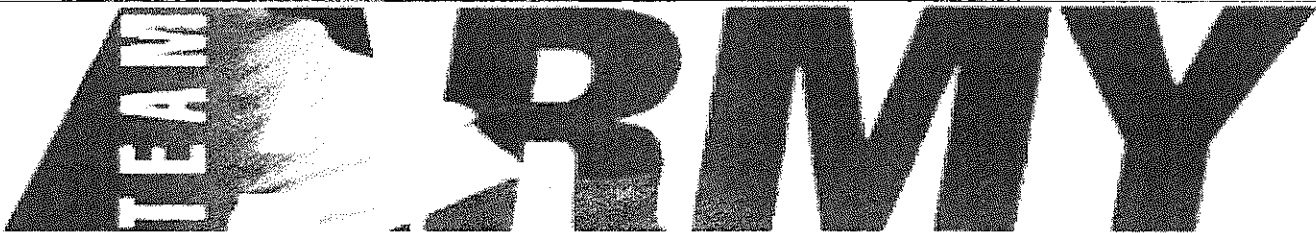


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NEWS CLIPPINGS

28 June 2018

Thursday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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Boracay raps filed vs 17 Aklan execs

DILG: Duterte to find replacements if suspended by ombudsman

By JENNIFER RENDON

ILOILO CITY – A total of 17 officials of Aklan province and Malay town were charged yesterday before the Office of the Ombudsman for neglect of duty that led to Boracay Island's environmental crisis.

President Duterte may replace the officials if they are suspended by the ombudsman, according to Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III.

Charged were Gov. Florencio Miraflores; Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Valentin Talabero; Malay Mayor Ciceron Cawaling; Ma-

lay Vice Mayor Abram Sualog; Sangguniang Bayan members Natalie Cawaling-Paderes, Jupiter Aelfred Gallenero, Frolibar Bautista, Lloyd Maming, Dalidig Sumdad, Maylynn Graff, Danilo delos Santos and Dante Pagsuiron; Malay licensing officer Jen Salsona; Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer Edgardo Sancho; and barangay

captains Hector Casidsid of Yapak, Chona Gabay of Manoc-Manoc and Lilibeth Sacapaño of Balabag.

Also charged were several John and Jane Does.

The 17 were administratively charged under the Local Government Code for gross neglect of duty, conduct unbecoming of a

Turn to Page 6

Boracay

From Page 1

public officer, conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service and grave misconduct.

Paderes, Salsona, Talabero, Sancho and the three barangay captains were also criminally charged for violation of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

In an interview with reporters after filing the complaints, Densing said Miraflores must be held liable with the officials of Malay as he has the "general supervision over all component cities and municipalities in the province of Aklan."

The complaints against the municipal officials stemmed from their alleged issuance of business permits to more than 2,000 establishments despite the lack of necessary documents, such as fire safety clearance and National Building Code compliance certificate.

Densing said from March to May this year, his team conducted physical investigation on the 2,269 establishments operating in Boracay and

found that only 95 of them were fully compliant with fire safety, building safety and environmental safety standards.

"More than half of the establishments there have no mayor's permit and I think 366-plus (establishments) have no environmental compliance certificate," Densing said.

Densing added that more than half of the establishments were also not paying their employees' contributions to the Social Security System, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Pag-IBIG Fund.

"Even the local employees working there are not receiving benefits. They are being taken advantage of by these businessmen," Densing said.

Densing added that the Commission on Audit will also look into the environmental fees collected in Boracay in the last five years.

"We would look into how much was collected and how it was utilized," he said.

Meanwhile, Task Force Boracay is set to meet next month

to discuss the soft opening of the island on Oct. 26.

"We want to define the soft opening - which establishments will be allowed to operate," Densing said.

He added that some members of the Cabinet who are not part of the task force have indicated their intention to attend.

Agro-tourism site

For its part, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is transforming a two-hectare ancestral land in Boracay into an agro-tourism site as part of the government's efforts to lift indigenous people from poverty and rehabilitate the island at the same time.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the Ati tribe in Boracay will adopt the Kabuhayan at Kaunlaran ng Kababayang Katutubo (4Ks) program, which will develop thousands of hectares of ancestral domain into tree farms with profitable crops.

"Part of the two-hectare area of the Boracay Ati will be transformed into a vegetable production area using a solar-powered greenhouse and

dairy goat milk parlor, while a portion will be used for the establishment of an organic restaurant or eatery where indigenous recipes could be offered to tourists," Piñol said.

"With funds coming from the DA and assisted by workers of the Agricultural Training Institute, a tribal-inspired hostel complete with facilities for trainings and seminars will also be established," he added.

The 4Ks program aims to help tribal people contribute to better food production in the country.

"The whole area is envisioned to become a tourist destination in itself, with the Ati people benefitting from the influx of tourists who I believe would be interested to have a taste of indigenous food, stay in a tribal-designed hostel or have a taste of organically produced milk and dairy products," Piñol said.

4Ks include the planting of industrial trees like falcata to be intercropped with coffee, cacao, black pepper, abaca and root crops like organic ube (purple yam) and camote (sweet potato).

DA estimates that after two

years, the 4Ks program will start earning at least P100,000 per hectare every year, with the bulk of income coming on the fifth year when the industrial trees are harvested and expected to earn at least

P1 million per hectare.

The department is targeting an initial area of 100,000 hectares for 20,000 families.

- With Elizabeth Marcelo, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Louise Maureen Simeon

PALACE: NO APOLOGY FROM THE PRESIDENT

STORY BY CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque rejects the call of Bro. Eddie Villanueva that the Chief Executive say sorry in public lest his rant invite calamities on the entire nation. **A2**

FROM A1

By Christine O. Avendaño
@10avendanoINQ

There won't be any sorry coming from President Duterte, Malacañang said on Wednesday, rejecting the suggestion of Christian evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva that the Chief Executive apologize to God in public for calling Him "stupid."

As the uproar over Mr. Duterte's "insult to God" raged across the predominantly Catholic country, Malacañang quietly held a dialogue with the Philippine Council for Evangelical Churches (PCEC) in a bid to mend any rift.

"The God that I know will not demand a public apology," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in response to Villanueva's suggestion.

Roque told ANC that "the God that I know is the God of love, and He is too big for any words that may come from a mortal." He and two others earlier held a dialogue with PCEC leaders.

Freedom of expression

Besides, Roque said, he believed nobody could demand anything from anyone, but critics could always respond to the President in their exercise of their freedom of expression.

Villanueva, founder of the Jesus Is Lord Movement (JIL), told an ANC public affairs show that insulting God smacked of blasphemy "in the highest order" and invited the "wrath of God," hence, the need for apology.

"The Bible is clear, when



Bro. Eddie Villanueva

you slander God, you are inviting curses not only to yourself but to the entire nation, like calamities," he said.

"No one can mock God. In Psalm 2, those who are mocking, persecuting God's people, the faith of God's people . . . God is just laughing at them. They are inviting the wrath of God," he added.

On the religious leader's warning of fire and brimstone, Roque said: "That's a matter of belief and faith."

The JIL, which counts 10 million members worldwide, asked Mr. Duterte to apologize to God in public in a June 25 letter to him.

JIL prayer rally

Villanueva warned that his group would mobilize a prayer rally if the President rebuffed its calls.

"We are representing 10 million people. I don't believe the President will ignore this. Because once he ignores the

collective wisdom of the body of Christ, this may lead to a kind of huge prayer rally," he said.

Mr. Duterte, notorious for having cursed even Pope Francis and world leaders, has been unapologetic about the remarks he made in last Friday's speech in Davao City, in which he took aim at the biblical story of creation, and questioned why God made Adam and Eve perfect only to allow them to fall from grace.

"Who is this stupid God? You created something perfect and then you think of an event that would destroy the quality of your work," the 73-year-old leader said. "How can you rationalize that God? How can you believe him?"

On Wednesday afternoon, Roque, Foreign Undersecretary Ernesto Abella and Pastor "Boy" Saycon of the Council for Philippine Affairs met with PCEC Bishop Noel Pantoja as part of the government initiative to mend any rift with the Church.

Opportunity for dialogue

Pantoja called the dialogue a "blessing" amid the furoi, saying it "opened up an opportunity for the Christian Church to be able to have a dialogue with leaders of the nation."

The PCEC, which earlier denounced the President's remarks, hoped to sit down with the President anytime "so we can pray for him and express our desire to build our nation," he said in a joint briefing with the Malacañang team.

Roque said his group hoped to meet with Catholic bishops next, clarifying that the dialogue had been prompted by

the killings of priests, not by the President's recent comments against God.

Mr. Duterte has picked on the Church in his rambling speeches over sex abuses by priests in response to its growing criticism of its brutal war on drugs.

As more members of the clergy came out to rebuke him, Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle called for sobriety.

"Be at peace. Be calm. Don't let things disturb your inner peace. Let us read the situation with the eyes of faith," Tagle said in a letter to priests in his diocese.

Respect for all religions

Quoting the Second Vatican Council, Tagle called for respect for non-Catholics and their religions, as well as nonbelievers.

"All people should strive to respect those who differ from their beliefs. Religions are not to be used for conflicts but for mutual understanding and peace," he said.

Tagle said the matter of questioning God and God's ways was "as old as humanity and religions."

Cebu Archbishop Jose Palma called Mr. Duterte's rant "yabag" (Cebuano word for "out of tune"), but appealed to the faithful to pray for the President's enlightenment and discovery of the way of the truth.

"We hope he will realize that what he is doing does not present a good picture of him," Palma said in an interview. —WITH REPORTS FROM TINA G. SANTOS, ADOR VINCENT MAYOL, CARLA P. GOMEZ, JOEY S. GABIETA AND ANC INQ

PCG rescues Chinese girl attempting to cross SCS

By EDU PUNAY

A Chinese woman who tried to swim her way across the South China Sea back to her homeland was rescued in waters off Cagayan last Sunday, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said yesterday.

Xiong Won Jing, 18, was suffering from depression after leaving her work at the Eastern Hawaii Casino in the province when she attempted to cross the sea, according to a report reaching PCG headquarters in Manila.

Xiong was found floating around 300 meters off a beach resort in Sta. Ana town by fishermen

Turn to Page 7

PCG rescues From Page 1

in the area.

The nearby PCG station dispatched a team and rescued the Chinese national.

"Ms. Xiong has just resigned as an employee of Eastern Hawaii Casino in Cagayan and due to depression she attempted to swim back to China," the PCG

said in a report.

Based on the report, the Chinese woman was brought to the Sta. Ana Community Hospital in Barangay Centro for medical attention before she was turned over to the representatives of the casino firm.

↓

US reassures Phl of stability in Indo-Pacific region

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The United States has again reassured the Philippines and its other allies of its commitment to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region, including the South China Sea.

Rear Admiral Marc Dalton, speaking aboard the *USS Ronald Reagan* on Tuesday, said their presence and operations have and will continue to promote security and freedom in international waters.

The Ronald Reagan Strike Group is in Manila for a four-day port visit.

"This scheduled patrol is part of our routine training and operations that we routinely conduct throughout the region as we have for the last 70 years. This continued presence in the Indo-Pacific has supported our ability to defend our nation and our allies, but it also promotes our ability to safeguard freedom of the seas, unimpeded commerce, to deter conflict and coercion, and to promote adherence to rules-based international order," Dalton said.

Dalton said the Ronald Reagan Strike Group is composed of the *USS Ronald Reagan*, the Carrier Air Wing 5, the Destroyer Squadron 15 and two other military ships.

He said stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region for the past 70 years has benefited all countries in the area.

Dalton said routine patrols allow the US Navy Strike Group to communicate with other navies including China in the South China Sea, but emphasized they "received no specific tasking other than our routine mission."

"So we've been directed by our chain of command, which goes up to the Secretary of Defense, to conduct this patrol but no specific tasking related to any current diplomatic issues," he explained.

"I would say that any countries that are concerned about US commitment can look to the continued routine presence of Ronald Reagan Strike Group as reassurance. So we operate every year in this region and we have operated naval forces in the Pacific for seven decades

as part of the Seventh Fleet and that is enduring presence... and that enduring mission has not changed," Dalton stressed.

He added their visit to Manila was meant to allow US sailors the chance to experience everything the Philippines has to offer and have a chance to get to know some of the people.

"Of course, a big part of our visit is the long tradition, rich tradition, of personal relationships between the United States Navy and the Philippines going back over 70 years and our strong alliance between the United States and the Philippines, one of the most enduring in the Pacific," he said.

On the other hand, a maritime law expert said a recognition from the US that Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal is part of Philippine territory could discourage China from pursuing its plan to reclaim and militarize the disputed area.

Professor Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and the Law

of the Sea, warned it is only a matter of time before China reclaims and presumably erects military facilities on Panatag Shoal, which is only some 124 nautical miles off Zambales.

"There are serious internal discussions in the US government that have been going on since last year where the US may declare Scarborough Shoal as part of Philippine territory," Batongbacal told *The STAR*.

"I think the government is aware of these discussions and I would encourage the government to participate or at least talk with the US on this matter so that we have a clear understanding on why this (recognition) is being pushed," he said.

Batongbacal said there is basis for such a declaration, since the US government "turned over" Scarborough Shoal to the Philippine Commonwealth government in 1937 based on official archives.

He said China already tried in 2016 to start reclaiming the area but was stopped upon strong warnings from the Phil-

ippine and US governments.

The shoal is currently guarded by several Chinese coast guard vessels controlling the entry of Filipino fishermen. The area was the site of confrontation between the Philippines and China in 2012 when the Philippine Navy tried to arrest Chinese poachers in the shoal.

Batongbacal said The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration, in junking the nine-dash line claim of China over the South China Sea, also ruled that Scarborough Shoal was a traditional fishing ground of Filipino, Chinese and Vietnamese fishermen.

Since Scarborough Shoal is marked with rocky outcrops even at high tide, it has its own "territorial waters" and therefore could be considered a disputed area outside the jurisdiction of any international tribunal, he said.

He said the Philippine government must prepare contingencies in case the US government issues such a recognition, whose implications are far-reaching.

Mutual Defense Treaty

In a separate interview with ANC, Batongbacal said if the US recognizes Scarborough Shoal as part of Philippine territory, the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty can be invoked in the event China reclaims the area and establishes a military outpost, as it did in several other parts in the disputed South China Sea where fighter jets and nuclear-capable bombers were sighted.

"It would be a serious issue on how would they act on certain activities in Scarborough, the biggest danger of course is the possibility China will push ahead with its reclamation," he said.⁴

"Recognition on the part of the US means that you're raising the possibility of actually defending the territory, say, from reclamation," he added.

He said it was unfortunate the Philippines took a "step backwards" when it mentioned Scarborough Shoal as a traditional fishing area when it filed its case before the PCA in 2013. — With Paolo Romero

MOUNTING RIVALRY

US, CHINESE DEFENSE CHIEFS SEEK AREAS OF COOPERATION AMID TENSIONS

BEIJING—US Defense Secretary James Mattis kicked off talks in China on Wednesday that he and his Chinese counterpart described as "open and honest," seeking to strike a positive tone despite Sino-US tensions over trade and the South China Sea.

Mattis, the first Pentagon chief to visit China since 2014, told Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe that he expected all of his conversations in Beijing would be characterized by an "open and honest" dialogue, like the one he had with Wei.

Military-to-military ties

"I'm here because of the importance that we in the US mili-

tary place on the military-to-military relationship with the PLA," Mattis said, referring to the People's Liberation Army.

"The military-to-military relationship is critical to the broader relationship between our two countries," he said.

Wei was similarly upbeat.

"Your visit to China this time is ... a new positive factor to the military-to-military and state-to-state relationship," Wei said.

Wei, who only assumed his position in March, noted a goal outlined by Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Donald Trump "to increase the strategic trust" between the United States and China.

"Indeed it will be significant for us to further build our strategic confidence and even cooperation," he said.

Later in the day, Mattis will meet other top Chinese officials, including Xi.

His four-day trip to Asia will include visits to regional allies Seoul and Tokyo.

Festering tensions

His first meeting with Wei comes under a cloud of festering tensions over China's placement of advanced weapons systems on artificial islets in the South China Sea, a projection of force that has challenged decades of the US Navy's pre-

eminent presence in the strategically important region.

That, along with rising Chinese pressure on US ally Taiwan, and deepening trade and technology disputes, have elevated the strains between Washington and Beijing to new levels.

Showing US displeasure with China's recent show of force in the South China Sea in which it landed long-range bombers on Woody Island last month, Mattis disinvented the Chinese from an exercise of some two dozen Pacific Rim navies.

And earlier this month, at a security conference in Singapore, Mattis slammed the Chinese militarization of its South-

east Asia outposts, noting that Xi promised then US President Barack Obama three years ago that Beijing would not weaponize the islets.

China's purpose was "intimidation and coercion," Mattis said at the time.

Beijing argues that the islands are Chinese territory and says it has the right to install military facilities to protect its sovereignty.

No deals expected

No official agreements are expected out of the visit, with the Pentagon chief saying he wants to take a measure of his counterparts to assess their

long-term strategic intentions.

He also will discuss Chinese cooperation in pressuring North Korea to agree to a denuclearization program, currently being negotiated between Washington and Pyongyang.

Mattis toned down his rhetoric ahead of the visit, saying he did not want to "poison" the atmosphere ahead of talks with Xi, Wei and others. *AL*

"I think the way to address issues between our two nations is to first establish a transparent strategic dialogue: how do the Chinese see the relationship with us developing, how we see it developing," he said. —REPORTS

FROM REUTERS AND AFP

CHINA'S MILITARIZATION OF DISPUTED SEA

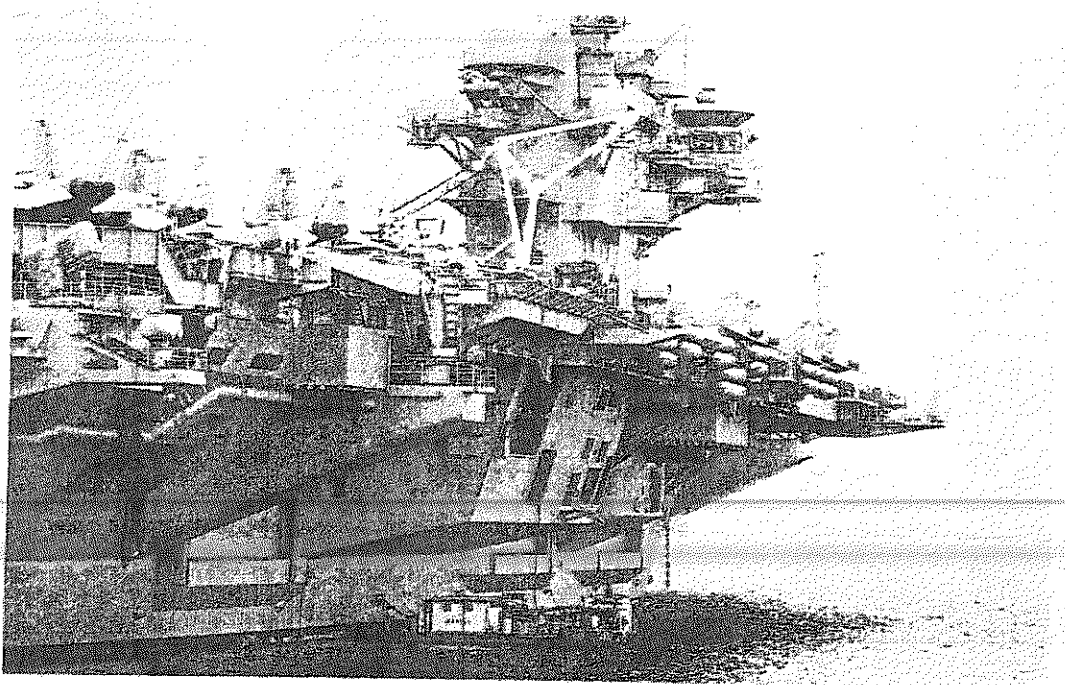
US TOUTS 'ENDURING' PACIFIC PRESENCE AS CARRIER VISITS MANILA

ABOARD THE USS RONALD REAGAN—A US aircraft carrier visited the Philippines on Tuesday, the third such call in four months, as its commander cited America's "enduring presence" in a region where China's military aims have raised tensions.

The nuclear-powered USS Ronald Reagan docked in Manila after sailing through the disputed South China Sea as part of a mission intended to reassure Washington's allies in the area.

China claims almost the entire sea, through which trillions of dollars in trade passes annually, with competing partial claims from Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing drew criticism after it landed bombers last month on a disputed island in the disputed waters and reports emerged that it had installed missiles on another.



PH VISIT The USS Ronald Reagan drops anchor in Manila Bay on Tuesday, making the third call by an American nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to the Philippines in four months. —AFP

US dedication to Asia

The US carrier's commander, Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, told reporters on board that the visit was meant to demonstrate America's dedication to the region.

"Countries that are concerned about US commitment can look to the continued routine presence of [the] Ronald Reagan Strike Group as reassurance," Dalton said.

"We have operated naval forces in the Pacific for seven decades... and that is an enduring presence and an enduring mission that has not changed and it will not," he added.

This is the third visit since mid-February of an American aircraft carrier to the Philippines or nearby waters, and comes as Manila takes a non-confrontational approach with

Beijing over the South China Sea.

Rules-based int'l order

While the Philippines won a key 2016 ruling against China's claims in the waterway, President Duterte has opted to set it aside in order to court Chinese investment and trade.

The Reagan, whose nearly 335-meter length exceeds the height of the Eiffel Tower, is on a four-day visit to the country.

The Nimitz-class "supercarrier" carries 5,500 sailors and more than 70 aircraft.

US Navy presence in the region is a flexing of American military muscle that Dalton said was intended to "promote adherence to a rules-based international order."

The Pentagon has criticized "intimidation and coercion" in the disputed waterway, where the Chinese Air Force landed long-range bombers for the first time on Woody Island in the Paracel group, putting the entire Southeast Asia within their range.

The Duterte administration has faced pressure to get tougher with Beijing, especially

after reports emerged this month that Chinese coast guards had taken Filipino fishermen's catch at Panatag Shoal, a rich fishing ground off the Philippines' Zambales province.

Manila has said it is working closely with China and is registering protests, but quietly so as to avoid confrontation.

Freedom of navigation

The US Navy periodically conducts freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, where it sails close to artificial islands Beijing has built on disputed reefs and turned into military bases to show it rejects any territorial claims.

Part of the Reagan strike group was the guided-missile cruiser Antietam, which along with a destroyer conducted a freedom of navigation patrol last month that angered Beijing.

Dalton said on Tuesday that China's actions did not deter the US Navy from sailing in international waters. *TB*

"The US Navy conducts those [patrols] routinely and we will continue to conduct those routinely," he said. —AFP

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US, Chinese defense chiefs talk cooperation despite tensions

BEIJING (AFP) - US Defense Secretary James Mattis met his Chinese counterpart in Beijing on Wednesday, aiming to find areas of cooperation despite a mounting military rivalry between the two superpowers.

On his first ever visit to China, the Pentagon chief was greeted at the headquarters of the People's Liberation Army by an honor guard and marching band playing the US and Chinese anthems.

In opening remarks, Defense Minister Wei Fenghe called the visit critical "to increase the strategic trust between our countries."

He said Mattis' words "carry weight in both the military and political circles back in the United States."

Mattis replied that military relations were crucial to the broader relationship between the two countries and he hoped the discussions would involve "very open and honest dialogue."

Mattis was expected to meet President Xi Jinping late Wednesday after talks with other senior officials. His four-day trip to Asia will include visits to regional allies Seoul and Tokyo.

His first meeting with Wei, who became defense minister earlier this year, comes under a cloud of festering

tensions over China's placement of advanced weapons systems on built-up islets in the South China Sea, a projection of force that has challenged decades of the US Navy's preeminent presence in the strategically important region.

That, along with rising Chinese pressure on US ally Taiwan, and deepening trade and technology disputes, has elevated the strains between Washington and Beijing to new levels.

Showing the US displeasure with China's recent show of force in the South China Sea—in which it landed long-range bombers on disputed islands claimed by Beijing—last month Mattis disinvited the Chinese from an exercise of some two dozen Pacific Rim navies.

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China's purpose was "intimidation and coercion," Mattis said at the time.

Beijing argues that the islands are Chinese territory and says it has the right to install military facilities to protect its sovereignty.

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PH, US security advisers reaffirm importance of security alliance

By ROY C. MABASA

The two top national security officials from the Philippines and the United States (US) have reaffirmed the

importance of their countries' security alliance amid the latest developments in the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula and on the fight against terrorism.
National Security Adviser Her-

mogenes Esperon Jr. met with his American counterpart John Bolton at the White House last week, where they had the opportunity to discuss broadly the security ties between Manila and Washington.

"Our meeting with Ambassador Bolton provided us with an opportunity to discuss how we could work together to further strengthen our security alliance," Philippine Ambassador to the United States Jose Manuel Romualdez said in a statement.

During the meeting, Esperon expressed the Philippine government's gratitude for the assistance the US extended during last year's siege in Marawi, and its commitment to contribute to the rehabilitation of the city.

According to Romualdez, Esperon also discussed with Bolton issues related to terrorism and other regional security concerns, such as the situation in the South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula.

The meeting was the first Bolton, who once served as the Permanent US Representative to the United Nations, had with Filipino officials since his appointment as National Security Adviser by US President Donald Trump in April.

From Washington, D.C., Esperon traveled to New York City where he joined officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs for the command conference of Filipino diplomats covering the Americas.

Esperon briefed the Filipino ambassadors and consul generals on matters concerning the country's security and the government's handling of the South China Sea issue.

US vows 'enduring presence'

A US aircraft carrier visited the Philippines on Tuesday, the third such call in four months, as its commander cited America's "enduring presence" in a region where China's military aims have raised tensions.

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This is the third visit since mid-February of an American aircraft carrier to the Philippines or nearby waters, and comes as Manila takes a non-confrontational approach with Beijing over the South China Sea.

While the Philippines won a key 2016 ruling against China's claims in the waterway, President Rodrigo Duterte has opted to set it aside in order to court Chinese investment and trade.

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length exceeds the height of the Eiffel Tower, is on a four-day visit to the Philippines.

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A2



Crow Valley residents face eviction

Civilian communities within Crow Valley in Capas, Tarlac face eviction as the military plans to expand the area for its bombing and gunnery exercises.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said they are only waiting for the needed funds for the relocation of affected residents of Barangay Sta. Juliana.

Lorenzana did not say how many families would be relocated.

Members of the Aeta tribe have pending ancestral domain claim over the area.

Lorenzana said there were no civilian communities in the

military reservation prior to the closure of the US air base at Clark Field in Pampanga.

"When the Americans left in 1992, they (residents) came in. When our Air Force took over the area in 2002, they're there. Some of them claim that they have been there for a long time," he said.

"We need a large area. If there are civilians there, the danger of them being hit by bombs is not remote. We have to move them. That's why we are preventing them from putting up permanent structures," he said.

- Jaime Laude

Senators to Rody: Think twice before arming b'gay execs

By PAOLO ROMERO

Senators yesterday cautioned President Duterte about rushing to arm barangay officials, but expressed support for his plan to evaluate the performance of local government executives in fighting crime and illegal drugs.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, chairman of the Senate committee on public order and dangerous drugs, said arming barangay officials is "not as simple as what the President wants."

"There are laws and procedures to be observed. Say, if government will provide and issue the firearms, there must be a budget in the GAA to be deliberated and approved by Congress," Lacson said, referring to the General Appropriations Act.

tions Act.

He said if barangay officials would procure firearms out of their own pocket, they would have to apply individually for license to own and possess firearms (LTOPF) and permits to carry firearms outside of residence (PTCFOR), undergo neuro-psychiatric tests, gun safety seminars and other requirements under Presidential Decree 1866, as well as comply with the rules and regulations of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Lacson and Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto support Duterte's plan to review the track record of mayors in fighting crime and illegal drugs in their jurisdictions.

Slammed

Meanwhile, Sen. Risa Hontiveros has slammed Duterte's proposal to arm students in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and barangay officials with .22 caliber revolvers.

Hontiveros said the idea is crazy.

"What is this? Wild Wild West? That's crazy. We should put to order our society," Hontiveros told reporters yesterday at a press conference at a hotel in Dagupan City.

She said arming barangay officials, prosecutors, priests and now those taking up ROTC is not the solution.

Lacson said that despite the resources under his disposal as commander-in-chief, Duterte

could not do it alone, especially in addressing common crimes.

"Each and every local government executive at all levels must do their part. Peace and order in the communities should be on the account of their respective local executives," he said.

Under the law, Lacson said mayors are authorized to employ and deploy policemen assigned in their jurisdictions, not to mention the power to choose their chiefs of police as recommended by the PNP.

"They should be made responsible and accountable for the breakdown of peace and order," Lacson said.

Recto said Duterte has the authority to order such an audit or evaluation in the exercise

of his supervisory role on local chief executives.

"I suppose he is doing this as follow up to his campaign promise to reduce crime nationwide. The message is prioritize law and order to make our streets safe," Recto said.

Hontiveros said the people's defense is a professional and rules-based police force and effective armed forces.

"If all sectors are armed, what will happen to us?" she said, adding there will be more killings and human rights violations if guns will be used to end misunderstandings or grudges.

She said such kind of solution or suggestion, where one literally shoots from the hip, is unwanted.

"After targeting small-time

drug users, and now the loiterers, then the youth, what is that?" she said.

The senator said the proposal is unreasonable, improper and damaging as it came from the highest elected official "who should be proposing more sane and reasonable solutions."

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) fully supports Duterte's plan to arm barangay chairmen.

"It's a presidential prerogative and we support him," AFP public affairs chief Col. Noel Detoyato said.

He said arming barangay chairmen would be a big help to the ongoing military and police security operations against threat groups. — With Eva Visperas, Jaime Laude

Mistaken clash: 2 cops sacked, troops disarmed

By Jeannette I. Andrade and DJ Yap @Team_Inquirer

Leyte, where the PNP and AFP met to review protocols and plan ways to improve coordination.

"Justice will be done," Galvez said, adding that should the joint AFP-PNP probe found lapses on the part of Army officers, they would definitely be relieved.

Unfortunate, meaningless

On Monday morning, six members of the Eastern Visayas RMFB were killed and nine others wounded in a mistaken clash with soldiers at Barangay San Roque, Sta. Rita town in Samar, with both sides mistaking the other for communist rebels.

There were no military casualties.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albayalde has relieved the head of the Eastern Visayas Regional Mobile Force Battalion (RMFB) Supt. Glen Cinco and RMFB 805th Company commander Chief Insp. Don Suspeñe pending investigation into the mistaken clash between the PNP and soldiers on Monday, which resulted in the death of six policemen.

The 16 soldiers from the Army 87th Infantry "Hinirang" Battalion (IB) involved in the clash had been disarmed and their firearms subjected to ballistic tests, Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Carlito Galvez told reporters in Palo,



SHOT BY SOLDIERS PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde pins a medal on PO1 Romulo Cordero, one of the nine policemen wounded in a mistaken clash with soldiers in Samar province. —JOEY GABIETA

used to head the PNP, decried the "unfortunate" and "meaningless" loss of lives in the 20-minute clash and said the investigation must now focus on measures to prevent a repeat of the mistake.

"Government resources have [also] been unnecessarily wasted in the recruitment and training of the PNP personnel concerned," Lacson told reporters in a text message.

Military and police officials said 33 policemen from the 805th Company of the PNP-RMFB and 16 soldiers from the 87th IB were involved in the fighting.

The exchange of gunfire ended only after the soldiers were informed by headquarters about the mistake.

Muntinlupa City Rep. Ruffy

Biazon said the House of Representatives would wait for the results of the investigation before deciding whether to conduct a legislative inquiry.

"It is crucial that the investigative bodies created by the PNP and AFP be given a free hand," Biazon said.

Biazon said standard operating procedures, rules of engagement and other measures were supposed to be in place to avoid clashes like that.

Those responsible for the clash should be prosecuted, he added.

"Whenever the lives of our men in uniform are lost in the performance of their duty, I cannot help but feel a sense of personal loss," Biazon said.

—WITH A REPORT FROM JEROME ANING INQ

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INQUIRER

DND wants to remove all civilians in Crow Valley

The Department of Defense (DND) planned to clear Crow Valley in Tarlac province of civilian settlements to turn the former US bombing test site into a training facility for the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana told reporters on Tuesday that the military needed a "large area" for joint training exercises by the Army, Navy and Air Force. "Crow Valley is a military reservation," Lorenzana said. "It is used for bombing [tests]," he added. "In the first place, they (civilian settlements) should not be there," Lorenzana said. —JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE

Illegal settlers at Crow Valley Air Base set to be relocated

BY VICTOR REYES

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana yesterday said residents who have encroached on the bombing and gunnery range in Crow Valley, Tarlac are due to be relocated to spare them from harm.

"We will be relocating them. We already have some plans to relocate them and we're just waiting for the government to allocate some funds," Lorenzana said.

Lorenzana said the defense and military establishment have already identified an area where the residents will be transferred. "We would just want to replicate the houses there, so that they can transfer," he said.

Crow Valley, also known as the Colonel Ernesto Rabina Air Base,

is home to the 710th Special Operations Wing, a rapid deployment force of the Air Force. The military reservation has a land area of 17,814 hectares.

"It is where we hold our training, bombings, strafing... it's a gunnery range. We conduct test fires. There should be no residents in the area because we're dropping actual bombs there," said Air Force spokesman Maj. Aristides Galang.

Galang could not immediately say, however, the number of residents who have encroached, how far they are from the gunnery range, and the size of the land where they have put up structures.

"If for example they go to the gunnery range, unaware that we are conducting training, that's

going to be risky. They are not supposed to be near the range because it's a practice area, gunnery range," Galang said.

It used to be occupied by the US Air Force when the Americans still maintained military bases in the country. Lorenzana said residents began encroaching on the area when the Americans left in the early 1990s.

"Crow valley is a military reservation. It is used for bombing by aircraft, bombing by artillery and by armor. And in the first place, they should not be there. But when the Americans left in 1991, 1992, they (residents) came in," said Lorenzana.

"So when the air force took over it 2002, they're already there. Some of them are claiming that

they have been there for a long time. No. There were no civilians there during the time of the Americans and only came there when the Americans left," added Lorenzana.

Lorenzana said the military cannot allow the residents to put up schools there, otherwise "they will become permanent."

"We want them to be relocated somewhere else because we will make that a joint training exercise of the Army, Navy and Air Force. We need a large area," Lorenzana said.

"If they (residents) are there, the danger of being hit, of them being hit by bombs is big so we have to remove them. That's why we are preventing them from putting up permanent structures," said Lorenzana. *BR*

Crow Valley off limits as civilian habitat

Due to its nature as a military reservation, civilians are prohibited from setting up any permanent structures or any development in Crow Valley in Capas, Tarlac.

This was bared by Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana when asked why there are moves to relocate civilians who have managed to encroach in the said facility.



LORENZANA

"Crow Valley is a military reservation. It is used for bombing by aircraft, bombing by artillery and by armor. And in the first place, *dapat wala sila doon* (civilians should not be there. But when the Americans left in 1991 (or in) 1992, they came in," Lorenzana said in an interview.

Lorenzana said the presence of the latter became a concern when the Philippine Air Force took over Crow Valley in 2002.

"So when the Air Force took over it (last) 2002, *andun na sila* (they were already there). Some of them are claiming that they have been there for a long time," the DND chief stressed.

Crow Valley, also known as the Col. Ernesto Ravina Air Base, measures 17,814 hectares and was formerly used by the Americans as a bombing and gunnery range.

"There were no civilians there during the time of the Americans and (the civilians) only came there when the Americans left. So if we allow them to put up schools and everything they will become permanent there. (we don't want that) because we want them to be relocated somewhere else because we will make (Crow Valley) a joint training exercise (area) of the Army, Navy and Air Force. We need a large area. If they are there, the danger of being hit, of them being hit by bombs is big so we have to remove them. That's why we are preventing them from putting up permanent structures," Lorenzana stressed.

The DND chief said there are already plans to relocate these civilians and that they are only waiting for the government to allocate the necessary funds.

PNA

Sundalo patay sa buy bust

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay – Bulagta ang tulak na isang dating sundalo ng Philippine Army matapos pumalag sa ginawang buybust operation ng mga pulis sa Brgy. Cambulaga sa Sorsogon City, Sorsogon kamakailawa ng hapon. Napuruhan sa iba't-ibang bahagi ng katawan at agad nasawi habang isinusugod sa ospital ang suspek na kinilalang si Ariel Marasigan Dimaala, 31 anyos, tubong Gumaca, Quezon at residente ng nasabing barangay. Sa ulat ng Camp Gen. Simeon Ola, dakong alas-4:40 ng hapon nang ikasa ng Regional Intelligence Division at Sorsogon Police ang buy bust operation laban kay Dimaala na itinuturing na bagong hasa listahan ng mga sangkot sa droga sa lungsod. Habang isinasagawa umano ang operasyon, pumalag at bumunot ng baril si Dimaala kaya pinutukan na siya ng mga pulis sahi ng kanyang aragang kamatayan. Nakuha sa suspek ang ilang sachet ng shabu at isang kalibre ng baril.
(Jorge Hallare)

Peace panel starts public consultation

By **MAYEN JAYMALIN**

Within the next two weeks, the government is set to start public consultations on the draft peace agreement with communist rebels.

This came as President Duterte again said on Tuesday that the government was ready to crush the communist rebels following the cancellation of peace talks with them.

In another development,

three soldiers were wounded in a roadside bombing launched by the New People's Army in Samar while another trooper was injured in last Tuesday's fighting between government forces and NPA guerrillas in Ormoc, Leyte, the Army reported yesterday.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, who also serves as the administration's chief peace negotiator, said the government

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Peace From Page 1

will undertake a three-month consultation with the public and other stakeholders.

"We will go to Mindanao. Our focus is on Mindanao because that is their stronghold. But we will also go to the Visayas and Luzon," Bello said in Filipino over radio station *dzMM*.

Bello said they will also meet with members of Congress, the Supreme Court and local government units regarding the agreement.

According to Bello, the peace panel will gather inputs from all stakeholders before going back to the negotiating table with the National Democratic Front (NDF).

Bello said the only remaining contentious issue between the government and the peace panel is the provision on national industrialization.

Contrary to the Constitu-

tion, which allows foreigners to own 40 percent of local firms, Bello said the communist party wants all industries to be entirely Filipino-owned.

The government earlier suspended peace negotiations with the NDF in preparation for the review of all deals between the two parties, including a proposed interim peace agreement (IPA).

President Duterte also wants the peace talks to be held in the country and no longer in Norway, which has been serving as third party facilitator for the talks.

Bello said the government is holding a nationwide consultation to ensure that the peace agreement will get the approval of both houses of Congress and the SC.

"We don't want that the final agreement we'll sign will again be scuttled by a ruling

of the Supreme Court as unconstitutional or illegal," Bello said in a previous interview with **The STAR**.

Certain provisions of the IPA like on agrarian reform and national industrialization, Bello said, may require legislation or constitutional amendments.

Bello said the government and NDF panels were supposed to sign at the end of the month an IPA that includes provisions on coordinated unilateral ceasefire and Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reform.

Cessation of hostilities

Bello also disclosed the NDF signed on June 8 a stand down agreement with the government because it trusted the sincerity of Duterte.

Bello said the stand down deal, which was signed in the Netherlands, provides for a temporary cessation of

hostilities.

He said the deal entails that the two sides should not commit offensive action or operation against combatants and civilians.

Bello cited that communist rebels refused, during previous administrations, to even discuss a cessation of hostilities, fearing this would weaken their force.

Inconsistent?

As Bello announced cessation of hostilities, however, the Army reported two NPA attacks against its troopers on Tuesday.

1Lt. Allan Jay Buerano, spokesman for the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion based in Lope de Vega, Northern Samar, identified the wounded soldiers as Pfc. Jeremy Rizal, Pfc. Marvin Rivera and Pfc. Noriel Guarte, all of the battalion's Bravo Company.

- With Jaime Laude, Jose Rodel Clapano

Reds burn motorcycles in Butuan

BUTUAN CITY – New People’s Army (NPA) rebels have claimed responsibility for burning five motorcycles in Sitio Kauswagan, Barangay San Mateo in this city on Monday.

In a statement released yesterday, the NPA Western Agusan del Norte-Agusan del Sur sub-regional committee said the motorcycles were used in illegal activities, including the killing of innocent civilians.

“The motorcycles... have no LTO (Land Transportation Office) plates to avoid being traced,” the statement read.

Capt. Al Anthony Pueblos, Civil Military Operations officer of the 402nd Infantry Brigade, said they are coordinating with the police to determine if some of the burned motorcycles were owned by military personnel.

– Ben Serrano



Late village chief's kin surrender guns

NORTH COTABATO – Various guns and ammunition used by a former village chairman in this province who recently died of illness were surrendered by his family on Tuesday.

Julie Fajatin, sister of Renado Dinampo, former chairman of Barangay Tagbak in Magpet town, said she turned over 13 shotguns and rifles, grenade launchers and more than a dozen 40 millimeter explosive projectiles.

Fajatin said the guns were used by her brother for his security, citing the strong presence of New People's Army rebels in their town.

Communist guerrillas raided the house of Dinampo several years ago and took at least a dozen firearms.

- John Unson

AFP disarms 16 soldiers in Samar misencounter

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

The military has disarmed and recalled for investigation the 16 soldiers involved in a deadly misencounter with police commandos in Samar last Monday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said the soldiers are now at the headquarters of the Army's 87th Infantry Battalion in Calbiga town after being pulled out of their anti-insurgency duties. Their firearms – M4 assault rifles and a sniper rifle – will be subjected to ballistic tests.

Galvez was in Samar yesterday with Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde for a joint closed door conference. After the conference, the officials visited the site of the encounter in Barangay San Roque, Sta. Rita town.

"For now, our soldiers involved, they are now dis-

armed and there is ballistics to be undertaken," Galvez told Camp Aguinaldo reporters over the phone.

"Let us just wait for the result of the investigation. Our joint investigation team, the board of inquiry will be the first to know. We don't want to speculate on something that we don't know what really happened," Galvez said.

But he said the military and the police have committed to further strengthen coordination to avoid a similar incident in the future.

"Once we have established or have identified that operational lapses have been committed, justice will be done," Galvez said.

He visited the wake for the six policemen at the gymnasium of the PNP's regional headquarters in Palo, Leyte.

As initially gathered, the soldiers were conducting an operation in the mountainous area near the boundaries of Sta. Rita and Villareal

towns when they spotted three armed men, who turned out to be members of the 805th Regional Mobile Force Battalion (RMFB), approaching the soldiers' position in Barangay San Roque Monday morning.

Both forces were apparently pursuing the same group of heavily armed New People's Army (NPA) rebels earlier sighted in the area.

Sensing danger, the soldiers immediately moved to higher ground and opened fire. The soldiers said they were still not aware that their targets had companions when the gunbattle erupted.

"It was not an ambush as there was no volume of gunfire involved in the initial stage of the misencounter," said Maj. Gen. Raul Farnacio, commander of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in the island province.

The AFP, meanwhile, said it fully agreed with President Duterte's attributing the incident to Murphy's Law.

"That's why it's called Murphy's Law. It's a natural law. It is bound to happen, it will happen," Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP Public Affairs Office (PAO) chief, said.

Albayalde for his part said the joint investigation is not meant to find fault but to ensure such incident will not happen again.

He stressed there will be no whitewash in the investigation.

"There is no reason to whitewash this investigation. As the AFP chief said, nobody wanted this to happen," Albayalde told reporters at the wake for the fallen rookie policemen.

But he said that based on initial reports, the policemen made some coordination with their counterparts in the AFP before the operations.

"We are not here to find fault. What we need to find out is what went wrong so that it will not happen in the future. In terms of coor-

dination, probably we will improve the coordination between the AFP and the PNP, especially our operating units," Albayalde said.

"Maybe the coordination was in the higher-ups and not in the ranks," he said in Filipino.

The police fatalities, he said, sustained multiple gunshot wounds. At least two of them had bullet wounds in the head. He said it could not be established yet if some of the hits were from sniper fire.

The PNP chief said there were reports that the victims' bodies were some 20 to 30 meters apart from one another when found.

He said the site was "highly vegetated and there is no way probably to identify them at that time."

In any field operation, it's always very hard to identify whether a group or individuals from afar are friends or foes. He stressed that even rebels wear camouflage outfit

"You know the enemies wear the same uniform. People should understand that's part of the diversionary tactics, they wear the same uniform, especially in places like this," he said. Soldiers and policemen usually have similar weapons in operations, he pointed out.

"We are trying to strengthen the existing coordination and looking for loose coordination and collaboration in the campaign plan to avoid unfortunate incident in the future," he said.

"What we are trying to determine is the level of coordination," Albayalde said.

Reports said the military personnel had been in the area for about five to six days. Albayalde said operatives of the PNP patrol the area about three times a month.

"We are open for any investigation but as far as we know this is an internal matter between the AFP and the PNP," he added. 2

AFP vows no coverup in Samar misencounter probe

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez Jr., assured families of the six slain police officers who figured in a misencounter with the military in Sta. Rita, Samar on Monday, that there will be no cover-up in the ongoing probe.

In a statement, Galvez also said that they have already mounted joint and in-

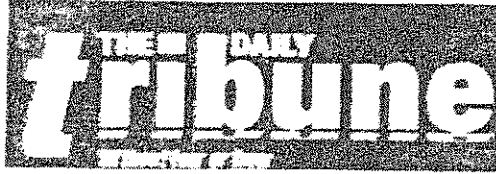
dependent investigations to determine the reason or cause of the misencounter and the wounding of nine other police officers.

On the morning of June 25, elements of the Philippine Army's 87th Infantry Battalion had a misencounter with members of the 805th Mobile Company of the Regional Mobile Force Battalion 8 as both groups were conducting simultaneous operations in the municipalities of Sta. Rita and Villareal.

"We assure you that this (probe) will be transparent and that no cover-up will be allowed to happen in our mutual desire to discover the actual circumstances of our actions," Galvez said.

"Our efforts moving forward from this is to assess our existing coordinative processes and systems with our brothers in the Philippine National Police so that similar unfortunate incidents will not happen again," he added. *L*

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Top cops relieved over 'misencounter'

By **Mario J. Mallari**
and **Angie M. Rosales**

Two police officials were ordered relieved in the aftermath of the "misencounter" between Army troops and police operatives in Samar last Monday, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said yesterday.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) also ordered the disarming of all members of the 87th IB involved in the "misencounter."

Relieved were Supt. Glen Oliver Cinco, officer in charge of the Regional Mobile Force

Battalion (RMFB) and Chief Insp. Don Archie Suspene, Commander of the 805th Regional Mobile Company (CRMC).

Albayalde issued the order to give way to an impartial investigation of Monday's misencounter in Sitio Lunoy, Barangay San Roque, Sta. Rita town that resulted in the killing of six policemen of the 805th RMC.

Nine other 805th RMC men were wounded after clashing with elements of the Army's 87th Infantry Battalion (IB).

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff

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Top cops relieved over 'misencounter'

From page 1

Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. also said he will not hesitate to relieve any officer if warranted after the investigation by a Board of Inquiry (BoI).

"If we determine that there were lapses...justice will be done, that is what we promised...if we find that there were lapses on the

part of the commander, then we will (order his relief)," Galvez said.

No speculation please

The AFP asked the public to refrain from making speculations while a joint Department of National Defense (DND)-Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) body investigates the misencounter.

The incident lasted for about 20 minutes and

also resulted in nine other policemen being wounded.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. stressed the need to strictly observe the protocols of the BoI created to look deeper into the accidental skirmish between elements of the Army's 87th Infantry Battalion (IB) and 805th Regional Mobile Company in Sta. Rita town.

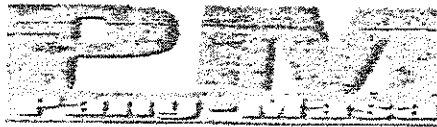
Lives lost 'meaningless'

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson said the tragic misencounter resulted in "meaningless" deaths as he cited reports the firefight reportedly happened due to lack of coordination and communication between the troops.

"It is indeed unfortunate since it was not the first time it happened. Aside from the meaningless loss of human

lives, government resources have been unnecessarily wasted in the recruitment and training of the PNP personnel concerned," Lacson said.

"The investigation therefore must focus on preventing any similar occurrences in the future and in other areas where troops from different units are simultaneously operating against local rebels and secessionist," Lacson said.



AFP: No cover up sa Samar misencounter

Tiniyak ni Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez na walang magaganap na cover up kaugnay ng isinasagawang masusing imbestigasyon ng mga binuong probe team sa misencounter sa pagitan ng mga sundalo at pulisya na ikinasawi ng anim na pulis habang siyam pa ang nasugatan sa Brgy. San Roque, Sta. Rita, Samar noong Lunes.

Anya, sakali namang mapatunayang nagkaroon ng pagkukulang sa tropa ng Army's 87th Infantry Battalion (IB) sa pamumuno ni 1st Lt. Orlando Casipit Jr., ay bibigyang hustisya ang kasong ito.

Si Galvez at Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayalde ay kasalukuyang nasa himpilan ng Police Regional Office (PRO) 8 sa Palo, Leyte kung saan nakaburol sa gymnasium ng nasabing himpilan ang anim na nasawing pulis.

Ang mga opisyal ng PNP at AFP ay nagsagawa ng pagpupulong kaugnay ng isinasagawang malalimang imbestigasyon hinggil sa nangyaring trahedya at bukod dito ay isa ring reenactment ang isinagawa sa lugar.

Ang nasabing reenactment ay naglalayong mabatid kung ano ang naging pagkukulang sa nasabing operasyon. - *Joy Cartos*

Mimaropa top cop orders suspension of combat ops sans AFP notice

By ALFRED DALIZON

POLICE Regional Office 4-B director Chief Supt. Emmanuel Luis D. Licup has ordered the suspension of all police combat operations in Mimaropa region until there is already a coordination with the local military to prevent a repetition of last Monday's 'misencounter' between soldiers and policemen in Sta. Rita, Eastern Samar which left six cops dead and nine others wounded.

Licup said he has instructed all Mimaropa PNP Mobile and Public Safety Forces to stop their internal security operations in the region if they have no proper coordination with the Army, having learned their lessons well in the Eastern Samar incident. Presence of large groups of New People's Army rebels remains a main threat to the peace and order condition in some parts of Mimaropa region.

The official also reminded the newly-designated PRO4-B Regional Mobile Force Battalion commander, Supt. Mardito Anguluan, to focus on his capability build-up on ISO matters, particularly in terms of conducting joint training with the military as the police prepares to take over the internal security operations in the region from the Armed Forces.

All other police regional units in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao which have problems on insurgency and other armed lawless elements were also instructed by the PNP leadership to see to it that they will coordinate with the AFP their movements in the aftermath of the Eastern Samar 'misencounter.'

PNP chief Director General Oscar D. Albayalde earlier formed a PNP Board of Generals to investigate the incident.

Initial investigation showed that the armed men who engaged the policemen were 16 members of the Army's 87th Infantry Battalion led by one 1Lt. Orlando Casipit.

The firefight which lasted for about 20 minutes killed PO1s Wyndell Noromor, Edwin Ebrado, Phil J. Rey Mendigo, Julius Suarez, Rowell Reyes and Julie Escalo and wounded nine others, identified as PO1s Elmer Pan, Cris Angelo Pialago, Romulo Cordero, Joemel Gonzaga, Rey Barbosa, Roden Goden, Jaime Galoy, Romel Bagunas and Janmark Adones.

NPA firearms, ammunition recovered in Isabela

SOLDIERS from the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) on Tuesday midnight recovered weapons and ammunition purportedly belonging to communist New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Isabela.

Lt. Col. Isagani Nato, Nolcom public information chief, said the 86th Infantry Battalion (86th IB) of the Joint Task Force Tala of the 5th

Infantry Division based in Iones town in Isabela immediately sent troops to validate a report on the rebel weapons and ammunition after receiving information from residents.

Nato added that the troops were accompanied by civilian residents who pointed to the firearms and ammunition in Barangay Santa Isabela in Iones town.

He said among the items recovered were an M16 rifle with an M653 grenade launcher with defaced serial numbers and 24 live ammunition for M16 rifles.

The guns and ammunition were turned over to the 86th IB headquarters for proper documentation and safekeeping.

Nato said Nolcom will continue

to engage all stakeholders to raise awareness among the populace on the "evils of communism" and the hostilities the NPA brings to the community.

He added that they are hoping that the NPA rebels will eventually become their partners in attaining lasting peace and sustainable development.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

2 NPA commanders yield in Surigao del Sur

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City - Two alleged commanders and a medical staff of the New People's Army (NPA) have left their mountain lair in Andap Complex in Surigao del Sur to surrender to Army and local government officials in Tandag City this week.

Capt. Al Anthony Pueblas, Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer of the Army's 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade said the two commanders and a medical officer officially made their intention to surrender during rites held at the Tandag City Police Station (TCPS) on Tuesday.

Their surrender was also witnessed by local officials led by Tandag City Mayor Alexander T. Pimentel who welcomed the three surrenderers back to society.

Pimentel immediately extended his personal cash assistance of

P20,000 to each of the surrenderers.

While refusing to reveal their identities, Pueblas nevertheless said the surrenderers were the commanding officer of the SDG Platoon, Guerilla Front Committee 30 of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPA Northeastern Regional Committee (NEMRC), his wife, and a team leader of the medical staff of NEMRC.

"It will be for their initial expenses as they finally reunite with their respective families," Pueblas told The Manila Bulletin on Wednesday.

He said the surrenderers are now currently being assisted by the local government unit, the military and other concerned line agencies of the government for their formal enrollment into the Comprehensive Local Intervention Program (CLIP) so that they may be able to avail of more cash and livelihood support from the government. ||

3 soldiers wounded in NPA ambush

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Three soldiers were wounded on Tuesday after a Community Support Program (CSP) Team from the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, was ambushed suspected elements of the New People's Army (NPA) in Lope de Vega, Northern Samar.

First Lt. Allan Jay P. Buerano, Civil-Military Operations officer of the 43rd IB, said the NPA terrorists used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and volley of gunfire to ambush the troops who were conducting Community Service, at Barangay Roxas, Lope de Vega, at about 9:10 a.m..

Wounded were as Pfc Jeremy P. Razid, Pfc. Marvin R. Rivera, and Pfc. Noriel M. Guarte.

They were brought to the nearest hospital for immediate medical treatment.

Buerano said the CSP was intended to deliver basic services, promote livelihood programs and empower communities to interior barangays of Sumoroy, Curry, Paguite and Roxas all of the Municipality of Lope de Vega, Northern Samar to address the problems affecting peace and security in the areas.

He said the 43rd IB condemns the barbaric act done by the CNTs particularly using IEDs, which resulted to the wounding of the government troops performing their task in CSP.

"This illegal activity of the NPA is a clear violation of the International Humanitarian Law and Comprehensive Agreement for Respect on Human Rights and International Law (CARHIL), were the CNTs is one of the signatories of this agreement," Buerano said.

"The 43rd IB ensures that the recent incident will not stop its troops in facilitating the delivery of basic services and livelihood program in the area. Your Army will still pursue and still committed to continue its mandated duty to protect the welfare of the populace in the far-flung areas," he added. *fr*

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The 43rd IB is also calling for the massive support of the communities to report any presence of armed group in their barangays to help stop violent incidents that hinders the sustainable development of the municipality.

3 soldiers hurt in NPA attack

THREE soldiers were wounded in an attack of the New People's Army in Lope de Vega town, Northern Samar on Tuesday, the military said yesterday.

The wounded were among 18 soldiers from the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, who were engaged in a community support program in Barangay Roxas, said 1Lt. Allan Jay Buerano, civil military operations officer of the Army's 43rd IB.

The soldiers were following up on the distribution of corn seeds given to the barangay, Buerano said. They were walking in the barangay when the NPA members detonated improvised bombs at around 9:10 a.m. then fired at the troops.

The soldiers fired back, leaving undetermined number of casualties on the enemy side, said Buerano. *Bz*

The explosions injured Privates First Class Jeremy Razid, Marvin Rivera, and Noriel Guarte, he said. — *Victor Reyes*

3 soldiers hurt in ambush

By ZAIDA DELOS REYES

THREE soldiers were wounded when suspected members of the New Peoples' Army (NPA) ambushed them while on their way to deliver basic services the other day in Northern Samar.

Taken to the nearest hospital for treatment were Pfc. Jeremy P. Razid, Marvin Rivera and Noriel M. Guarte, all members of Community Support Program (CSP) Team from Bravo Company of the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion, 8th Infantry Division.

Reports said the ambush occurred at 9:10 a.m. at Bgy. Roxas, Lope de Vega, Northern Samar.

Investigators said the victims were on their way to conduct community service in the area when they were waylaid by the rebels.

The rebels reportedly used improvised explosive devices (IED) planted along the road where the team was expected to pass.

As the IEDs exploded, the rebels peppered the troopers with bullets and fled.

The CSP is intended to deliver basic services, promote livelihood programs and empower communities to interior barangays of Bgy. Sumoroy, Curry, Paguite and Roxas, all in Lope de Vega, to address the problems affecting peace and security in these areas.

Girl, 7, kidnapped by Abus in Tawi-Tawi

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits kidnapped a seven-year-old daughter of a businessman in Tawi-Tawi on Monday night, police said yesterday.

Radznalyn Astah and her parents, Rahim and Rasha, were at their store in a coastal village in Sitio Palau Pinang, Barangay Himba, Tandubas, when at least seven gunmen arrived on a pumpboat at around 9:30 p.m. and pretended to buy gasoline,

according to initial reports received by Inspector Albert Carillo, Tandubas police chief.

When the father of the victim noticed that the suspects were acting suspiciously, he pulled out his caliber .45 pistol. However, one of the gunmen managed to snatch

Radznalyn.

One of the suspects and the mother of the victim were wounded in the shootout.

Responding personnel of the Coast Guard and Marine Battalion Landing Team 6 failed to arrest the kidnapers, who escaped with the girl toward Sulu.

The kidnapping was the first along the shore of Tawi-Tawi after more than two years.

The military has intensified its operations against

Abu Sayyaf bandits at the border of Philippines and Malaysia, where hijacking of foreign vessels and kidnapping of their crewmembers usually occur.

Joint patrols by Indonesian, Malaysian and Philippine Navies in line with a trilateral agreement also prevented pirates with links to the Abu Sayyaf.

A Dutch man, a Vietnamese, three Indonesians and four Filipinos remain in the hands of the bandits.

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ASG kidnaps merchant's daughter in Tawi-Tawi

By NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY - A seven-year old daughter of a local merchant in Tandubas, Tawi-Tawi was reportedly abducted by suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Monday night, according to a military report.

The report said the victim, a resident of sitio Pinang in the village of Himbah in Tandubas town was kidnapped

at around 9:30 p.m. Monday from her home by seven armed men, believed to be ASG members, and whisked away onboard a green "jungkung", or water craft that was docked in a nearby coastal area.

It added that the armed men pretended to buy gasoline from the victim's father Rahis Asta to refuel their "jungkung".

The young victim was then playing when the suspects snatched her.

Rahis was still able to take out his weapon and fired several shots at the suspects but failed to hit any of them.

However, as an exchange of gunfire also ensued, his wife Rahsa Malyun was hit in the leg.

The suspects were able to successfully take the victim with them on their "jungkung" and fled towards the direction of Sulu.

Rahsa Malyun was immediately brought to Sapa-Sapa town for treatment.

UP

PNP steps in to defuse tension between warring MNLF, MILF groups

By JOSEPH JUBELAG

PALIMBANG, Sultan Kudarat - Government security forces have undertaken steps to defuse the brewing tension between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) after a shooting incident involving its members in Barangay Mina here.

Sr. Supt. James Gulmatico, Sultan Kudarat police director, said the police are investigating the incident wherein Israel

Valle, 62, MNLF vice-chairman for Sabiwang Revolutionary State Committee, was fired upon by five suspects in Barangay Mina last June 25.

Valle, who sustained a lone bullet wound in the stomach believed to be shot from a Garand rifle, accused a certain Inoy Kadtim, a member of 105th MILF Base Command of leading the attack against him.

Police said the attack against Valle was an offshoot of the killing of Mustre Kadtim, barangay chairman of Mina who was gunned last

May 13 in Barangay Poblacion.

The victim's relatives tagged Valle as the one who masterminded the killing of the barangay official.

Valle has denied any involvement in the killing of Kadtim.

He said that he had prevailed upon his MNLF forces to stand down and just allow him to press charges against Inoy Kadtim.

Gulmatico said additional policemen have been deployed in the area to prevent the escalation of tension between the two warring groups.

Solons wary of Marawi rehab, rights situation

By Maricel V. Cruz

SEVERAL lawmakers on Wednesday expressed concern on the human-rights situation in Marawi and the status of the rehabilitation of the war-damaged city.

Members of the Makabayan Bloc in the House of Representatives filed Resolution 1973 that calls for a legislative inquiry into the bloc's concerns.

Party-list Representatives Antonio Tinio and France Castro of ACT-Teachers, Emmi de Jesus and Arlene Brosas of Gabriela, Carlos Zarate of Bayan Muna, Ariel Casilao of Anakpawis, and Sarah Elago of Kabataan asked the House Committees on Human Rights and on Muslim Affairs to conduct an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the reports of human-rights violations in Marawi and other serious concerns of the city's residents on the government's rehabilitation plans for the city.

"There is a need for Congress to investigate the reports of human-rights violations and the valid concerns of the people of Marawi as regards their land, properties, culture and future," the group said in the resolution.

The bloc said, however, that "no amount of investigation, compensation and accountability will bring back lost and shattered lives, properties, culture and dignity" but added "this probe is important for the people to regain a part of their lives and culture."

The resolution cited a report from the National Interfaith Humanitarian Mission in June and July 2017, respectively, that documented several cases of extrajudicial killings, disappearances and torture of Marawi residents, who were allegedly accosted by soldiers while in the process of evacuation.

NIHM also reported several complaints of alleged looting by soldiers who forced their way into abandoned homes and took household items and other properties.

Amnesty International, in its report on November 2017, said "Philippine security forces violated the prohibition on the use of torture and other ill-treatment of people in their custody."

The group said "most of the violations were carried out against civilians who were escaping from the besieged lakeside town and seeking military protection."

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METRO CORNER

Tanods as 'citizen soldiers'



By **ERIK ESPINA**

IN several speeches by President DU-30 as guest of honor and speaker on the occasion of the 'oath taking' of newly elected barangay officials in various parts of the country, he hinted at the possibility of arming the barangay captains. In recent statements, he spoke of giving the smallest unit of governance a shotgun, and for tanods caliber .22, harnessing them in the fight against drugs and criminality. The plan has yet to be studied by the Cabinet, he said.

Since Malacañang, PDEA, PNP, etc., have a list of suspected barangay officials who won in the last election but remain in the drug-watch, not all barangays can expect to enjoy such privilege. The firearms are also government property under the DILG which must be accounted for and constantly inventoried when turned over to barangay officials

and tanods. A protocol of gun seminars, drug-testing, plus firing, familiarization, confidence, and proficiency would be ideal. The DILG must, however, produce an administrative policy regulating the standards for incoming tanod applicants.

Part of the solution would be to enroll the entire 42,029 barangays nationwide with their 20-plus auxiliary volunteers (tanods) as "citizen soldiers" for national defense, to include disaster training, first aid, etc. The AFP's Reserve Commands could undertake a program of training with their respective regional and community units. Funding is actually existent and long available on the local government level precisely for this purpose.

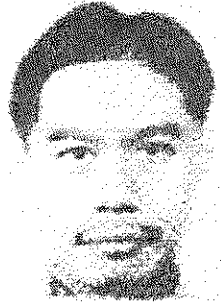
With proper administrative coordination between DND and DILG, plus the AFP-PNP tandem, such a move would create untold benefits and a great impact on many theaters of national concern. I

do not need to spell out the positive gains rising from such marriage. The Cabinet members of the President are smart. With the number of barangays all over the country multiplied by at least 20 tanods, expect 840,580 warm bodies as citizen soldiers attached to the ready reserve.

PERSONAL: Happy wedding anniversary to Biliran Congressman Roger and Dr. Cecil Espina and a joint natal day celebration with Congressman Roger and Kawayan Mayor Rudy Espina. Warmest regards and prayers from your "inaanaks"! 8

In the rain at high noon

BERNARD KARGANILLA



*Behold, all souls are mine;
as the soul of the father, so
also the soul of the son is
mine. — Ezekiel 18:4*

sic_17/HB01021.pdf]

The same Libingan ng mga Bayani, according to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, is the "final resting place for Filipino soldiers who fought during the Second World War as members of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), Korean War as Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea (PEFTOK) and Vietnam War and other elements." [http://www.cbcpnews.com/cbcpnews/?p=44609]

Those "other elements" include Baltazar Karganilla, DMD, a PRC-certified fellow-specialist belonging to the Philippine College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, who also happened to have completed successfully the Ranger Course Number 1 at Fort Magsaysay in 1970.

Dr. Baltazar Karganilla was commissioned as an officer of

the Philippine Army on 15 June 1968. He was able to mark the 50th anniversary of his service before he succumbed to the effects of progressive supra-nuclear palsy this year. For him, the President of the Philippines in 1992-1998, Fidel Valdez Ramos, sent a poem ("Safely Home"), of which the third stanza reads: "Did you wonder I so calmly / Trod the valley of the shade? Oh! But Jesus' love illumined / Every dark and fearful glade." [Letter to Mrs. Angelina Karganilla and family, 21 June 2018]

For the late Dr. Baltazar Karganilla, the DCSRRA, J9 Rear Adm. Samuel Z. Felix, authorized the provision of vigil, bugler/drummer, firing party (21-gun salute), military host/pallbearers, and arrival/departure honors. For these provisions, the Presidential letter and the condolences of comrades and relatives, the family of the late

Dr. Baltazar Karganilla is deeply grateful.

The Libingan ng mga Bayani is maintained as a National Shrine by the Grave Services Unit of the Philippine Army. [http://server.prao.mil.ph/PDF/shrines/libingan.pdf] "Under AFP Regulation G 161-373 or "The allocation of Cemetery Plots at the LNMB" issued on April 9, 1986 by then Chief of Staff of the AFP General Fidel Ramos and President Corazon Aquino, deceased persons who can be interred at LNMB are: Medal of Valor Awardees; President of the Philippines as the Commander-in-Chief of the AFP; Secretary of National Defense; Chief of Staff of the AFP; General/Flag Officers of the AFP; active and retired military personnel of the AFP; former AFP members who laterally entered and joined the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Philippine Coast Guard (PCG); veterans of the Philippine Revolution of 1896, the First and Second World War, as well as recognized guerrillas; government dignitaries, statesman, national artists and other deceased persons whose interment or re-interment has been approved by the Commander-in-Chief, Congress or the Secretary of National Defense; former presidents, Secretaries of National Defense, Chiefs of Staff and widows of former presidents." [http://www.congress.gov.ph/

At the Libingan ng mga Bayani in the rain at high noon my father was interred.

"The Republic Memorial Cemetery now known as the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB) is our only Heroes' Cemetery located in Fort Bonifacio, Western Bicutan, Taguig City. It was established in 1947 as a fitting resting place for Filipino military personnel from private to generals, as well as our heroes and martyrs. It is a tribute to the gallant Filipino soldiers who fought and died in World War II. In 1954, then President Ramon Magsaysay rededicated the cemetery and renamed it as the Libingan ng mga Bayani. In 1967, then President Ferdinand Marcos reserved 142 hectares from the Fort Bonifacio Military Reserve (formerly known as the Fort Mckinley) in consideration for the LNMB to serve not only as a cemetery for military personnel but also as a national shrine for fallen heroes. Presently, LNMB provides grave and interment services not only for military men who die in the line of duty or who were honorably discharged but is also open as a final resting place for presidents, Filipino veterans, notable government statesmen, dignitaries and national artists." [Rep. Leopoldo N. Bataoil (2nd District, Pangasinan), House Bill 1021, House of Representatives, 17th Congress Second Regular Session, July 2016; http://www.congress.gov.ph/legisdocs/ba-

IN THE

[press/details.php?pressid=6508](#)]

"Our fallen heroes shall always be remembered. Their country shall continue to honor them for even if they can no longer participate in the routine of daily life, what they had left and died for shall continuously be enjoyed by the very people they have sworn to serve." [<http://www.army.mil/ph/ASCOM/gsu.html>]

Other matters of interest this week:

(1) A year after Greenpeace Philippines and its creative partner Dentsu Jayme Syfu unveiled the dead plastic whale in Naic, Cavite, the art installation that shocked the world bagged two top awards in the 2018 Cannes Lions International Festival in France. The dead whale was unveiled on May

11, 2017, during the meeting of the Asean Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment in Manila. "The scourge of plastic pollution is undeniable, and is already taking a toll not just on our environment and food, but the overall welfare of Filipinos. It's time for the national government to stop dragging its feet in addressing this problem and for big fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) corporations to stop spewing excuses for their single-use plastic production," said Vince Cinches, oceans campaigner for Greenpeace Philippines.

(2) For the blasphemers, an excerpt from the August 3, 1973 warning of Our Lady of Akita: "Many men in this world afflict the Lord...In order that the world might know His anger, the Heavenly Father is preparing to inflict

a great chastisement on all mankind." And from the October 13, 1973 prophecy: "As I told you, if men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity. It will be a punishment greater than the deluge, such as one will never see before. Fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity, the good as well as the bad, sparing neither priests nor faithful. The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead." [<https://www.ewrn.com/library/mary/akita.htm>]

(3) More than 1,000 retired soldiers, including locals and many others who rushed in from around the country, descended on local government offices in the eastern city of Zhenjiang, in Jiangsu province. For four days,

they occupied a public plaza and a street, singing and chanting as they demanded answers over the alleged beating of a fellow veteran by government-hired thugs after he petitioned for better benefits. [Large army veteran protests in China pose challenge for Xi; <https://apnews.com/15cafc2ca03841bf9f32d5edb959ba85>]

(4) "Today, on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, we remember those we have lost to the drug abuse epidemic, lift up and pray for those struggling with addiction, and reaffirm our steadfast resolve to dismantle the criminal networks that spread the drugs that are poisoning our loved ones." [<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/presidential-message-international-day-drug-abuse-illicit-trafficking/>]

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June 2018

Malaya

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EDITORIAL

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Friendly fire

SIX policemen were killed and several others were wounded by government troops in Samar, both groups running after New People's Army rebels, not knowing that they were in the same area, and unable to discern that they were on the same side.

The combat units were the 1st Platoon, 805th Company of the Regional Mobile Force 8 of the police and the Charlie Company, 87th Infantry Battalion, 8 Infantry Division of the Philippine Army.

The bungling scenario has become so commonplace in the operations of the military that we wonder if the defense leadership is really doing something about it.

'The bungling scenario has become so commonplace in the operations of the military that we wonder if the defense leadership is really doing something about it.'

Fresh in the public memory were similar "friendly fire" incidents last year in the effort to retake Marawi City from the clutches of the Islamist Maute group, also affiliated with the Islamic State. Another costly and unresolved military error is the Mamasapano debacle, where 44 top officers of the PNP Special Action Force were butchered by Muslim fighters without as much as a proper summing up. To be fair, the leadership of both the Philip-

pine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines held an emergency meeting to assess the situation. They included PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carilto Galvez.

We could imagine how the communist-led New People's Army (NPA) rebels may have gloated over this embarrassing and hurting incident. The rebels might have surmised that in their enemy's haste to obliterate the rebellion within the year, they are committing one error after another.

Jose Ma. Sison, now consultant of the National Democratic Front in the suspended peace talks, had earlier charged that President Duterte indefinitely postponed the talks because the defense establishment assured him that the military can defeat the NPA within the year. Believing this info, Sison counterposed that it is highly unlikely that they would suffer complete defeat; in fact, the NPA may be able to oust the President.

We are skeptic about the veracity of Sison's information, but if indeed the AFP is implementing massive offensives against the communist rebels, media reports from the field will most likely validate this.

The fact is, with or without such short-term offensive to blow up the organizational strength of the NPA, the military's missteps are apparent. President Duterte's explanation attributing this to Murphy's Law (whatever can go wrong will go wrong) isn't an explanation at all for these lapses that caused lives.

There is great promise when new blood is injected into the leaderships of the PNP and the AFP, with Albayalde and Galvez, both capable officers, picked to lead these organizations.

The people remain hopeful that the leaders of our men in uniform will make a difference this time, when their Commander in Chief is serious in effecting reforms in their ranks. *124*

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Will Uncle Sam defend PH territory at WPS?

By Elmer Navarro Manuel

Will the United States come to the defense of the Philippines in the event the West Philippine Sea (WPS) becomes a flashpoint among claimant nations, including China?

Uncle Sam may or may not depending on several historical issues to be resolved at WPS which China refers to as South China Sea.

Maritime expert Jay

Batongbacal on Wednesday stressed the Philippine-US Mutual Defense Treaty can only be invoked by the Philippines if the US recognizes Scarborough Shoal as a territory of the Philippines.

Batongbacal, nonetheless, conceded that the US has an obligation under the pact to defend Philippine territory in the event of an attack by another country.

"There is a strong push for the US government (to aid the Philippines). It has been under discussion for more than a year now, whether the US should consider the Scarborough Shoal as Philippine

territory," said Batongbacal on TV.

He explained recent documents tended to show the US government turned over Scarborough to the Philippine Commonwealth government decades ago.

If that is the case, the US may be obliged to come to the Philippines' aid in the event it finds itself

under attack on Scarborough Shoal at WPS.

"A recognition on the part of the US means that you're raising the possibility of defending the territory from say reclamation," the professor said.

"It's now a matter of shall we say, how serious is the issue, how they would act on certain activities in Scarborough. The

biggest danger is if China will push with its reclamation," he added.

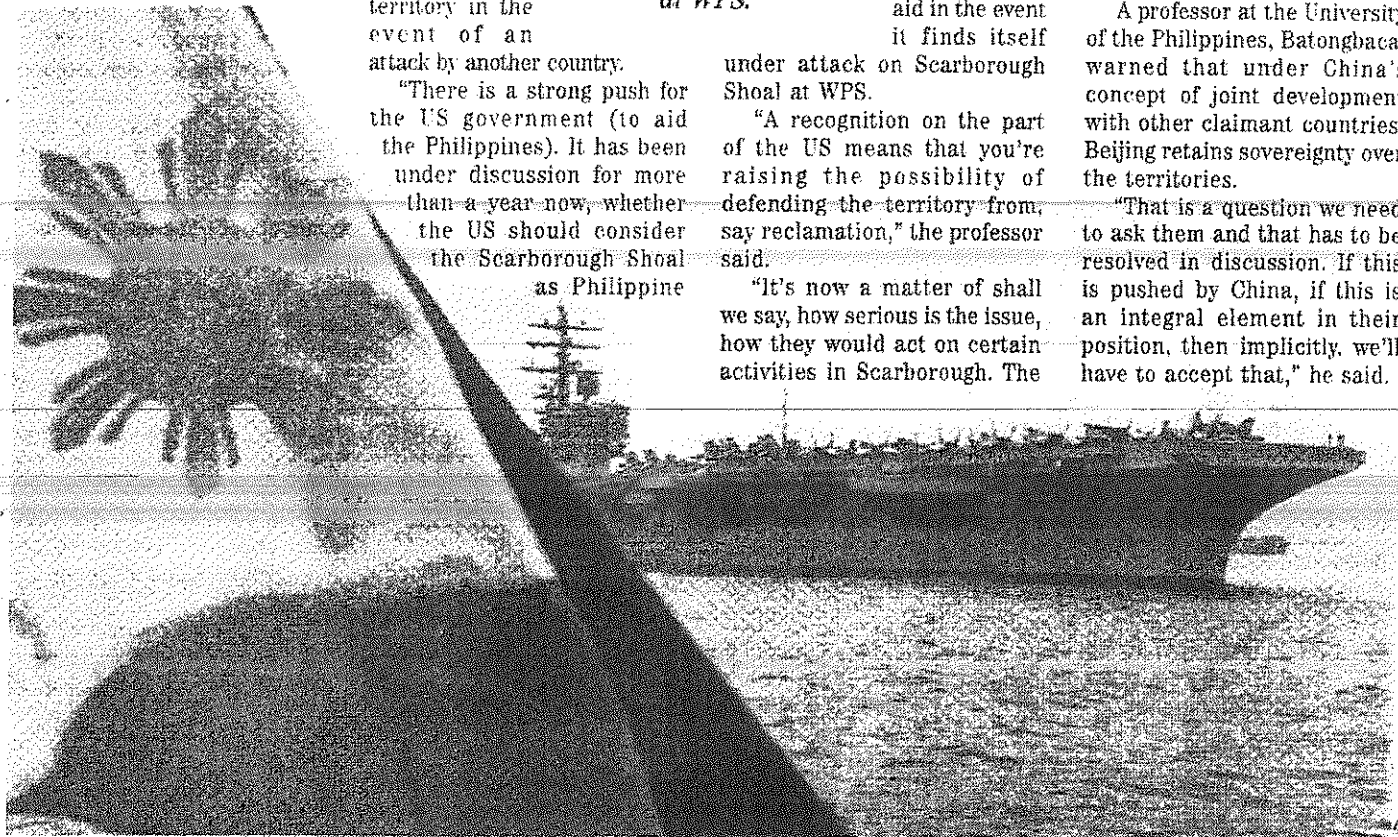
Batongbacal contended the arbitral ruling on the South China Sea seen by many to favor the Philippines may actually be a step backward for the Philippine government.

This because the ruling, according to Batongbacal, stated that both the Philippines and China have "traditional fishing rights" to the shoal.

A professor at the University of the Philippines, Batongbacal warned that under China's concept of joint development with other claimant countries, Beijing retains sovereignty over the territories.

"That is a question we need to ask them and that has to be resolved in discussion. If this is pushed by China, if this is an integral element in their position, then implicitly, we'll have to accept that," he said.

"The US may be obliged to come to the Philippines' aid in the event the Philippines finds itself under attack on Scarborough Shoal at WPS."



THE USS Ronald Reagan docks in Manila, sparking debate on WPS issues.

AFP

ONLINE NEWS

28 JUNE 2018

www.inquirer.net

Armed men abducts 7-year-old girl in Tawi-Tawi

By: [Julie Alipala](#) - Reporter / [@alipainjulieINQ](#)

[inquirer Mindanao](#) / 08:27 PM June 27, 2018

ZAMBOANGA CITY — Armed men abducted a seven-year-old girl and wounded her mother after a brief altercation with her father in Sitio Pulao Pinang, Barangay Himba, Tandubas town in Tawi-Tawi on Monday night.

Brigadier General Custodio Parcon, the commander of Joint Task Force Tawi-Tawi, said five to seven men arrived on a boat and docked in front of the store owned by the family of Rahim Astah, pretending to buy gasoline.

When the girl's father Rahim noticed their suspicious move, he reportedly drew his caliber .45 pistol, prompting one of the men to grab his daughter Radznalyn.

Rahim fired his pistol, hitting one of the men, who fought back and hit his wife, Rasha. They fled north of Baluman Island in Languyan and brought the girl with them.

Parcon said they were using a green Jungkong type boat with twin engines and a yellow-striped blue Tiririt boat.

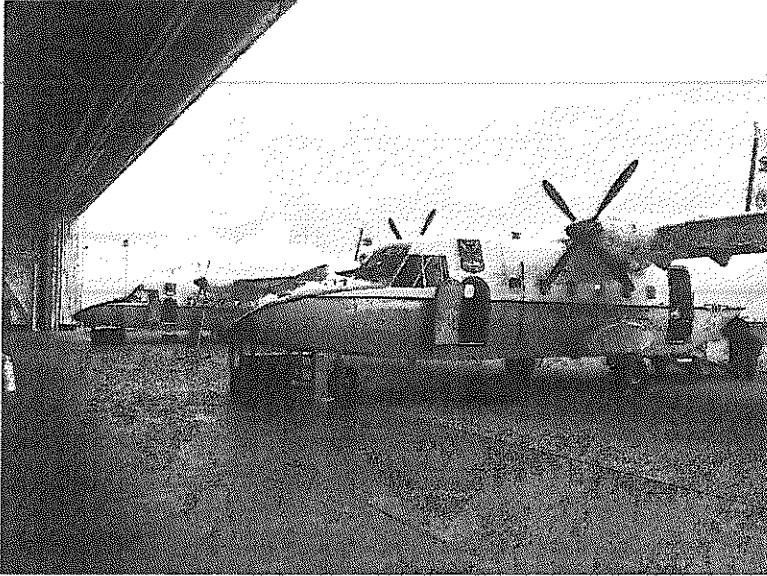
Parcon said the police were looking into the motive of the abduction, including the possibility that it is drug-related since Astah was previously a drug user who turned himself over to the government.

There was no demand for ransom from the abductors so far.

The girl's mother, who sustained gunshot wounds, was already in stable condition at the Datu Halon Hospital. /ee

PH may buy more NC212i planes in the future — Lorenzana

By: Frances Mangosing - Reporter / @FMangosingINQ
INQUIRER.net / 03:49 PM June 27, 2018



The Philippine Air Force commissions two new aircraft from Indonesia. /Photo by Frances Mangosing/INQUIRER.net

The Philippines may purchase more NC212i light utility transport aircraft from Indonesia if the Air Force finds it suitable to their operations, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

On Tuesday, the state-owned PT Dirgantara Indonesia finally turned over two units to the Philippines, after a few years of delay due to autopilot issues. The planes, purchased through the AFP modernization program signed in 2014, are worth P850 million.

The Air Force sees the aircraft as a “big leap” to their air mobility requirements and capabilities. Its fleet of light transport planes, the Nomad, are being used since the 1970s.

“If the Air Force will find this aircraft suitable for our use, they will order more of this aircraft,” he said. A similar type of aircraft is currently not included in the Horizon 2 of the AFP modernization program, however.

Lorenzana also took the opportunity at the turnover to express his admiration for Indonesia’s defense industry.

“We admire Indonesia for their vision to create their own defense industry. Remember in the 1960s we also had our own modernization program under then President Marcos but it did not take off,” he said. “But Indonesia was able to pursue their vision of developing their naval industry and aircraft industry and now they are exporting to us,” Lorenzana said, citing the two strategic sealift vessels of the Philippine Navy which were also bought from Indonesia as examples.

“We are happy to have the help of our neighbors. Indonesia is in just in the back door to provide the necessary equipment,” he said.

“When the supplier of a good is near, the after-sale support is easier. It’s easier for them to come and solve a problem,” he added. /je

PNP, AFP probe troops comms in Samar misencounter

By: Jhoanna Ballaran - Reporter / @JhoannaBINQ

INQUIRER.net / 03:11 PM June 27, 2018

The Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will look into the level of coordination made before the patrolling troops in Samar ended up in a bloody mistaken encounter, Director General Oscar Albayalde said on Wednesday.

The PNP chief said policemen have coordinated with the military for their operation, but the communication obviously failed to reach the soldiers on the ground.

"Definitely there's coordination, sinabi na nga ng AFP and the PNP 'yan. What we're looking at here is the level of coordination kung hanggang saan nakarating 'yung coordination na 'yun. That is part of the investigation," Albayalde said in a televised interview in Leyte.

(Definitely there's coordination, the AFP and the PNP have already said that. What we're looking at here is the level of coordination, up to which level the coordination reached. That is part of the investigation.)

"Ang sinasabi ng PNP nakikipag-coordinate din sila pero tinatanong natin ditto. gusto nating malaman kung hanggang saan nakarating 'yung coordination na 'yun. Bakit humantong sa ganito? Bakit hindi nakarating sa mga operating units nila?"

(The PNP was saying that they also coordinated with the AFP but our question here, what we want to know is up to what level the coordination reached. Why did it end up like this? Why it did not reach their operating units?)

Six members of the PNP 805th Mobile Company of the Regional Mobile Force Battalion 8 (RMFB8) were killed while nine others were wounded in a bloody snafu with the members of the 87th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army in Sta. Rita, Samar on Monday morning. Both troops were targeting members of the New People's Army (NPA).

In an interview with the media on Tuesday, 8th Infantry Division Commander Major General Raul Farnacio admitted the RMFB8 had informed the Alimbuyog detachment on Friday of the policemen patrolling in the area.

Farnacio, however, said the policemen did not say when they would conduct their operations, thus the communication failed to reach military ground troops.

Albayalde said it was difficult for troops in the area to identify who the enemies were as rebels often wear the same uniform as the government troops.

"Kung ano ang suot ng AFP at PNP yun din ang suot nila (NPA). Kung ano armas nila (military, police) minsan 'yun din ang armas nila. So that's important on our part is the coordination between the AFP and the PNP," the police chief said.

(They wear what the AFP and PNP wears. Sometimes they use the weapons of the military and the police.)

The PNP has formed its own Board of Inquiry to investigate the incident. *with reports from Daphne Beltran* /kga