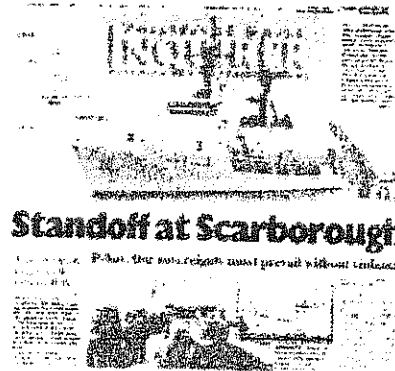
BY RIGOBERTO TIGLAO
Columnist

First of a 3-part series

SEN. Leticia Legarda, the chairman of the Senate's committee on foreign relations, said the other day that she welcomed a probe into the country's handling of its territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea.

That would be great, not only so we would learn invaluable lessons on how to handle the territorial dispute. But just as important, such an investigation will finally inform the nation — and it will be written in our history books — how President Aquino, his foreign secretary Albert del Rosario, and Sen. Antonio Trillanes lost Panatag Shoal (Scarborough) to the Chinese in

> Tiglaos A4



■ AQUINO'S BLUSTER THAT LOST US PANATAG: The PDI's front page April 12, 2012. Note caption for huge photo of the Philippine Navy ship: "The BRP Gregorio del Pilar, the country's biggest warship... was deployed to Scarborough Shoal after Navy surveillance ships spotted eight Chinese fishing vessels there." The warship left a day after it arrived though.

■ TIGLAO FROM A1

2012 because of their bungling. We lost Panatag also partly because of Aquino and del Rosario's colossal error of trusting the US too much, as the following account will show.

Trillanes of course strived to put the blame on del Rosario, whom he even accused of treason in an interview in a GMA News segment on the Panatag incident, which he claimed was part of the foreign secretary's strategy to create a rift between China and the Philippines. Trillanes also claimed that in the end, Aquino had blamed del Rosario for the fiasco.

Such an investigation will teach us valuable lessons on how to handle our territorial disputes with China. For instance, Acting Chief Justice Antonio Carpio was either so misinformed on how we lost Panatag or was simply trying to push President Duterte in making the same colossal mistake as Aquino did in 2012 when he urged him to send the Navy to the area to enforce our sovereignty.

That kind of move was precisely what Aquino stupidly did in 2012 that triggered the events that with his ineptness led to our loss of Panatag to the Chinese.

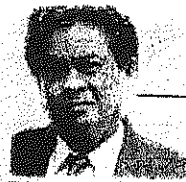
Indisputable facts

Here are the indisputable facts, and neither Aquino, del Rosario, nor Trillanes have disputed them after I pointed this out in several columns in 2015 and 2016. These are the same facts reported in other accounts of the episode, for instance, in Richard Javad Heydarian's book, *Asia's New Battlefield* (pages 164 to 165), although the intellectually timid or pro-Aquino author, even as the facts stared him in the face, couldn't get himself to state that we lost Panatag because of Aquino's bungling.

Some background: Although China and the Philippines had each been laying claim to Scarborough Shoal, there was never been an attempt from either the Chinese or Philippine forces to permanently station troops there. Fishermen from both countries acted as though there were no dispute, fished around and in the area, and routinely used its lagoon as a refuge from storms.

Aquino broke the "peaceful co-existence" of sorts in April 2012

April 10, 2012: Sailors from a Philippine Navy surveillance ship board eight Chinese fishing vessels anchored in the shoal's lagoon. They try to arrest the Chinese fishermen allegedly for illegal fishing.



RIGOBERTO TIGLAO

However, two vessels from the China Maritime Surveillance (CMS) come to the rescue of the Chinese and prevent the arrests in circumstances that are unclear.

Aquino immediately orders the Navy's biggest warship *BRP Gregorio del Pilar* (a refurbished cutter from the US Coast Guard) to confront the Chinese at Panatag Shoal. "What is important is we take care of our sovereignty. We cannot give [Panatag] away and we cannot depend on others but ourselves," Aquino blustered.

April 12, 2012: Three CMS ships enter the shoal, bringing with them a flotilla of 31 Chinese fishing boats and 50 dinghies. Aquino suddenly orders *BRP Gregorio del Pilar* to leave and return to its La Union base. Aquino had apparently

been told by Washington that sending a naval warship was a stupid move, as it made the Philippines appear as the aggressor. The CMS vessels were civilian vessels of China's State Oceanic Administration, which in 2013 merged with the Chinese Coast Guard.

Aquino played into Chinese hands. Beijing claimed to the whole world that the Philippines had militarized the dispute by sending a "warship" even though the vessel was hand-me-down from the US Coast Guard that the President like a kid with a new toy had been itching to deploy. China therefore, felt it had the right to retaliate and occupy the shoal.

Sea-borne People Power

Cleverly, though, instead of deploying any number of 400 warships that has made China the second biggest navy in the world—as it did in its battle with the Vietnamese in the Paracels in 1974—China launched a seaborne People Power of sorts. Escorted on course by three CMS vessels 90 small Chinese fishing boats occupied the shoal lagoon, which is actually the most strategic or useful area of Panatag as it provides a sanctuary for vessels during rough seas.

When the *BRP Gregorio del Pilar* left, Aquino could deploy only one vessel of our Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and two Coast Guard vessels to remain near the en-

trance to the shoal's lagoon.

A stand-off ensued that lasted for a month and a half, with neither side of course unwilling to fire the first shot.

China even managed to take advantage of another of Aquino's blunders, which was to appoint Trillanes as his secret envoy to resolve the stand-off peacefully. Trillanes only confused the situation.

April 12 to June 3: The Chinese CMS vessels and 90 fishing boats occupy the lagoon, while about seven Philippine BFAR and Coast guard vessels position themselves just outside the entrance to it in a stand-off.

June 2, 2012: After his trip to China to talk with his "contacts" — "of Politburo rank," he told me — Trillanes told Aquino that the Chinese agreed on a simultaneous withdrawal of the Chinese ships and the Philippine vessels. "PNoy directed me to work on the sequential withdrawal of government ships inside the shoal," Trillanes wrote in his aide-memoire on the crisis, which was made available to me.

June 4: "PNoy called me to inform me that our two BFAR vessels already left the shoal but China reneged on the agreement of simultaneous withdrawal of their ships, so two of them [were] still inside the shoal," Trillanes wrote.

June 10: Aquino orders the remaining two Coast Guard vessels to leave the area. The Chinese didn't.

They haven't left the area to this day. That's how we lost Panatag.

In his aide memoire on his "Backchannel Talks" made available to me, Trillanes put the blame squarely on del Rosario:

"I asked him who agreed with what, since I was just hammering out the details of the sequential withdrawal because the mouth of the shoal was too narrow for a simultaneous withdrawal. The President told me that Sec. del Rosario told him about the agreement reached in Washington," Trillanes wrote.

"This time I asked PNoy: 'If the agreement was simultaneous withdrawal, why did we leave first?' PNoy responded to this effect: *"Kaya nga sinabi-han ko si Albert kung bakit niya pinalabas yung BFAR na hindi ko nalalaman."* ("That's why I asked Albert [del Rosario] why he ordered the BFAR vessels to leave without my permission.")

Since that time no Filipino ship or fishing vessel has been able to enter the shoal, now occupied by CMS vessels and

Chinese fishing boats. China has imposed a 15-nautical mile restriction perimeter around the shoal, and prevents any vessel from going into the shoal's lagoon.

Laughing at Aquino

Chinese strategists must have rolling on the ground laughing at Aquino. They cleverly manipulated Trillanes, del Rosario and their US contacts to fool Aquino that they would withdraw their ships from Scarborough if we did. They didn't.

Even American generals closely monitoring the Spratly territorial disputes must have been pulling their hair out in utter frustration at how their puppet Aquino dropped the ball.

A November 2014 report of the Center for Naval Analyses (CAN) — a think-tank for the US military — entitled *"The South China Sea: Assessing US Policy and Options for the Future"* pointed out matter-of-factly that in the past 40 years, China has been able to take other nations' territory only in two instances.

The first was in 1974 when Chinese troops and vessels fought South Vietnamese forces on the Paracel islands, resulting in 53 Vietnamese soldiers being killed and dozens wounded. Chinese forces have since occupied the area.

The second territory acquired by China, the CAN reported, was Scarborough Shoal, though in this case, because of a bungling President, no single shot was fired:

"From its perspective, China resolved the sovereignty dispute with the Philippines over Scarborough Shoal in 2012 when it established control over the shoal. Again, it is unlikely to relinquish it. The government of the Philippines is in no position to even begin to contemplate the use of force to recover Scarborough, and the United States is not going to become involved in any attempt to expel the Chinese." (Emphasis mine.)

Aquino filed the arbitration case against China in January 2013 to cover up for our loss of Panatag because of his ineptness, which was successful in terms of public perception because of his control over media during his administration.

On Wednesday: How Aquino and the Yellow Media hid the loss of Panatag from the nation.

BELOW THE LINE

Kidlat ngayon

By JOSE ABETO ZAIDE

THERE was an electrifying moment at the Senate hearings last week, when an obviously piqued Secretary of Foreign Affairs Alan Peter Cayetano called the heavens: "*O tamaan na ng kidlat kung sino sa amin ang nagsisimungaling!*" (May lightning strike the liar!).

Everyone was dumbstruck. More so, because even as they waited, nobody was struck by lightning.

Our chief diplomat was provoked to make the incantation after a heated exchange with Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Rep. Gary Alejandro. When the two oppositionists claimed that PDU30 had ordered the military to cease patrols in the West Philippine Sea, Cayetano accused them of "politicizing" the issue. He said it was "very irresponsible of Sen. Trillanes and Rep. Alejandro to say there are no patrols. They endangered our security and our standing in this dispute."

The DFA chief invited both political oppositionists for a briefing on DFA's diplomatic protests against China; he would also show them our ongoing patrols in the West Philippine Sea.

In a backhanded compliment, he reminded that Trillanes' backdoor channel with China cost us the loss of Panatag Shoal.

As of my deadline today, Foreign Secretary Cayetano, Senator Trillanes, and Congressman Alejandro are all extant and none have been struck by lightning. We can, therefore, neither confirm nor deny if anybody was lying. Or if everyone was telling the truth.

We asked Kapitan Kidlat about this conundrum; and he referred us to a seer who explained that since Cayetano was seated next to Trillanes, one or the other would have been collateral damage if lightning struck. It has always been the better judgment of Providence, we were told, to spare the guilty rather than to inflict harm on the innocent.

On a related matter, Malacañang spokesman Harry Roque stressed the arrangement with China that allows

Filipino fishermen at Panatag is a "goodwill" gesture on the part of the Chinese – and the right thing to do for the Philippines.

Gary Lising disagrees and says, "It is none of their [Chinese] business to be there, because Panatag Shoal only 230 kilometers west off Zambales is our traditional fishing ground."

Robredo: China's "goodwill" over PH fishing ground in Scarborough "insulting" — News item.

Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo said that the Duterte administration should file a strongly worded diplomatic protest against over its insulting statement that Filipino fishermen were just free to fish in Panatag Shoal out of China's goodwill.

For the same reason, Gary Lising agrees.

Passport issue hounding DFA — News item.

Irate netizens swamped the social media account of Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano with complaints when he launched a new e-payment system for passport online application in Taguig City. Netizens aired their frustration over the difficulties in securing appointment slots at the DFA's online passport application site.

Hope is just around the corner. Besides introducing e-payment portal to facilitate passport services, the DFA is adding 100,000 more passport application appointment slots to "address the current backlog in the online application and renewal system."

₱10-B aid allocated for poor — News item.

Government also eyes ₱5,000 fuel voucher for each jeepney owner. Malacañang announced that the government will distribute cash subsidies to poor families and fuel vouchers to public utility jeepney drivers starting next month to cushion the impact of the new tax reform law.

And I thought that the PDU30 administration was phasing out the jeepney?

47

Editorial

Public opinion on peace talks

JOSE Maria Sison and his comrades could whine all they want, but President Rodrigo Duterte has made a strategic move to delay the "stand down," or reciprocal ceasefire declaration between the government and the communist group, and the resumption of the formal peace talks.

The talks with the National Democratic Front (NDF) were supposed to resume on June 28, a week after the stand-down order to the military and police forces and the Red fighters was scheduled to take effect. The President, however, announced that he was no longer ready to resume talks, despite his issuance of a 60-day ultimatum to both sides to revive negotiations, which were suspended late last year.

This was after a joint command conference on Wednesday in Malacañang, where military and police top brass aired concerns over how the communist side would implement the stand-down order.

A number of things need to be clarified first. What is happening is a mere postponement of the planned ceasefire and resumption of talks. There is no "cancellation," as Sison's press statements last week claimed.

The timeline has been delayed, yes. Even Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who is no fan of the peace talks, acknowledged the need to resume it at some point in the future. To say that the talks have been canceled is inaccurate on Sison's part.

It must also be stressed that the Duterte administration is never bound by the "backchannel" talks that happened between government negotiators and the NDF. These preparatory talks are only meant to lay the groundwork for the resumption of formal negotiations. Both sides have the prerogative to walk away from backchannel talks at any time based on their level of confidence. The government, it seems, needed a pause before it is rushed into making concessions (such as amnesties) to Sison and his cadres.

The NDF has a poor record when it comes to control over the New People's Army, the communist armed wing, which had staged ambush attacks on state troops despite ceasefire declarations. This was precisely the reason why talks fell through last year. The military, therefore, had reason to have qualms over the resumption of talks without a clear guarantee that the Red fighters will really stand down.

Finally, Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza's announcement of the conduct of public consultations prior to the resumption of talks is a timely proposition.

Stakeholder involvement has traditionally been a cardinal rule in policymaking. There is no reason to exclude the proposed agreements with the NDF from such mechanism. Ask any reasonably informed citizen what the CASER is. CASER what?

Not many would know that's the acronym for Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms.

It's about time Filipinos were informed of what to expect if and when a peace deal is reached. Drafts of agreements such as the CASER, or even summaries, must be made available to interested citizens, especially if these deals mean drastic changes in government policy such as giving away lands to rebels and forcing the nationalization of certain strategic industries.

Both sides should take this pause as an opportunity to educate the public and get them on their side. Sison and his comrades need to do their share in getting public buy-in (perhaps by coming home and holding their own public consultations), and go beyond wanting to save their own skins first.

Yes to peace, no to amnesty

The commies and government negotiators signed a "stand down" agreement on their respective armed forces that will be taking an "active defense" mode in preparation for the "formal resumption of peace talks.

The agreement was signed on June 8 in Utrecht, The Netherlands. The stand-down was defined as a "temporary cessation of hostilities in which the contending armed units and personnel of the Parties stay where they are ("as is where is"), take an active defense mode, and shall not commit any offensive action or operation against combatants and civilians."

The agreement further said that the stand-down would "take effect immediately upon its declaration and shall remain effective until replaced by a Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire (CUC)."

Both parties are said eager to immediately implement the agreement. Apparently the date that the two panels agreed on cannot be implemented since President Duterte canceled the talks, saying that he is not prepared for the formal talks. The President still has to talk to many sectors, presumably, the military, which has been making great strides in getting certain areas controlled by the New People's Army back in the control of government, and in succeeding in driving away the armed commies whose numbers have dwindled down.

It is suspected that Duterte may have found, through his talks with the military generals and senior officers, that they may not be in full agreement with the talking points agreed upon by the two negotiating panels.

For one, a "temporary" stand down



FRONTLINE
Ninez Cacho-Olivares

order may not even last a week, despite being claimed to be one where the mode applied would have both armed groups taking an "active defense" position and rejecting any "combative" action against civilians and combatants.

The problem with these "ceasefire" claims and "active defense mode" is that they never last. More often than not, something happens and each party claims the truce was broken by the other party.

In documents signed by both panels, the agreed portions appear to benefit the commies more than government, especially as there has been nothing agreed on by way of the commies surrendering

"Note that the agreement says nothing about Sison engaging in the peace talks with Duterte in the Philippines, merely stating that Sison is to return home."

their arms and totally giving up the armed struggle, despite the fact that the agreement includes an amnesty proclamation that will be accompanied by the releases of what the commies call "political prisoners" as well as the return of Sison to the Philippines.

There appears no proviso on the complete stoppage of the NPA's extortion racket which is the collection from big business operating in their areas. Those who refuse to pay "Revolutionary Taxes" get their firms

destroyed by the armed commies.

Note that the agreement says nothing about Sison engaging in the peace talks with Duterte in the Philippines, merely stating that Sison is to return home. When he is slated to come home is not in the agreement.

This then can be only after the amnesty sought by the President and concurred in by Congress would have been granted.

The release of 800 "political prisoners" through an amnesty proclamation is difficult to swallow for the military and police forces and some widows, as some of these claimed political prisoners have murdered many of the military's troopers. The military and police risked life and limbs just to capture these commies alive and made accountable before the courts of law, and they are to be set free?

What guarantee is there that these 800 "political prisoners" won't rejoin the Red struggle? None at all.

Some jailed commie leaders were granted bail to join The Netherlands-based Red leaders in peace talks, on condition that after the peace talks, they must return to their cells.

They never did return to their cells and have gone back instead to the hills to rejoin and lead their armed forces to fight government.

They couldn't be trusted then. What makes the government negotiators foolish enough to trust these same commies who speak of peace but are still thinking of war? What makes them agree to free 800 of their commies in jail through an amnesty, where the crimes committed are forgotten?

Free these jailed commies and get them amnestied, who include Joma Sison and the rest of The Netherlands' Red Gang without their surrendering all arms and pledging allegiance to the Philippine government and the Constitution and forever lay down their arms?

Forget it. Once the 800 are released, they go back to the hills and start killing and extorting again.

There can be no trust when there continues to exist Red treachery.

49

4

18

June 2018

4

Beware the lies

Many can see through the intensified propaganda efforts of the communist movement as a reflection of its frustration on its inability to manipulate the conditions for the 60-day window that the peace negotiations will be rebooted.

President Rody Duterte's decision to delay the start of the peace talks with the rebels citing the need to consult the public clearly threw off the timetable of CPP founding chairman Jose Maria "Joma" Sison to again use the interregnum in fighting to strengthen the movement.

Instead of an actual ceasefire, Sison came up with a so-called stand-down agreement which the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) agreed to sign at the end of the backchannel negotiations in Utrecht, The Netherlands last June 8.

While the agreement has similar features as a truce since it provided that the New People's Army (NPA), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) will be restricted to camp, the key difference is the word "temporary" in the agreement, a term which was not clearly defined particularly about its duration.

That makes "temporary" subject to the interpretation of both parties which the communist rebels may take advantage of. The military had accused the rebels in the past of sneaking in attacks during previous truce agreements which the guerillas later on blamed on soldiers whom they accused of provocation.

Part of the stand-down agreement provided that both the communists and the government "shall work on measures to prevent the escalation of hostilities that may arise from certain incidents. No retaliatory act shall be taken by either Party."

The agreement puts the government forces in a disadvantage

50

since they are stationed in identified camps while the rebels are mobile.

The stand-down agreement should have paved the way for the resumption of the negotiations, or the fifth round of talks from the start of the peace process under Rody.

"Suspensions of betrayal from the communist groups remain the biggest hurdle to the meeting of minds."

The stand-down order will remain until replaced by a Coordinated Unilateral Ceasefire, according to the agreement.

The Department of National Defense (DND) apparently wanted to review the ramification of the stand-down agreement since it may put to peril the lives of soldiers if the government falls into another Red trap.

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), in a statement, called the postponement of the resumption of talks as a "withdrawal" saying that Rody's decision was made after consulting with the AFP and his national security officials. "What is clear is that Duterte is obsessed with waging an all-out war against the people and talks of peace only as a way of inducing the surrender of the revolutionary forces through a prolonged ceasefire," it said.

The CPP then exposed its main objective by stating that it has directed the NPA "to continue to consolidate, strengthen and expand its ranks and its mass base across the country, rouse the people to fight their oppressors and exploiters, mount widespread tactical offensives."

The DND had sought a three-month delay in the negotiations to review the effects to government of the stand-down agreement.

Suspensions of betrayal from the communist groups remain the biggest hurdle to the meeting of minds. Such doubts needed to be resolved before goodwill can dwell in the negotiating table.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the apprehension of the military and police is that the NPA could use the resumption of peace talks to regroup which has been the experience in the past.

Joma and his CPP cadres should address the lack of trust issue which is always identified with the communist front since several of the previous peace talks were called off after brutal attacks launched against government forces.

A good measure of the CPP's insincerity is in the statement it issues that does not reflect any interest in achieving peace but spouts belligerence.

ONLINE NEWS

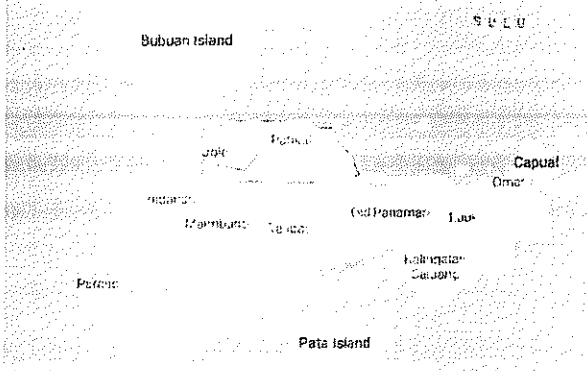
18 JUNE 2018

www.inquirer.net

Soldiers kill Abu Sayyaf bandit in Sulu encounter

By: Julie Alipala - Reporter / @alipalajulieINQ

Inquirer Mindanao / 12:57 AM June 17, 2018



Patikul (outlined in red) in Sulu (Image from Google Maps)

ZAMBOANGA CITY — An Abu Sayyaf bandit was killed in one of two clashes that took place in Sitio Salih in Barangay Panglahayan in Patikul, Sulu on Saturday.

Lt. Col. Ronaldo Mateo, commanding officer of the 32nd Infantry Battalion, said soldiers and Abu Sayyaf bandits clashed at around 3:20 p.m. but no casualty were reported.

At 6:30 p.m., another encounter took place, where the still unidentified bandit was killed.

Several improvised explosive devices and personal belongings were also recovered in the aftermath of the second clash. /atm

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

www.inquirer.net

Villagers flee as military launches operation vs suspected Maute gunmen

By: Richard Umel - Correspondent / @rumellNQ

inquirer Mindanao / 07:47 PM June 17, 2018

ILIGAN CITY – The military launched an air strike-backed operation against suspected Maute gunmen in Tubaran town in Lanao del Sur on Sunday, but no casualty was immediately reported.

Col. Romeo Brawner, the deputy commander of the Joint Task Force Lanao, told the Inquirer that the bomb run in Sitio Giarong started around 11:45 a.m. The soldiers who conducted the ground operations reportedly clashed with the gunmen.

He said at least 500 families had fled their homes and are now staying at the Tubaran Elementary School as the military also conducted artillery fires against the suspected Maute gunmen holed up in a portion of Sitio Giarong.

He said the army was taking care of the evacuees.

"There is a great chance that the ISIS terrorists have been hit in the air strike and artillery fires," Brawner said.

As of posting time, the military operation was still ongoing. /ee

www.pna.gov.ph

PAF earmarks P110.9-M for attack helicopter parts

By Priam Nepomuceno June 17, 2018, 2:55 pm

MANILA -- The Philippine Air Force (PAF) is setting aside the sum of PHP110,917,000 for the acquisition of spare parts needed for the maintenance of its AgustaWestland AW-109 attack helicopters.

Pre-bid conference, as per the bid bulletin posted at the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System, is scheduled for Wednesday, 10 a.m. at the PAF Procurement Center Conference Room, Villamor Air Base, Pasay City.

While submission and opening of bids is on July 4, 9 a.m. at the same venue.

"The Philippine Air Force reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award in accordance with Section 41 of RA 9184 and its IRR, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders," PAF Bids and Awards Committee chair Brig. Gen. Ferynl Buca said in the same bid bulletin.

The first two PAF attack AW-109s were commissioned last Aug. 17, 2015 while the remaining six were formally accepted for PAF service on Dec. 5 of that year.

The Philippines signed an eight-unit attack AW-109E order with AgustaWestland in 2013 for PHP3.44 billion. *(PNA)*

www.pna.gov.ph

Navy needs more technically-skilled people for new assets

By Priam Nepomuceno June 17, 2018. 9:49 am

MANILA – With more modern assets arriving, the Philippine Navy (PN) said it is now in need of highly-qualified computer experts and engineers to man these platforms.

"Sa (In terms of) personnel, in my command guidance, *ang sinabi ko* is specialized tayo (what I said is we are specialized). Technical *ang kailangan* (We need technical people) so we want engineers, we want computer experts and we want people who can operate and maintain weapon system *na* first time *lang tayo magkakaroon ng ganito katulad ng* (which we acquired for the first time such as) surface-to-air missile, torpedoes," Navy flag-officer-in-command, Vice Admiral Robert Empedrad, in a recent interview with the military-run DWDD.

The PN is expected to take delivery of its first modern frigate, which is capable of neutralizing air, surface and sub-surface threats by 2020, with the second being delivered by 2021.

However, the PN is expected to receive its first two anti-submarine helicopters, which are armed with torpedoes and missiles, by 2019.

Empedrad stressed that equipment modernization should be parallel with the upgrade of personnel and they will be tasked to man and operate it.

"*Dapat parallel ung preparation* (The preparation must be parallel). What we have been doing in the past is *kuha lang tayo ng kuha ngequipment* and then *sinisira din natin* (we just acquire equipment and then we ruin it)," he added.

In line with this, the PN chief said that they need a lot of money now for base development to house these incoming assets.

"We need a lot of budget to fund our programs like base support development, one of our bases in Sanglej (Cavite City), we need around PHP11 million for its renovation. These cost millions and we need storage for our missiles and torpedoes and the study that we made shows that developing these sites requires PHP7 billion. So we need a lot of funds to support the upgrade of our capabilities," he added.

Some of the possible missiles and torpedoes sites for the PN includes Caballo Island near Corregidor in Manila Bay, Subic Bay in Zambales, and Cebu. (PNA)