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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## NEWS CLIPPINGS

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*Honor. Patriotism. Duty*

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# DUTERTE ADMIN RATING DROPS

STORY BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

Among the upper and middle classes, satisfaction with the Duterte administration took its deepest plunge—34 points, from +81 to +47, according to a Social Weather Stations poll conducted in September. A 6-point slide was recorded in Class D, while the drop was 13 points in Class E, the poorest of the poor.

A2

## FROM A1

The Duterte administration's satisfaction rating among upper and middle classes fell sharply from +81 to +47, or a drop of 34 points, and its net satisfaction rating nationwide fell by at least 8 points, according to results of a new Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey.

By class, the Duterte administration's net satisfaction dropped from +81 to +47 among Classes ABC, from +56 to +50 among Class D and from +62 to +49 among Class E, according to results of the survey conducted on Sept. 15-23.

The administration's satisfaction rating fell across geographic areas and socioeconomic classes but most notably in the Visayas and among the ABC, or middle and upper, classes.

Overall net satisfaction on the performance of the administration dropped 8 points, taking the biggest plunge of 14 points in the Visayas.

Results of the survey found 65 percent of adult Filipinos satisfied with the administration's work while 15 percent said otherwise, resulting in a +50 net satisfaction rating (satisfied minus dissatisfied).

### Contrast

The latest rating was still classified as "very good" but down from +58 (correctly rounded) in June when 72 percent said they were satisfied and 13 percent said they were dissatisfied.

The decline in the latest rating of the Duterte administration was in contrast with the improvement in the President's net satisfaction rating, which recovered from a low of +45 in

June to +54 in September.

SWS also asked respondents if they were satisfied with the Duterte administration's performance on 14 issues, including inflation, in which the government's performance was rated a "neutral" +8, the lowest rating on the issues surveyed in September.

A "moderate" rating of +23 was given on the issue of ensuring that no family will ever be hungry.

SWS considered a rating of +70 and above as "excellent"; +50 to +69, "very good"; +30 to +49, "good"; +10 to +29, "moderate"; +9 to -9, "neutral"; -10 to -29, "poor"; -30 to -49, "bad"; -50 to -69, "very bad"; and -70 and lower, "execrable."

By location, net satisfaction with the government fell from +56 to +42 in the Visayas, from +76 to +67 in Mindanao, from +47 to +40 in Metro Manila and from +54 to +48 in Luzon

outside Metro Manila.

### Other issues

Rated on its performance on other issues, the government scored "very good" net satisfaction on building and maintenance of public works (+66), helping the poor (+63), reconstructing Marawi City (+58), protecting human rights (+54) and fighting terrorism (+53).

It got a "good" rating on fighting crimes (+43), reconciling with communist rebels (+42), reconciling with Muslim rebels (+41), foreign relations (+40), fulfilling commitments in international treaties (+40), defending Philippine sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea (+39) and eradicating graft and corruption (+38).

SWS interviewed 1,200 adults nationwide and used a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points.

—INQUIRER RESEARCH INQ

# Palace: Steps being taken vs rising prices

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Malacañang has issued fresh assurance of relief in the wake of new record high inflation in September, saying President Duterte's directives like relaxing procedures for agriculture importation and cracking down on profiteers would cushion the impact of soaring prices.

"We know that the people are feeling the effects of higher prices, that's why the government has taken steps to address this," presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said in Filipino yesterday.

Based on data released by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), inflation reached a new nine-year high

of 6.7 percent in September from 6.4 percent in August and three percent in September 2017.

President Duterte issued Administrative Order No. 13 in September seeking the removal of non-tariff barriers to importation of agricultural products, including rice.

Through Memorandum Order No.

26 issued also last month, the Chief Executive directed the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry to adopt measures to reduce the gap between farmgate prices and retail prices of agricultural products.

"This will lower the price of basic food products for Filipino consumers since certain administrative

Turn to Page 8



requirements unduly add to the cost of importation and limit food supply," Roque said, referring to AO13.

Steep increase in food prices due to supply disruptions in the aftermath of Typhoon Ompong stoked inflation in September, PSA said.

But there are indications of easing prices, the country's economic managers claimed in a joint statement.

Roque said the President's memorandum was intended to maintain sufficient supply of agricultural products in the domestic market and "provide effective and sufficient protection to consumers against hoarding, profiteering and cartels with respect to the supply, distribution, marketing and pricing of said goods."

Congressmen called yesterday for the implementation of robust measures to arrest rising inflation, which was highest in the Bicol region.

Reps. Joey Salceda of Albay and Michael Romero of party-list group 1-Pacman, who are both economists, warned the Duterte administration that unless vigorous steps were taken, consumer prices could further go up in the months ahead.

"6.7 percent was bad as expected and remained driven by 9.7-percent food inflation. This was caused by a combo punch of Ompong and self-inflicted jabs," Salceda said. "Barring any deterioration in external factors and delays in implementing reforms, we see this to be the peak of this inflation cycle."

He said the government

should aim to "stop inflation momentum, arrest inflationary expectations, preempt market opportunism and provide immediate relief to consumers through lower prices and higher supply of commodities."

Romero predicted that inflation could shoot past seven percent "with the recent approval of water rate hikes, continuing peso depreciation, increased consumer spending during the Christmas season and crude oil prices rising above \$80 per barrel."

## Christmas spending

He said Filipinos would spend in the coming months "no matter what because of the 13th-month pay, bonuses and other cash gifts given to employees in the last quarter."

"It is now time for brute force intervention in the consumer markets for basic commodities. The economic managers must immediately step on the brakes by flooding the consumer market with more than enough supplies of basic commodities," he said.

He added that a combination of more money and fewer goods would certainly mean more inflationary pressures.

Romero also urged the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and National Food Authority (NEA) "to get their act together by removing all needless regulations on rice retail permits" and to facilitate the sale of cheap rice.

Salceda said higher inflation has likely added 2.4 million Filipinos to the ranks of the poor.

He reiterated the proposals of Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her economic team for the administration to remove tariffs on corn, feed wheat, vegetables, and meat, and to import more rice to bring in needed supplies.

He said President Duterte could sign an executive order scrapping tariffs on these items between Oct. 13 and Nov. 11, when Congress will be on its Halloween recess.

He said the Energy Regulatory Commission, Department of Energy, Toll Regulatory

Board and Water Regulatory Office should "defer implementation or approval of regulated price adjustments," while the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) "must remain vigilant to control inflationary expectations, as well as peso speculation."

The water agency has just approved a hefty rate increase. In August, before Congress went on a 12-day recess, Arroyo and other House leaders recommended these measures, but administration officials largely ignored them.

Only the BSP responded positively.

Salceda also urged the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide cash-for-work for small fishermen, 80,000 of them in the Bicol region.

He said the DSWD should also speed up the release of cash assistance to the poor and senior citizens.

He urged other departments, including labor and employment, environment and natural resources, and transportation and the NFA

to as well to expedite the implementation of similar programs.

On Aug. 10, Salceda warned President Duterte's economic managers that unless vigorous measures were taken, inflation could hit beyond six percent.

He aired the warning on "The Chiefs" show in Signal TV's One News after the PSA reported that inflation in July jumped to 5.7 percent from 5.2 percent in June. Prices further rose by 6.4 percent in August and 6.7 percent last month.

- Jess Diaz

# Japan military joins historic PH war games

SAN ANTONIO, ZAMBALES— Japanese troops stormed a beach here on Saturday in joint exercises with American and Filipino troops that officials said marked the first time Tokyo's armored vehicles rolled on foreign soil since World War II.

The small Japanese contingent played a humanitarian support role in the drill after US and Filipino Marines made an amphibious landing to retake territory from a "terrorist" group.

Fifty unarmed Japanese soldiers in camouflage marched behind their four armored vehicles and picked up Filipino and American troops playing the role of wounded combatants while moving inland over sand and sparse bushland.



### Not in combat drills

The exercise, code-named "Kamandag" (Venom), marked the first time Japanese armored military vehicles were used on foreign soil since the country adopted a pacifist constitution after its 1945 defeat, said Japan's Maj. Koki Inoue.

"Our purpose is to improve our operational capability and this is a very good opportunity for us to improve our humanitarian assistance and disaster relief training," Inoue said, adding Japan was not involved in the drill's combat component.

**COMMON FRONT** Some 150 Filipino, American and Japanese troops on Saturday storm a beach facing the South China Sea in Zambales province in joint military exercises code-named "Kamandag" (Venom). The Japanese military deployed amphibious armored vehicles on foreign soil for the first time since the end of World War II.

The exercise was held at a Philippine Navy base facing the South China Sea some 250 kilometers (155 miles) from Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, a territory



PHOTOS BY NIÑO JESUS ORRETA

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**RESCUE EXERCISE** Marching behind their armored vehicles, Japanese Marines carry a Filipino civilian playing the role of a wounded victim during the humanitarian assistance drill.

claimed by Manila that was seized by China during a 2012 naval standoff.

The Philippines has since ramped up military cooperation with Washington, its longtime ally, and also held joint naval exercises with Japan near Panatag Shoal in 2015.

#### **Not aimed at China**

Japan has its own maritime territorial dispute with Beijing in the East China Sea.

The US military stressed that Saturday's exercise was not aimed at China, which has also built arti-

ficial islands on disputed areas of the South China Sea and installed military facilities on them.

"It has nothing to do with a foreign nation or any sort of foreign army. This is exclusively counterterrorism within the Philippines," US Marine communications officer 1st Lt. Zack Doherty told Agence France-Press (AFP).

About 150 US, Filipino and Japanese troops took part in Saturday's landing, Doherty added.

This year's 10-day Kamandag exercises finish on Wednesday.

—AFP MB

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> War games A2

■ WAR GAMES FROM A1

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AFP

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# ₱1 B for Kalayaan

By CHARISSA M. LUCI-ATIENZA

## Island dev't sought

**C**agayan de Oro City Rep. Maximo Rodriguez Jr. is calling on the government to allocate ₱1 billion for the improvement, fortification, and building of structures in the Kalayaan Group of Islands.

He said these islands have been subject of claims of different countries, including Vietnam, Palau, Malaysia, and China.

"In order to strengthen our claim and protect our sovereignty, we need to build more structures and fortify our defense of these islands, particularly the construction of a safe harbor as well as the repair of the Rancudo airfield on

Pag-Asa Island," Rodriguez said.

Kalayaan Island is a fifth class municipality in the province of Palawan with a population of around 300 to 400 people.

It has one barangay, Pag-Asa and a 1.3 km airstrip that is used both by the military and civilians, the Cagayan de Oro lawmaker noted.

"Aside from solidifying our claim, the construction of structures in the Kalayaan Islands would also improve the tourism industry of the Islands," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said China already built strong fortifications and military structures in the islands surrounding the Kalayaan Islands.

"On several instances, Chinese gunboats even confiscated fishing nets of the Filipino fishermen and the increasing Chinese intrusions and their illegal occupation of Mischief (Panganiban) Reef are already alarming to the country's security," he laments.

Rodriguez filed House Bill 7583 which provides that ₱1 billion be appropriated to be exclusively used for the fortification and improvement of the current structures present in the Kalayaan Group of Islands.

Such amount shall also be used to build new structures

in the islands like harbors, berthing facilities and other structures necessary to promote tourism in the islands and increase the defensive capabilities of the Philippines to strengthen the Philip-

pines' claim over it.

The bill mandates that an annual report regarding the use of the funds be submitted to both houses of Congress. J

# AFP chief lauds sergeants major for bridging officers, enlisted men

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

In an attempt to stem the supposed restiveness among the military ranks, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez hailed non-commissioned officers for acting as "mediators."

"You have done a remarkable job of acting as leaders and mediators by bringing to attention the issues and concerns of our soldiers, particularly on their morale and welfare and discipline, which carry a great weight on the accomplishment of the AFP mission," Galvez told Sergeants Major and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) on Friday.

Galvez commended the NCOs for successfully completing a three-day consultative meeting that ended Friday at the PMA in Baguio City.

Amid coup rumors, Galvez highlighted the deliverables in uplifting the

morale and welfare of the troops and updates on scholarships for soldiers and their dependents.

In his speech Galvez quoted French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, saying that "war is a matter of morale."

"Those who are high in morale will certainly win and prevail. That's what happened in (the siege of) Marawi City. Our soldiers were in high spirits so that's why we won the battle (against the extremists)," he said.

"As the highest-ranking enlisted personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the AFP Sergeants Major and our Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) play a very important role in the efficient and successful functions and operations of the AFP. You are the 'indispensable bridge' that connects our enlisted personnel to the AFP leadership. You are the officer's and soldier's father, brother, mentor and

guardian," he said.

The consultative meeting was organized by the Office of the AFP Sergeant Major, which is celebrating its 49th anniversary this month also in conjunction with the 22nd NCO Day being held every October.

Over 200 Sergeants Major, NCOs and enlisted personnel from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines attended the event during which Galvez also recognized 17 retiring and retired sergeants major who were previously awarded for their exceptional work and service.

Also during the PMA visit, Galvez had lunch with the PMA cadets and reminded the future military leaders not to lose their integrity even if it will cause them their position and to remain apolitical at all times.

"In these trying times, we will still emerge victorious if we stick together and be true to our service to our nation and the Filipino people," he said.



# Phl naval task force honors Filipino community in Russia

By JAIME LAUDE

VLADIVOSTOK – A Philippine Navy (PN) contingent on a five-day goodwill visit in this city, paid tribute to a small group of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) based here, in a reception dinner held at the helicopter hangar of the Navy's Strategic Sealift Vessel (SSV) BRP Tarlac (LD601) docked at the Russian Pacific Fleet's naval facility.

Capt. Florante Gagua, commander of the Naval Task Force-87 (NTF-87) welcomed the seven Filipinas out of around 50 to 100 Filipinos currently working here – from

nannies to landscaping experts – aboard LD601.

"Aside from our goodwill visit with our Russian counterparts, we are also here to honor you being the country's modern-day heroes," Gagua told the Filipinas, one whom has found love and is now married to a Russian national, who joined her in the reception dinner.

Johnny Tomas, 45, who hails from Solana, Nueve Viscaya, said that he used to be an OFW in South Korea for 12 years until his transfer to Vladivostok and for the last five years, he is working as utility man, a security guard and a gardener

when there's no snow.

While he declined to disclose his monthly earnings, Tomas said it's more than enough to support him and his family back home.

For her part, Silvina Punungbayan, 47, of Magallanes, Cavite, said she has to endure the loneliness here for the sake of her six children back home.

She works as a nanny to a wealthy family here with a monthly pay of \$1,100 (more or less P55,000).

But landing a job here, she said, is at first very difficult as an applicant must go through various recruitment channels who all charging exorbitant fees.

However, once employed

these expenses are easily recoup because of the high-paying jobs, just like the salary of Pinky Quidan, an Ilongga who is also employed here as a nanny with a monthly pay of \$1,500.

"Our salary here are in dollars and not in local currency (Russia ruble). My boss is a senior political leader here. The family is very kind to me. In fact when we I went here my boss dropped me off and will return to pick me up by 9 p.m.," Quidan said.

Quidan's story of landing a job here is almost the same as that with the rest of OFWs who attended the reception dinner – Marlita Monchenging, Catherine Reteza and Jennelyn Lancia – all of them formerly

OFWs based in Hong Kong or South Korea.

They also bared some of their co-workers have already left for Europe as it is very easy to secure a working visa in European countries from here.

In his speech, Gagua also

conveyed to the gathered Filipinos the message of President Duterte, thanking them for enduring the difficulties of being away from home for the sake of their families and at the same time helping the country's economy. BS

## Other mutineers' cases up to Dugo, but Trillanes a priority—DOJ chief

By Jerome Aning  
@JeromeAningINQ

A day after the military revealed that the amnesty records of some 276 other mutineers are missing, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra on Saturday said the government would prioritize the case involving the voiding by President Duterte of the presidential pardon given to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV in 2012.

Guevarra said he would leave it up to Mr. Duterte to decide what to do with the other former mutineers, who also faced the revocation of their amnesty.

"For now, the focus is on Senator Trillanes' amnesty grant. It is

up to the President what he wants to do with the grant of amnesty to other individuals," Guevarra said in a brief statement.

Department of National Defense (DND) officials on Friday told a Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) hearing that Trillanes' revived coup d'état case that all records related to the amnesty given to the senator and 276 other mutinous military officers covered by Proclamation No. 75 of President Benigno Aquino III were missing.

The records included minutes of deliberations and transcripts of stenographic notes.

Norman Daanoy, chief of legal affairs at the DND, and head

of records Arlene Manjares said the documents could not be found in their respective offices.

### Option not to act

Guevarra said Mr. Duterte, as part of his power to grant executive clemency, had the option not to act on the disclosure about the missing records.

"Executive clemency involves the exercise of discretion, and the President as Chief Executive and Commander in Chief enjoys a lot of freedom in exercising this prerogative," the justice secretary said.

Mr. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 572 on Sept. 4 voiding Trillanes' amnesty due to the

senator's failure to apply for amnesty and admit guilt for his role in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny and 2007 Peninsula Manila siege during the term of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The President cited Trillanes' missing application form in ordering his arrest, although video footage and pictures presented by the senator showed that he applied for amnesty and that his application was found to be in order by the DND.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) later ordered government prosecutors to revive the coup d'état and mutiny cases originally lodged in the two Makati courts against Trillanes and to

file motions for his rearrest.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines also moved to reconvene Trillanes' court martial, which was discontinued in 2012 following Aquino's grant of amnesty.

### Galvez admission

Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., chief of staff of the AFP, admitted in a Senate budget hearing on Tuesday that Trillanes, the President's fiercest critic in Congress, indeed applied for amnesty.

But Mr. Duterte's chief legal counsel, Salvador Panelo, rejected Galvez's statement, saying it was "mere hearsay" since the general based his remarks on the affidavit

of Col. Josefa Berbical, the former head of the amnesty secretariat.

On Sept. 21, Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati RTC Branch 150 issued an arrest warrant against the senator and reopened the rebellion case against him. But Alameda allowed Trillanes to post bail.

After an almost eight-hour hearing on Friday, Judge Andres Soriano of Makati RTC Branch 148 asked Trillanes' camp to file its formal offer of evidence on Tuesday next week while giving the prosecution a day to file their comment.

Only then will he decide whether to order the senator's arrest, Soriano said. INQ

## Up to PRRD to void other amnesties – Guevarra

By JEFFREY G. DAMICO

President Rodrigo R. Duterte will determine whether to void or not the amnesty granted to those who participated in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny and 2007 Manila Peninsula siege, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said.

"It is up to the President what he wants to do with the grant of amnesty to other individuals," Guevarra told reporters.



## Up to PRRD to void...

◀1

"Executive clemency involves the exercise of discretion, and the president as chief executive and commander-in-chief enjoys a lot of freedom in exercising this prerogative," he explained.

At the moment, Guevarra said the DOJ is only focused on the amnesty granted to Sen. Antonio Trillanes which was declared "void ab initio" (void from the start) by the President by virtue of Proclamation No. 572 for failing to comply with the requirements in applying for amnesty.

The Palace order has prompted the DOJ to seek the revival of the rebellion and coup d'etat cases against Trillanes before Makati Regional Trial Court

Branch 150 and 148, respectively and seek the issuance of a warrant of arrest and hold departure orders (HDO) against him.

Trillanes is currently out on a P200,000 bail granted by Makati RTC Branch 150 Executive Judge Elmo Alameda.

The Department of National Defense (DND) Chief of Legal Affairs lawyer Norman Daanoy, and DND Records Division Chief Arlene Manjares told Makati RTC Branch 148 Judge Andres Soriano during Friday's hearing that they have no record of the 277 amnesty applications, including that of Trillanes.

### Escorts recalled

Meanwhile, the Philippine National Police has recalled the two police escorts of Trillanes reportedly upon the order of the President after his amnesty was voided.

This means that since September 4, Trillanes no longer had police security escorts. Chief Superintendent Filmore Escobar, director of the PNP-Police Security Protection Group (PSPG) said.

The PSPG handles the operations of all police security escorts detailed to VIPs, including government officials.

A source from the Office of Senator Trillanes confirmed the recall of the security escorts. (With reports from Jel Santos and Martin Sadongdong)

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# Other amnesties' fate DU30's call



It would be the prerogative of President Rodrigo Duterte to decide on the fate of amnesties granted to some 250 other mutineers aside from that given to opposition Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said yesterday.

"For now, the focus is on Senator Trillanes' amnesty grant," Guevarra added.

Acting Prosecutor General Richard Anthony

Fadullon on Friday labeled as "defective" the application form for the amnesty given to Trillanes and other soldiers who rebelled

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against the administration of former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

"It is up to the President what he wants to do with the grant of amnesty to other individuals," Guevarra said.

Fadullon said during Friday's hearing on the revived cases against Trillanes that "assuming without admitting" that Trillanes can prove he filed an application form, the more crucial point is the "defective" application form.

The lack of an application form and the absence of an admission of guilt were the basis for Proclamation 572 that voided the amnesty to Trillanes.

Fadullon said the application form on the required admission of guilt referred to incidents only such as the Oakwood Mutiny and the Manila Peninsula-siege

but did not include specific crimes like *coup d'etat* and rebellion.

Stating the specific crimes is needed for the mutineers to admit guilt too, Fadullon said.

### Admission lacking

"Our opinion is that the form itself is defective. The thing there is it could have been corrected if they were able to show an admission since their offenses are too serious to be left to just the ticking of boxes and filling of blanks which is what had happened," he said.

The amnesty application form has three check boxes for the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, the 2006 Marines stand-off and the 2007 Peninsula Manila Hotel siege incident which is followed by the statement:

"I hereby acknowledge that my

involvement/participation in the subject incident/s constituted a violation of the 1987 Constitution, criminal laws and the Articles of War. I hereby recant my previous statements that are contrary, if any, to this express admission of involvement/participation and guilt."

**It is up to the President what he wants to do with the grant of amnesty to other individuals.**

Below that is a blank space for the applicant's printed name and signature.

Fadullon said the defect of the form lies on the absence of the specific offenses since one does not admit guilt to an incident.

"An incident is not an offense," he added.

"As a consequence of that incident, there are crimes for which they were charged which are what the law had

stated that guilt for which should be admitted," Fadullon said.

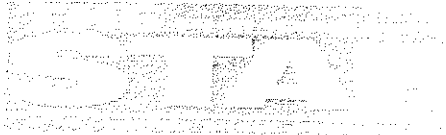
### Proclamation exclusive

Fadullon did not venture into stating whether or not the defect would put the amnesty of rebel soldiers other than Trillanes at risk.

"We will not speculate on that. The term defective refers to a specific individual. We're confining ourselves to the proclamation, and Proclamation 572 pertains to declaring void *ab initio* the application of Senator Trillanes," Fadullon said.

Fadullon also showed the court a Department of National Defense certification stating the absence of the minutes on the deliberations of the long list of applications for the amnesty grant from former President Benigno Aquino III.

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# Police to seek CHED guidance over 'Red October' universities

By **ROBERTZON RAMIREZ**

Police will seek guidance from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) on what action to take against the 18

universities and colleges tagged by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the communist plot to oust President Duterte.

National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Di-

rector Guillermo Eleazar said the CHED oversees colleges and universities in the country, adding the government agency could have monitored alleged

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# Police From Page 1

recruitment activities of communist groups among students.

Eleazar stressed the police need help from CHED to reach out to the students.

"After our consultations with the CHED, from there, we will determine what we can do to reach out to the students," he added.

The AFP recently revealed the list of universities and colleges where communists allegedly are recruiting students for mass actions and protests to join the "Red October" plot to oust Duterte.

Student organizations and civic groups slammed the military for tagging educational institutions as a sort of breeding ground for communists.

The Alliance of Health Workers (AHW) also accused the police of harassing hospital union leaders in linking them to the Red October plot.

AHW president Robert Mendoza said the PNP is using the "dirty tactics of sowing fear and terror" among the group's union members and officers.

"The group strongly condemns the PNP's bold attempts to cower anyone they suspect or fancy to be anti-government," Mendoza said.

Mendoza said on Sept. 28, two men in civilian clothes who introduced themselves as government intelligence agents paid a visit to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center Employees Union office inside the hospital building.

He claimed the men "grilled" a union officer about the group's activities and involvement. The two men returned on Oct. 3.

The AHW said the same

men visited the employees union office of Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital on the same day.

"We believe that what PNP did endangers the lives and security of our union members and leaders. This is an affront to health workers' rights," Mendoza complained.

He added the AHW is now concerned over efforts to "suppress all forms of opposition to the government."

"Fighting for health workers' rights and welfare is a right. Forming workers union is a right and it is legal," Mendoza stressed.

He added the AHW is anticipating escalated threats and harassments by military and police agents to "paralyze individuals and organizations who are critical of anti-worker and anti-people policies."

Eleazar, on the other hand, said the NCRPO will look into the AHW's complaint.

Eleazar said he has yet to get all the details on the reported harassment of AHW members by policemen.

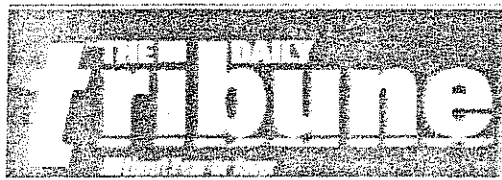
Eleazar, however, stressed visitations of police officers should not be misconstrued as a form of intimidation.

"Our police officers can go anywhere and ask questions," he said.

Eleazar said there is nothing wrong if police officers will just ask some questions to get information.

Eleazar assured the AHW that it should not be worried if they have not committed any offense.

"Why would they be afraid when police officers only want to talk to them," he said. — With Emmanuel Tupas, Sheila Crisostomo, Gilbert Bayoran



# 'RED OCTOBER' IN UNIVERSITIES? PNP-DEPED gab on 'plot'

By Nelson Badilla

The Philippine National Police (PNP) is supporting the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) effort in determining the strength of the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP's) recruitment of students from the country's top colleges and universities.

This was confirmed by National Capital Region Police (NCRPO) Director General Guillermo Eleazar yesterday as he bared the start of coordination with several schools and universities earlier tagged by the AFP as recruitment bases of the CPP and its military arm, the New People's Army.

Veteran activists interviewed by *Daily Tribune* confirmed the CPP-NPA recruitment of students from legal organizations, including the League of Filipino Students (LFS), National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), Anakbayan and several more school organizations influenced by the Maoist party.

Eleazar said police officials in Metro Manila will dialogue with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to verify the AFP intelligence report about 10 or more schools teeming with Maoist activities.

These allegedly include efforts to draw the students into joining the claimed "Red October" plot to unseat President Rodrigo Duterte.

"There is really a need to validate the intelligence report

**Eleazar bared the start of coordination with several schools and universities earlier tagged by the AFP as recruitment bases of the CPP and its military arm, the New People's Army.**

No less than AFP assistant deputy chief of staff for operations Brig. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr. alleged that there was as an agreement among the CPP, Liberal Party (LP), Magdalo party list group, some members of the Catholic church and Tindig Pilipinas to remove Duterte and called it "Red October."

According to Eleazar, recruitment of students by the CPP has been happening for a long time now.

Eleazar said the NCRPO plans to ask CHED officials to help in determining the extent of the CPP recruitment in schools.

He stressed that civil rights of the students will not be violated as investigation is ongoing.

"This is not new, even in previous years we know that there are efforts by the CPP-NPA to recruit students in universities. But we still need to validate information regarding this," Eleazar said.

School officials, however, protested the AFP claim.

Several schools also released statements acknowledging students' rights to join and form organizations and stressed their right to peaceful assembly as guaranteed by the Constitution.

Several student leaders, however, have figured in the communist movement in the past and at present.

The key movers during the formation of the CPP were former student leaders who answered the call to "go to the hills" at the height of the First Quarter Storm, a student-led series of rallies that became one of the bases of the late President Ferdinand Marcos to declare martial law.

Marcos made martial law official on 21 September 1972 and lifted it only on 17 January 1981 that was made possible only by the visit of Pope John Paul II in Manila in February.

In between those years, hundreds of students, workers and farmers joined the CPP-NPA.

### Housing for former rebels

DAVAO CITY (PNA) – President Rodrigo Duterte will lead the turn-over of the government's settlement project for former New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Tagum City later this month. This was according to National Housing Authority (NHA) General Manager Marcelino Escalada, who conducted a site inspection at the five-hectare Freedom Residences in Barangay Cuambongan, Tagum City on Friday. Escalada said 50 of the 375 units will be initially turned over to recipients, who are former rebels from Davao Oriental, Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, parts of Compostela Valley province, and Davao del Norte. The Freedom Residences is a secured subdivision-type housing project with each unit costing P450,000. Each unit is tiled with 22 square meter floor area in the first floor and 11 square meters for the loft, a provision ready for light and water connections and other facilities.



## Students joining rallies not NPA recruits – NCRPO

By AARON B. REQUENCO

The top police official of Metro Manila has rejected insinuations that students joining protest actions could be considered as recruits of the communist rebels.

Director Guillermo Eleazar, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), said protest actions are guaranteed in the Constitution and everyone, including the students have the right to do so.

"We cannot say that those joining the rallies are recruits. Just because they joined rallies does not mean that they are NPA (New People's Army)," said Eleazar.

"We guarantee the civil rights of the students and the school persons," he added.

The NCRPO has always

been at the forefront of the security preparations in protest actions, sometimes involving students from various schools in Metro Manila.

Recently, the military has been subjected to intense criticisms for claiming that there were 20 colleges and universities in Metro Manila, including the top schools and both private and state colleges and universities, which have been serving as the recruitment hubs of the communist rebels. 7

The military made the announcement amid the discussion on the alleged Red October plot which is allegedly meant to topple President Duterte.

The national police leadership has tasked Eleazar to lead the meeting with the officials of the schools mentioned by the military.

## 2 NPAs killed; soldiers overrun rebel camp

By **MIKE U. CRISMUNDO**

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City - Two New People's Army (NPA) fighters were killed while troops from the 402nd Infantry Brigade (402nd IB) seized control of a rebel camp as the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) forged on with its campaign against Communist insurgents in Northern and Northeastern Mindanao.

Brig. Gen. Franco Nemesio M. Gacal, 402nd IB commander, said his troops encountered about 50 heavily armed NPA terrorists in Palilhana, Barangay Mahanub in Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte, engaging their foes in a 30-minute gunfight at around 3:30 a.m., Friday.

And when the smoke cleared over the battle area, Gacal said a rebel fighter was found dead, with more insurgents believed wounded based on the blood splatter found in the area.

The encounter also resulted in the discovery of an NPA camp, which the soldiers promptly seized. The camp belonged to the Sub-Regional Command Northland of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPA Northeastern Mindanao Regional Committee (NEMRC).

The rebels abandoned their hideout after sensing they were already out-positioned and more combat maneuvering troops coming from nearby areas were coming, field report said.

Meanwhile, another alleged NPA fighter, identified as one of those who burned a truck belonging to an agriculture company, was killed in a gunbattle with troops in Kilometer 9, Barangay Policarpio in San Luis, Agusan del Sur.

According to Brig. Gen. Andres C. Centino, commanding general of the Army's 401st Infantry (Unity) Brigade, the Communist terrorists belonged to Guerrilla Front 88 (GF 88) of the CPP-NPA North-Central Mindanao Regional Committee (NCMRC).

"The firefight ensued for 20 minutes after which the enemies scampered in different directions, leaving behind one of their dead comrade-in-arm," the 401st Brigade commander said.

Soldiers also seized in the encounter site one M16 Armalite rifle, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and some bomb-making materials, he said.

Identity of the slain rebel was not immediately known.

# Margie at home at the CCP

*(First of two parts)*

**By Jojo Gumpal Silvestre**  
*Contributor*

A year and six months before the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), the country's foremost venue for the performing arts, celebrates its golden anniversary, its Board of Trustees voted as its chair Maria Margarita "Margie" Moran Floirendo, a world-class Filipina whose outstanding credentials make her truly deserving of the honor. It is, of course, a job that requires her attention and Margie welcomed her election as an opportunity to do more of what she could for her country.

Margie, who first came into our national consciousness as the Miss Universe of 1978, adds as a gem to her crown, as it were, a sincere commitment to strengthening the arts and culture community through the various programs of the CCP, in



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The Margie of today is a veteran of the public life, although she chose to widen her reach

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which she is very much at home.

At an early age, even before she joined the Bb. Pilipinas contest which led to her representing the Philippines in that fateful Miss Universe pageant held in Athens, Greece, Margie was dancing on stage. In the early 1970s, she performed in the Best of Broadway productions of the foremost fashion and cultural impresario of the era, Karilagan Arts International founder, Conchita Sunico.

"I was a jazz dancer," Margie shared with us when the *Daily Tribune* visited her for an interview for the paper's continuing front page series on the country's current movers and shakers. "What makes them click?" and "Why are they successful?" are only two of the many questions that we hope to answer through these weekly features.

Margie gladly welcomed us to the CCP, her home for 10 years as president of Ballet Philippines prior to her current post, in the quiet and cool privacy of the cultural institution's audiovisual room on its third floor, where tapes and CD of all CCP performances through the years are meticulously kept and preserved.

It was a relaxed and quiet afternoon, with the hum of the air conditioner hardly intruding into Margie's naturally modulated voice. Neither did we hear the heavy rain that, we were told later, put Manila traffic to a halt.

Margie, articulate in the manner of a *colegiala* who attended both St. Theresa's College and the former Maryknoll College (now known as Miriam), looked from every angle a modern-day queen, minus the

crown, the scepter and the train. Instead, she was in a lady executive's typical weekday working clothes - a casual jacket for her top, and an unfussy skirt, this one with a hemline that was a few centimeters above the wearer's knees.

#### No-nonsense beauty queen

If her Miss Universe looks and attributes have not radically changed, making her still a proverbial sight to behold (a description that may not please her because she seemed nonchalant about matters of beauty and style), her intelligence and spontaneity in her responses bring to mind the Margie of almost 45 years ago who, when asked what she would do with her prize if she made it as Miss Universe, simply replied that she would buy a house and lot.

Even then, she was a no-nonsense woman who would prove to be a good manager of the many establishments and projects that she was eventually tasked to handle - whether appointed or voted, or considered by her associates and friends a shoo-in for the position.

*Daily Tribune*, though, could

not help noticing (and reiterating) that the Miss Universe of 1973 has indeed kept her elegant carriage, eye-catching beauty that also got her voted as Miss Photogenic, and an exquisite face evocative of Greek goddesses, as interpreted by the classical masters, that made her the favorite of the mostly-Greek crowd. Her eyes, I observed during the interview, "smiled" a lot each time she shared a happy experience.

The Margie of today is a veteran of the public life, although she chose to widen her reach by becoming, through the years, a television show host, movie producer, book editor and publisher, cultural manager, resort and travel agency manager, and volunteer worker in social development projects.

Of course, the list includes a one-movie acting experience not long after she won her Miss Universe title. "It was a musical.

I enjoyed it," she recalled. "What I didn't like about it was the waiting. They were writing and improving the script while the movie was being filmed."

She admitted to "liking the fast-paced kind of doing things. I hate waiting," which gives us a hint to her work and management style.

The CCP and the Filipino nation, with her as chair of the Board of Trustees, can look forward to a revitalized institution under the leadership of someone who knows its ins and outs, since, she points out, "I just moved from one floor to the other."

#### Bai Putri of two sultanates

Margie who was president of Ballet Philippines for 10 years from 2008 to 2018, was appointed a trustee only this January and, in April, she was nominated by the President of the Philippines as the chairman, to which the members of the board concurred.

It was a unanimous vote, recognizing the nominee's work in arts and culture, even before she became an energetic fixture in the CCP scene.

In Mindanao, where she had lived straight for decades since her marriage to a local scion, she hosted television shows and published coffee table books that highlighted the various facets of life in the Philippines' second largest island, "thus giving me the opportunity to travel all over Mindanao," she said.

She also produced the box-office hit and award-winning movie, *Bagong Buwan*, in cooperation with Star Cinema, which "was about the Mindanao conflict," she shared.

Of that stint, Margie modestly pointed out, "It was Star Cinema that did most of the work. My part was just in assisting in getting the stars and the story. It was exciting for me because I introduced the director, Marilou Diaz-Abaya, and some of the people who were involved in the movie, to the Muslim leaders, including the top brass of the MILF. I myself met a lot of learned Muslim professors and leaders. Just learning about why the conflict happened was a good learning experience. I learned more about the inequity in people's lives."

Her TV shows and the movie inspired the royal families to confer on her two honorary royal titles, Bai Putri of the Maguindanao Sultanate and Bai Putri of the Maranaw Sultanate. These were well-deserved honors for one who "had been to places where people could not go during those days. It was dangerous to go there, but I made a lot of friends among the Muslims, nomads and Christians."

Her exposure to the people and experiencing firsthand their culture have, of course, enlightened her on the realities of Filipino life which, she said, "made me realize the importance of the arts not only as an expression of the sentiments of a people, but as a tool for social and economic development."

*To be continued*



## Rebelde, todas sa Agusan encounter

**CAMP DATU LIPUS MAKAPANDONG**, Awa, New Leyte, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur - Isang umano'y kaanib ng New People's Army (NPA) na kabilang sa grupong sumunog sa isang truck na pangbaka ang napatay nang makipagbakbakan ang mga ito sa militar sa Kilometer 9, Barangay Policarpio, San Luis, Agusan del Sur, nitong Biyernes ng umaga.

Sa panayam, sinabi ni Brig. Gen. Andres Centino, commanding

general ng 401st Infantry Brigade (IB) ng Philippine Army (PA), hindi pa nila makuha ang pagkakakilanlan ng nasawing rebelde na sinasabing kaanib ng Guerilla Front 88 (GF 88) ng Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-NPA North-Central Mindanao Regional Committee (NCMRC).

"The operating troops of 26th Infantry Battalion (26th IB) was pursuing the more or less 20 CNTs who burned an ELF truck hauling citrus fruits in Barangay Balit, San

Luis town province when they engaged the fleeing rebels in nearby Barangay Policarpio of that same town," sabi ni Centino.

Tumagal ng 20 minuto ang engkuwentro bago tumakas ang grupo ng mga rebelde patungo sa iba't ibang direksyon.

Nasamsam ng militar sa encounter site ang isang M16 ArmaLite rifle, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at ilang bomb-making materials.

Mike U. Crismundo



# Local, int'l observers welcome in Bangsamoro plebiscite

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

21, 2019.

Local and international observers are welcome to monitor the conduct of a plebiscite that will ratify the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), the Commission on Elections (Comelec) said in a recent resolution.

Promulgated on Sept. 26, the resolution said the observers would have to go through an accreditation process before they could be allowed to monitor the plebiscite on Jan.

Interested parties have until Dec. 14 to file their application.

The Comelec said the observers must be free from any political, economic or other interests that might interfere with the accurate and impartial observation and monitoring of the electoral process.

If approved by the voters, the law will create the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), replacing the Au-

tonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The observers will be bound by a code of conduct to ensure an impartial and accurate assessment of the plebiscite.

They are not allowed to express any personal comment or conclusion about the conduct of the monitoring before the election observation mission can issue an official statement.

The observers are not allowed to assist any person or groups in whatever manner

related to the conduct of the plebiscite.

They are prohibited from taking part or influencing the conduct of the plebiscite and cannot engage in partisan political activities or make any form of contribution related to the plebiscite.

The observers are not allowed to enter the polling place or talk with the voters.

Violators face imprisonment from one to six years, the Comelec said. 16

# 'UN aims to empower youth, women in peace development'

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

The United Nations' (UN) upcoming initiatives in Mindanao will focus on building the capacities of the youth and women and empowering them to become agents of peace and development.

This was among the highlights of the second Project Advisory Board meeting of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UN PBF) attended by representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UN Women and the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) on Friday.

Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza, who co-chairs the PBF Project Advisory Board with UN resident coordinator in the Philippines Ola Almgren, stressed the "critical" role of the youth in peacebuilding, particularly in the national government's efforts to address the growing threat of violent extremism in the country.

Dureza pointed out that a large number of those recruited by terrorist groups during the Marawi siege were very young fighters.

He emphasized the need to provide young people, particularly those in conflict-affected areas, with the necessary skills that would enable them to make a living and consequently discourage them from joining extremist organizations.

"We need to give them the capacity to earn so they can avoid doing these foolish things," Dureza said.

The PBF, dubbed "Enhancing Capacities for the Bangsamoro," began its implementation in September 2017 through a partnership between the United Nations and OPAPP.

The fund's main objectives are to create an enabling environment for the successful implementation of a new law for the Bangsamoro region.

## Engaging the youth

During the meeting, Andrew Morris, chief of UNICEF's Mindanao office, said it is the overall strategy of his agency to actively engage the youth in peace-promoting activities.

"This is something we would continue in the coming years, to get them involved in peacebuilding," Morris said.

He said based on a recent study conducted by UNICEF, there are currently around 400,000 out-of-school youth in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Morris said the situation is worrisome in light of the current peace and security conditions in the region, which are being exploited by radical groups.

He added that among the major concerns confronting the region's youth are health, education and employment.

He said this is the reason the UNICEF's programs and projects are focused on providing much-needed services for the youth.

"We need to work on a larger scale to make an impact," he said.

Morris said through UNICEF's various programs, the agency hopes to reach out to about half a million youth in the region.

## Women's role

For her part, Maricel Aguilar of UN Women reported that her organization has already reached out to 500 "diaspora" communities.

She said this is in line with the agency's efforts to support a Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) that is compliant with the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro signed between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Bangsamoro peace process in general.

Aguilar said many of the women they have talked to still do not have a clear understanding of the BOL, especially on how its implementation will impact their respective communities.

"A lot of them don't know what will be the implications of the law," she said. "We need to reach out to these communities and influence them."

Aguilar said UN Women is now closely working with civil society organizations in the region in order to boost their information dissemination campaign on the BOL and strengthen the role of women in community safety and civilian protection.

To date, they have trained 33 women speakers who will lead in legislative lobbying and conversations in diaspora communities.

"We hope to scale up our interventions," she said.

Dureza underscored the need for greater synergy and integration among the various peace stakehold-

ers.

"We need to have a coherent network," he said, noting that a lot of organizations are now helping the national government in its work for peace.

Dureza also lauded the international development community, particularly the UN, for helping push forward the Duterte administration's peace and development agenda.

In response, Almgren, UN's resident coordinator in the Philippines, thanked OPAPP for giving his organization the opportunity to carry out its work in the Philippines.

## Group criticizes new DSWD chief

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

Militant groups yesterday slammed the appointment of Army chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Bautista as Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

Amihan national chair Zenaida Soriano said the appointment displays the transformation of the Duterte administration into a militarist regime.

She said the appointment of a military general as social welfare chief is a manifestation of the President's increasing paranoia on the socio-political instability amidst the socio-economic crisis facing the country.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said the DSWD is a civilian post that is mandated to provide welfare assistance to the most vulner-

able and disadvantaged in our society.

"Social welfare principles include upholding the dignity of individuals and respecting their rights. Hence a strong emphasis on people's participation in the crafting and execution of the agency's programs is a given," Bayan said in a statement.

"Under the present administration which has again and again violated the rule of law, 'civilian supremacy over the military' is being thrown out of the window," Bayan added.

Bautista, on the other hand, has refused to comment on his appointment.

Bautista led Joint Task Force Marawi forces in driving out the Islamic State-inspired Maute Group of extremists that laid siege in Marawi City.

The battle for Marawi City in May 2017 left thousands of people dead and displaced.

During the launching of a 28-book series on the Marawi siege last May, Bautista stressed there was "zero" human rights violations during the five-month battle to liberate Marawi City.

The Philippine Army's official website describes Bautista as a military official whose "irreproachable service reputation, inspiring leadership and impressive combat achievements earned him the top position to lead the 85,000-strong Philippine Army."

After graduating from the Philippine Military Academy in 1985, Bautista volunteered to undergo one of the most difficult combat preparatory courses in the Philippine Army - the Scout Ranger Course.   
 - With Michael Punongbayan

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## 2 MILF members nabbed with arms cache in S. Cotabato

By JOSEPH JUBELAG

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - Police arrested on Friday two alleged members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) for keeping in their possession a cache of high-powered firearms in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato.

Supt. Aldrin Gonzales, regional police spokesperson, identified the suspects as Abdulrashid Filcan Dalican, battalion commander of 107th MILF Base Command and his subordinate, Dionne Pendatun Maguan, who were nabbed during simultaneous police raids conducted by police operatives in

Barangay Lamalahak, Lake Sebu.

Policemen swooped down on the houses of the suspects in Barangay Lamalahak, which is a known MILF stronghold, following reports that the suspects were building up arms cache for the rebel group.

The raiding team seized high-powered firearms, including two 12-gauge shotgun, a Garand rifle, a rocket-propelled grenade, an M-79 grenade launcher, and a fragmentation grenade.

Police have filed charges of illegal possession of firearms and explosives against the suspects who are presently detained at the Lake Sebu police station.



# Outrage over ambush of PDEA agents

By ALI C. MACABALANG  
and ZEA C. CAPISTRANO

**C**OTABATO CITY - Local and national officials have condemned the ambush-slay Friday in Lanao del Sur of five agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), taking turns in assuring measures for the immediate dispensation of justice in what they called a "brutal" and "cowardly" attack.

Lanao del Sur Gov. Soraya Alonto-Adiong and Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Governor Mujiv Hataman expressed rage over the incident and urged everyone to help provide vital information that could help solve the dastardly crime.

At around 12 noon Friday, a PDEA team was travelling onboard a white Toyota van along Barangay Malna in Kapai, Lanao del Sur when they were waylaid by a barrage of gunfire from still unidentified assailants.

The team had just attended a program in nearby Tagoloan town for reforming drug convicts.

Slain were Kenneth Tabulo, Kristine Mae Torlao, Lores Joy Amar, Binzo Dipolla, and Diobel Pacinic, all agents of the PDEA office in ARMM. The sixth

victim, Rachel Gentapanan, was still fighting for her life in the hospital, a PDEA report said.

The ARMM regional police office said Lanao Sur-based cops and soldiers have jointly launched a pursuit operation.

Lanao del Sur Vice Governor Marmintal Adiong Jr. has reportedly offered a cash reward for any information leading to the identification and arrest of suspects in the ambush-slay.

In a statement, Lanao del Sur Governor Soraya Adiong said she was "very much infuriated" over the "brutal murder" of the five PDEA agents, whom she described as "saviors" of future generations.

The lady governor has ordered provincial health officials to provide vehicles for the transport of the victims' remains from Marawi City to this city, with security escorts from military elements of the Task Force Ranao.

Meanwhile, a Moro civil society organization expressed concern that the attack against the PDEA agents will be used by some government officials as a reason to push for the extension of martial law in Mindanao.

"We don't want this incident to be used by hawkish officials in the Government to justify the extension of Martial

Law in Mindanao," said Drieza Lininding, convener of the Moro Consensus Group, in a statement on Saturday.

"We urge authorities for a speedy investigation and identify the perpetrators as soon as possible," he added.

They also called for strong coordination between national government agencies, local government units to put in place safety measures when traveling to far-flung areas, particularly in Lanao del Sur.

## ARMM fetes mentors on World Teachers' Day

**COTABATO CITY:** The Department of Education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (DepEd-ARMM) paid tribute to the region's teachers during the celebration of World Teachers' Day at the office of the regional governor here on Friday.

This year's observance was more meaningful for hundreds of teachers whose lives were in danger for the five months last year when the Maute terror group laid siege to Marawi. Schools in the city were shut down and living in and near conflict areas was very risky.

For Mona Miscille Domato, 38, the saying that "teachers are the students' second parents," hit home during the Marawi siege. As a teacher at Sugod Central Elementary School, she recounted the effects of the siege on her and her students.

"Schools were closed down during the siege, but I urged my fellow teachers to continue our classes. If the students will be left at home, their minds may be corrupted by the war," she said.

True enough, almost every student talked about the number of bombs dropped in the city daily, Domato added.

A mother of nine, Domato said she treats her students like they were her own children. During the siege, she also felt their pain.

"Many of my students were hungry and helpless. I also felt their pain," she said.

Instead of being pulled down by negativity, she took the situation as an inspiration to serve as the

students' second mother.

Domato continued to hold classes despite the siege and to provide a safe haven for the children, she turned their classrooms into a "fun zone" allowing them to talk openly about the ongoing war.

"This allowed us to process all our thoughts. Having an all-Muslim class, we also reflected on the teachings of Islam — that inflicting harm to others is not Islamic," she said.

By providing a space where students can be "afraid" together, she also developed with them a strong sense of family. "We made a strong support system among ourselves," she added.

Now that the war in Marawi is over, she is thankful that her students no longer have to worry about their security. She said the student population of Sugod Central Elementary School grew this school year because of the influx of evacuees from other villages.

"I have more children now. I'm more inspired to teach because despite what happened last year, we remained strong as a community," she said.

"That's the key to teaching, when you treat your students as your own, you stand by them through their ups and downs. You become excited for their future," she added.

A teacher for 16 years now, Mona is proud to have produced professionals from among her former students. "My heart is full everyday knowing that the students I have today will give back to our community in the future," she said.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

# Sultan Kudarat bomber slain in raid

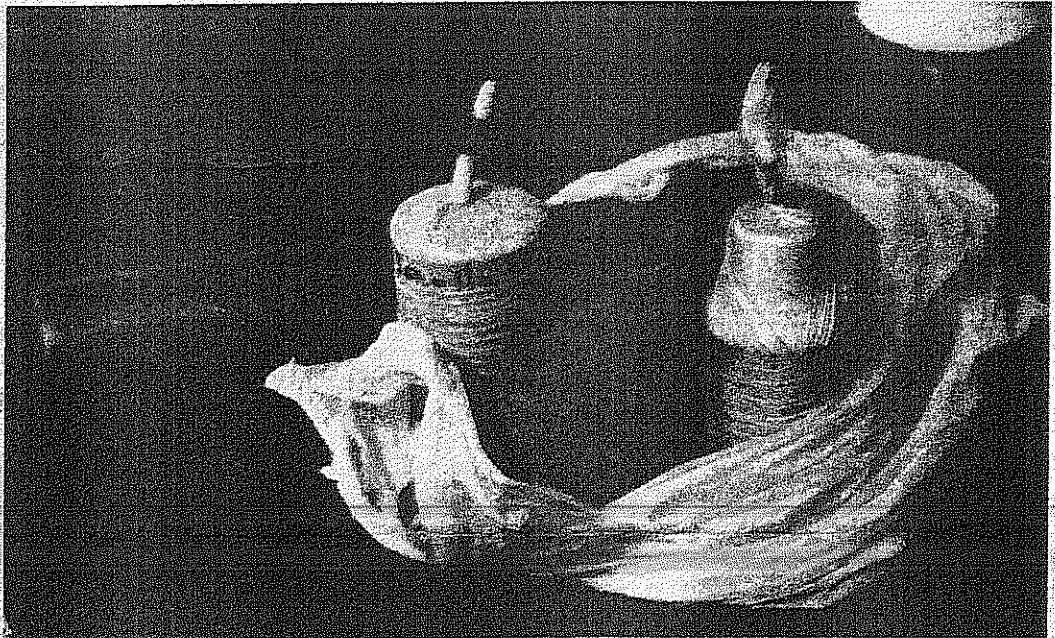
**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** One of the suspects behind the two fatal bombings in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat was killed during a law enforcement operation in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao on Saturday morning.

Norodin Taib, a notorious bomber of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) was killed by the combined troops of the 601st Infantry Brigade (601st IB) in Sitio Lab, Barangay Kuloy in Shariff Aguak.

Taib was tagged as a suspect in the Isulan bombings on August 28 that killed three and wounded 36 others, and on September 2 when two died and 12 were wounded.

Capt. Arvin Encinas, spokesman for the 601st Infantry Battalion, said troops raided the hideout of the BIFF before dawn on Saturday. As they approached the house, someone from inside threw a homemade hand grenade triggering a firefight. Taib was fatally wounded while five other bandits escaped.

Government troops recovered one improvised explosive device, two



**EXPLOSIVE FIND** This military photo shows recovered improvised explosives from a pro-Islamic State hideout in the restive province of Maguindanao, a stronghold of terrorist groups in Mindanao. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

improvised hand grenades, three cell-phones and subversive documents.

Encinas said civilians provided intelligence reports that led troops

to the hideout of the BIFF bandits as in past operations.

Police filed murder charges against BIFF leader Esmael Ab-

dulmalik alias Abu Toraife and 20 of his followers on September 11.

AL JACINTO  
AND ROY D.R. NARRA

## Isulan bombing suspect killed

As suspect in the Isulan bombings in Sultan Kudarat last 28 August and 2 September was killed during a military operation in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao.

The man, identified as Norodin Taib, was killed by troops from the 601st Infantry Brigade while conducting a law enforcement operation in Sitio Lab, Barangay Kuloy at dawn of Saturday, 6 October.

Taib was a notorious bomber of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and was tagged as one of the suspects in the two separate bombings in Isulan.

The operation was made possible after concerned civilians reported the presence of the suspected bombers in the area.

While the troops were moving towards the location, some five individuals scampered in

different directions, but one of them threw a homemade hand grenade which prompted the troops to neutralize the suspect.

The troops also recovered one improvised explosive device, two improvised hand grenades, three cellphones and subversive documents in the premises. **Kathleen Mae Bulquerin**

# Isulan bomber killed in Maguindanao

By MARTIN SADONGDONG

A suspected member of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters allegedly involved in the twin bomb attacks in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat recently was gunned down by military forces in Maguindanao early yesterday morning.

The suspect, identified as Norodin Taib, was killed during the conduct of support to law enforcement operations of the Army 601st Infantry Brigade in Sitio Lab, Barangay Kuloy, Shariff Aguak.

Brig. Gen. Diosdado Carreon, Army 601st Brigade commander,

said troops were moving to the house of the suspect at around 2 a.m. when at least five individuals, including Taib, suddenly ran away.

Carreon said Taib threw a homemade hand grenade to the troops but it did not explode. In retaliation, the military shot and killed him.

The Army 601st Brigade commander said the operation was launched after concerned civilians reported the presence of the suspects in the area.

Carreon added that the slain terror suspect was a known bomber linked to the BIFF.

Taib was included in the list of suspects behind the twin bomb

attacks in Isulan last Aug. 28 and Sept. 2 that killed five persons and wounded 50 others.

Joint Task Force Sulu commander Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana commended the Army 601st Brigade for the neutralization of the suspect.

"We will continue to conduct military operations with the assistance of the Philippine National Police, the local government, and the civilians to stop them from doing their terroristic activities," Sobejana said.

A manhunt operation is underway to identify and locate the suspected cohorts of Taib.

## BIFF BOMBER KILLED, NPA LEADER NABBED

By Francisco Tuyay

THE military notched two victories this week when operatives killed Saturday a terrorist-bomber involved in twin bombings in Sultan Kudarat and captured Thursday a New People's Army leader in operations in Negros Occidental.

Brig. Gen. Diosdado Carreon, commander of the Army's 601st Infantry Brigade, said Norodin Taib, a bomber and militant of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighter, was killed in Sitio Lab, Barangay Kuloy, Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao at about 2 a.m.

Carreon said troops were approaching the safe house of Taib but the BIFF bomber, with five other companions scamped in different directions.

One of the fleeing suspects hurled a homemade hand grenade at authorities, prompting soldiers to defend themselves, hitting Taib, according to the military.

Reports said Taib was involved in two separate bombings at Isulan, Sultan Kudarat last Aug. 28 and Sept. 2, that left five people killed and wounded 50 others.

Carreon said the military operation against Taib was launched following information from concerned civilians about the presence of notorious bombers in the area.

Maj. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Joint Task Force Commander, commended the 601st IB for "neutralizing" Taib whom he called responsible in bombing incidents in Central Mindanao.

"We will continue to conduct military operations with the assistance of the Philippine National Police, local government units, and the civilian populace to stop them from doing their terroristic activities," Sobejana said.

In Negros Occidental, 2nd Lt. Mae Rio Sanchez, Civil Military Operations officer of the 15th Infantry Battalion, said army and police operatives captured Joebert "Allan" Herrera, 36, a Platoon Leader of the Southwest Front of the CPP//NPA in Sipalay City.

Citing police records, Sanchez said Herrera had two standing warrants of arrest for the crime of murder and multiple frustrated murder and arson.

Lt. Col. Patricio Tomales, commanding officer of the 15th Infantry Battalion, said the capture of Herrera was made possible through the cooperation of the civilian populace who told the military they were already fed up with the atrocities perpetrated by the CPP/NPA.

He vowed more arrests and urged local populace continued support to authorities to stamp out NPA activities.

"In coordination with the police, there will be more [operations] in Negros. With the active help of the local populace, the CPP/NPA terrorists will be suppressed and defeated," Tomales said.

"The 15thIB will continue with its counter-terrorist operations to ensure the safety and security of the people...and attain the aspired peace and security in Negros," Tomales added.



## What 'Red October' is all about

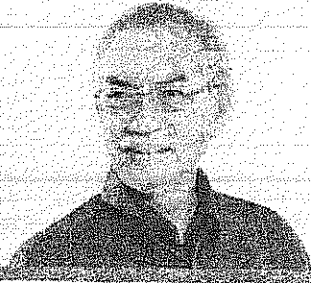
Lacking experience in state affairs, President Duterte has made many mistakes during his brief presidency. He has shocked the Filipino people and the world with his murderous war against drug users and drug pushers. He has turned off many sympathizers by his crude language and blasphemous tirades against organized religion. But, a tolerant nation has continued to stand by him, seeing in his rise to the nation's highest office a clear sign that democracy works in the country.

Basking in the public's postelection adulation of him, Mr. Duterte felt secure enough to take on the Catholic Church, the mainstream media, some figures in the business community he singles out as the rapacious oligarchy, the United States and the European Union, the UN human rights commission, and the International Criminal Court, etc.—all at the same time. He seems well aware that, unless the military turns against him by way of a coup or a mutiny, no attempt to topple his presidency can ever succeed.

Accordingly, he has taken good care of "his" men, as he likes to refer to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police. He has doubled their salaries, equipped them with new firearms, and increased their budgets. He has regularly visited wounded personnel in hospitals and attended the wakes of military and police casualties. He has appointed retired military and police officials to high positions in the bureaucracy, far more than any previous administration.

On top of these, Mr. Duterte has also spent more time than any of his predecessors going to military camps and speaking to the troops. In these frequent visits, he tirelessly assures the uniformed services that he would protect them against criminal liability and keep them out of jail should they encounter any trouble in the performance of their duties. Lastly, he tells them that if they feel unhappy with his presidency, it won't be necessary for them to conspire against him—that all they need to do is tell him to step down, and he would comply without hesitation.

This message has been such a recurrent item in Mr. Duterte's talks to the military



### PUBLIC LIVES

RANDY DAVID

that one can't help seeing it as a significant subtext of an ongoing conversation with the military. Rather than presume their loyalty to the Constitution, as befits a professional army in a democracy, he seems to expect more from them by way of trust—i.e., that he knows what he's doing.

I suspect he has long been aware of grumblings in the Armed Forces over his administration's friendly overtures toward the local communist movement. Indeed, when he was leading in all the polls on the eve of the 2016 elections, his chummy-chummy and almost affectionate conversation over Skype with his former teacher, Jose Maria Sison, raised quite a few eyebrows. Here was a would-be president who seemed totally indifferent to being tagged as a communist coddler.

More than the Moro insurgency, it is the threat from the CPP-NPA that has consumed the Philippine military for the longest time. The military's deeply ingrained anticommunist counterinsurgency mindset has been an obstacle to all past attempts to end the communist insurgency through peaceful negotiations.

In the early months of his term, President Duterte seemed undeterred by this problem. As Davao City mayor, he had struck a modus vivendi with the local communist rebels based on his personal friendship with their leaders. Banking on this reserve of goodwill, he was confident he could replicate his success in Davao on a national scale.

Thus, not only did he authorize the immediate resumption of the stalled peace talks, he also ordered the release of the rebels' top leaders from prison so they could participate in the negotiations. He welcomed their leaders to Malacañang like long-lost friends, and invited them to nominate their choices for key positions in the Cabinet. He kept his word and appointed their comrades.

Through all these developments, the military publicly said nothing that could be taken as disagreement with the President's policy. But, we can be certain the military leadership managed to communicate their reservations to their Commander in Chief, especially after the corpses of soldiers and policemen killed in ambushes and encounters with so-called "communist-terrorists" started to turn up in large numbers.

The military must have heaved a sigh of relief when Mr. Duterte finally decided to call a halt to the Oslo-sponsored peace talks, even as the possibility of reopening them remained. They must have felt further affirmed when the President let go of the last leftists in his Cabinet. Now, they want to make sure that's where things will stay.

This, I believe, is what "Red October" is all about. It is an attempt to put an end to Mr. Duterte's hitherto exuberant approach to dealing with the armed Left. It's also a subtle way of telling him that, while they are not his enemies, they are also not his minions. Riding on the President's paranoia about destabilization efforts against his administration, the Armed Forces has painted a scenario that is reminiscent of the months prior to Marcos' declaration of martial law. It tells of widespread recruitment among university students and factory workers for a communist-led antigovernment general strike, in collusion with the elite and the traditional opposition. It is a distraction from the people's main problems. *ATS*

But, in raising a big fuss about it, the military and the police may have unwittingly awakened a sleeping giant—the same student movement that led the antifascist struggle throughout the period of martial law.

public.lives@gmail.com

## 'Red October' plot's real target

**T**he much ballyhooed "Red October" ouster plot recently revealed by the military top brass is sounding more incredible by the day.

From a grand conspiracy involving groups critical of the Duterte regime—from the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), Liberal Party and Magdalo group, to broad coalitions like the Movement Against Tyranny, Coalition for Justice, and Tindig Pilipinas—the Armed Forces of the Philippines has now expanded the plot to include 18 colleges and universities in Metro Manila whose students are supposedly being brainwashed by communists through films about martial law.

Prior to the revelation of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. and his deputy chief of operations, Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., President Duterte himself accused the CPP, Liberal Party and Magdalo of planning to assassinate him in September.

When that didn't happen, the AFP changed the story line, saying New People's Army (NPA) rebels were going to infiltrate the Sept. 21 antimartial law rally in Luneta to sow terror and instigate Mr. Duterte's forcible removal from power.

And when that didn't happen, the AFP changed the story again, this time calling the "Red October" plot a "rolling plan" that can happen anytime until December, coinciding with the CPP's 50th anniversary.

Since then, anything that can be vaguely linked to the alleged plot—an arms cache raid by the National Bureau of Investigation in Rizal province, an arrest of a supposed top-ranking rebel in faraway southern

### COMMENTARY

TEDDY CASIÑO

Mindanao, the discovery of some smuggled firearms—is given a spin by the AFP to bolster its story, leaving other state security forces scratching their heads.

The plot is so pliable because, after all, there really is no Red October plot. In the first place, what right-minded leftist would name such a subversive plot that way, unless he/she wants to be discovered right away? "Oplan Gumamela" would have been much more credible.

No proof or evidence was ever presented of the conspiracy, save for the usual "intelligence reports" and "computer files" that were all confidential and never shown to the public.

The accusers could not cite any document, forum, gathering or meeting where the said groups actually conspired to oust Mr. Duterte. Pressed to give details, military officials fell back to the standard line that the communists were recruiting from the ranks of the protesters and were agitating people to topple the government.

Not even the NBI or the Philippine National Police could confirm the AFP's outlandish and ever-expanding story line.

Which brings us to the logical conclusion that Red October is actually a military psywar operation; an attack by Mr. Duterte and his generals on the people's legal democratic movement using the

age-old trick of Red-tagging.

By raising the communist bogey, they aim to vilify Mr. Duterte's critics, sow intrigue and division among the broad democratic opposition, and condition the public mind into accepting violent and politically repressive measures like a crackdown on democratic and progressive movements, or outright military rule.

The Red scare is also meant to consolidate the rightist elements in the opposition to the point of being party to a McCarthyist witch hunt.

To top it all off, the AFP is pushing for an "interagency body" to "defeat the communist insurgency once and for all." This is a dangerous ploy to dovetail all government functions and agencies to the AFP-led anti-insurgency campaign, in the process undermining or doing away with the principle of civilian supremacy.

The campaign's target will be groups engaged in the legal democratic struggle, especially student organizations and labor groups, that are historically the strongest opposers to martial law and dictatorship. They are also targeting "lumad" communities fighting the encroachment of mining and plantation companies into their lands, as well as urban poor groups, the political opposition and people's organizations and social movements critical of Mr. Duterte.

Red October aims to usher in martial law without a formal declaration.

Teddy Casiño served as Bayan Muna representative in 2004 to 2013 and is now back in the parliament of the streets.

## FROM A DISTANCE

CARMEN N. PEDROSA

### A letter to the President that should be in mainstream media

**M**My friend and colleague in the 2005 Constitutional Commission, Lito Lorenzana, wrote a column about a letter that should be published in mainstream media. I agree with its contents and I am sure many will once they read it. It was written as a post in Facebook.



The letter is addressed to the President purportedly signed by the AFP Chief of Staff and the major service commanders. I did not have to edit it because I agreed with every word it contained.

It is supposed to be a letter to the President and he should read it. This letter did not mince words "... there is enough ground already to dissolve Congress and declare RevGov..."

It should be spread to all Filipinos and not be limited to social media.

It is time that the President take action realizing that "he is no match against the very system he wanted to change while working within it." This is the dilemma that he has to face now or he and reforms will come to naught.

"Except for a few, their level of managerial sophistication has not matched the exigencies of their office."

Time is not exactly in the President's favor. The oligarchy can sit him out on his legal term limits, as they did over the decades for all those elected to power that purport to reform the system the oligarchy has exploited for itself.

Let me again quote the AFP major commander's letter to PRRD: "... recent events have placed us in a quandary as those who, like us are pledged to abide by the Constitution, have beyond doubt been the ones habitually undermining and making a mockery of it even while hiding behind it to escape prosecution. ... Even more curiously, despite the many weaknesses in our electoral process that have been exposed, not a single member of Congress has made a single proposal for electoral reform..."

Mr. President, we fully understand that it is not in your nature to ask us to transgress the Constitution we have all sworn to uphold. However, as our Commander-in-Chief we are obliged to present to you our concerns... We fear that without timely and decisive action, not only will everything we have fought, worked hard and died for will come to naught, threatening the future of our children and future generations."

Shortly after President Digong was elected, I had already written a column on the challenges he faced and that only an act of strong will do with the people and military behind him.

"There is a difference between martial law and strong rule in the context of Philippine politics today. In my opinion we need strong rule but it need not be a military dictatorship. The military is in charge under martial law. In strong rule, the military does not take direct charge of

government. It is there to support civilian rule. Singapore is a good example of strong rule without direct intervention of the military. Lee Kuan Yew practiced strong rule successfully. In my opinion the Philippines today would be best served by a combination of parliamentary government with a federal structure like Malaysia has.

Filipinos tried hard to advocate for constitutional change but its enemies were too powerful. The elite blocked it time and again.

President Duterte won the elections because he exemplified a leader who will bring about this change. He communicated with the masses with his persona and manner of speaking.

The recent protests commemorating the evil deeds during martial law under Marcos is being used against the good intentions of Duterte. To some Noynoy's presidency was worse than corruption during Marcos because he defied all rules of law to govern the way he wanted. That also is dictatorship of a kind.

The undertow was the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and a disappearing middle class. Democratic elections and government were limited to the oligarchic class and their subalterns best personified by the Lopez family. They owned media which promoted their business interests.

Their example was followed by other oligarchic families and was written about excellently by Alfred McCoy in his book *The Anarchy of Families*. It must be remembered that it was the Marcos-Lopez partnership that became the template for our politics and society that eventually led to the more vicious Aquino-Lopez partnership.

If Duterte is to achieve change and a new Constitution he needs strong rule.

Democracy is inevitably a clash of interests. In the Philippines the most grievous was the clash of interests between the rich and powerful elite and the masses of the poor.

Duterte communicated and gave nerve to the excluded poor and the dispossessed which drove them to rallies never seen before in recent politics. Filipinos crowded his rallies and saw its climax during his miting de abanse on May 7, 2016 in Luneta.

For thinking citizens, it is obvious that no matter how much we want change we will not be able to do it without strong rule. The traditional politicians, the oligarchy and the system they protect will not allow change. They will fight tooth and nail to retain the status quo which gives them their wealth and privileges.

A choice will have to be made soon on whether we keep the status quo or take the steps necessary for parliamentary federalism. We elected Duterte as President/leader to get it done.

Given the entrenched positions of officials of the Aquino administration, it will be impossible to do so unless President Duterte assumes the extraordinary powers he needs. The most serious stumbling block is Congress and the previous government's subalterns in the bureaucracy.

Duterte has given his war against drug lords priority because the election of officials is funded by drug lords. We remove the power of drug lords to fund politicians and excise corrupt politicians in Congress at the same time. It is a dangerous combination and needs a strong hand to break up.

Duterte can achieve his mandate with speed with the people and military supporting him.

This is where military help is needed and the 1987 Constitution empowers it to do so.

The 1987 Constitution states in Article II of the principles and state policies in Section 3 that "Civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory."

## BABE'S EYE VIEW

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ambassador B. ROMUALDEZ

### US will step up FONOPs

After the "close encounter of the unsafe kind" last week between US Navy destroyer USS Decatur and Chinese destroyer Lanzhou during a freedom of navigation operation (FONOP) conducted by the American ship in the vicinity of Gaven Reef in the Spratlys, the US Pacific Fleet is drafting a classified proposal for a series of operations involving warships, combat aircraft and troops to show that the United States has the power and the capability to counter any opponent on any front. A part of the US Indo-Pacific Command, the US Pacific Fleet is the world's largest fleet command with 200 naval vessels, almost 1,200 aircraft and over 130,000 personnel under its command.



Reports indicate that USS Decatur – whose motto is "In Pursuit of Peace" – was concluding its FONOP and was already headed out of the 12-nautical mile zone around Gaven Reef when the Chinese ship came within 41 meters – which could have resulted in a collision had the US destroyer not maneuvered away.

For several decades now, the US has been conducting FONOPs all over the world to uphold a rules-based international order and challenge excessive (territorial) claims of countries. In conducting these sail-by operations, the US has consistently declared that it will "fly, sail, and operate anywhere (that) international law allows."

In the South China Sea, the conduct of FONOPs by the United States has been acknowledged by US strategists as critical in maintaining the balance of power and ensuring the free flow of commerce considering that an estimated \$5 trillion of global trade passes through this critical waterway.

We can expect more FONOPs under the administration of President Donald Trump, although these sail-by operations are planned in absolute secrecy. Last May, the US made a strong assertion when two of its warships – the destroyer USS Higgins and the cruiser USS Anzietam – conducted FONOPs in the Paracel Islands. It was the first time that two US Navy ships were involved in a freedom of navigation operation.

While the US does not want to escalate the tension and has no intention to start a war with China, it "will not be intimidated" and "will not stand down," as Vice President Mike Pence declared in a major policy speech on China last Thursday where he also condemned the "reckless harassment" displayed by China when its destroyer almost collided with USS Decatur.

Not surprisingly, China's Defense Ministry has denounced the US, saying the actions of the USS Decatur has threatened the sovereignty and security of China.

"The US side repeatedly sends military ships without permission into seas close to South China Seas islands, seriously threatening China's sovereignty and security, seriously damaging Sino-US military ties and seriously harming regional peace and stability," China's Defense Ministry said.

Experts say that the Chinese vessel's "unprofessional" maneuver that almost resulted in a collision shows that China is "feeling the heat" and so must act to assert its claims. Early last month, the British Navy ship HMS Albion sailed past the Paracel Islands, earning the ire of the Chinese who complained that the British vessel infringed on China's sovereignty. The British Navy asserted that the HMS Albion was exercising its rights for "freedom of navigation in full compliance with international law and norms."

Interestingly, the recent results of an annual survey involving 25 countries conducted by the Pew Research Center showed that an overwhelming majority – Asian countries included – prefer the US to be the leading global power versus China especially in the South China Sea.

The same survey also showed that the Philippines is one of the countries that has the most positive perception of the US under the leadership of President Donald Trump, with 78 percent of respondents from the Philippines indicating they trust the US president. Not at all surprising since in the last survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations in the last quarter of 2017, results showed that majority of Filipinos have much trust in the US while their attitude toward China is willy-nilly.

During meetings that Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and I had with State Secretary Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary James Mattis and National Security Adviser John Bolton, one of the major discussions centered on the West Philippine Sea amid a broad range of defense concerns. In those meetings, the longstanding defense relationship between the two countries was reaffirmed. Our commitment to the 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty remains intact.

At the recent 2018 Mutual Defense Board and Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB) meeting between Admiral Philip Davidson, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command and Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez, the US and the Philippines agreed on 281 security cooperation activities for 2019 on areas that involve national and security interests that include counterterrorism and maritime security, among many others. The forthcoming security activities lined up for 2019 are more than the number of activities that will be conducted this year.

Intelligence strategists affirm that the signing of the MDB-SEB agreement is a clear indication that the military alliance between the Philippines and the US continues to be strong, dynamic and robust. "It does send a message (that) everything is on an even keel; the alliance remains strong," avers the Center for Strategic and International Studies' (CSIS) Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative director Greg Poling.

As I have told our many congressional friends in Washington, D.C., this alliance is deeply embedded and its foundation so solid that it will continue for many decades to come regardless of what happens. There are just so many historical ties between our countries.



REYES FROM A5

# Making a short story long

SEN. Antonio Trillanes 4th to mirror on the wall: "Who is the fairest of them all?"

Mirror on the wall: "You have three pending cases, so I hope that answers your question."

If Bill Gates attracted faces to look at those portable screens and type, it was Steve Jobs who made them smile doing it. If Bill Gates delivered solutions, Steve introduced fun in finding these.

THE Makati RTC Branch 148 deferred ruling anew on the issuance of an arrest warrant against Sen. Trillanes, as "sensitive" considerations on the coup d'etat case needed further review. This delay is understandable. If made longer than it should, suspicions come next.

Trillanes was quoted in GMA News journalist Mark Merueñas' 2011 article as saying: "I would like to qualify that we did not admit to the charge of 'coup d'etat' or anything that was filed because we believe that it was not true."

How on earth will he apply for amnesty for a crime he said he did not commit?

It is always easy to accuse that the documents were deliberately stolen or hidden, a feat that is hard to do especially if they were non-existent in the first place.

It is always tough to decide which path to take. Consequently, friends and foes alike will always tempt to divert you into their preferred courses to theirs or to your advantage. It is in making this decision that you gain the word "courage." Accountability for the action taken is what we call "wisdom."

Armed Forces Chief Carlito Galvez Jr. claims the Department of Justice (DoJ) is now infiltrated by Reds. I don't think this is true but we are not surprised. The military always sees



MIRRORLESS

ROLLY G. REYES

"red" everywhere it goes. I do not think he will be happy to know that within his ranks in the military, some are secretly conniving with the left to destabilize the country. I expect the good general to start counting much like the drill command "left, left, left right left..."

News: At least 50 government officials are being investigated by the Presidential Anti-Corruption Commission (PACC) for alleged involvement in graft and corruption while in office. I am not judicial and Bar Council (JBC) but this number seems to be the shortlisted. Where's the long list?

We all get slowed down due to fear of failure. Fail if you must, but fail fast and stand up quick.

On digital age:

Businesses should always be on their toes (or shall I say on their fingers) to stay alive. Conceptual mind explosions in a digital age will always be a threat for survival in a very competitive world.

A product can either be enhanced in a day or two or totally replaced in a year. Pioneering is now fast paced, and revolutionary ways of making profits are just fingertips away in a keyboard. Agility is the new business beast mode, not doctorates in economics.

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The Social Weather Stations' released Thursday that 84 percent of those polled said they were satisfied. This was 6 points above the 78 percent recorded in March 2018. And some said that the country was in turmoil. I suggest

ReyesA6

that they look up the words "turmoil" and "satisfactory." I hope they will not end up concluding that "turmoil is satisfactory."

Posting the usual response of spokespersons to defend their principals:

Out of context: "without the surrounding words or circumstances and so not fully understandable."

Misquote: "a passage or remark quoted inaccurately."

Hyperbole: "exaggerated statements or claims not meant to be taken literally."

Joke: "A thing that someone says to cause amusement or laughter, especially a story with a funny punchline."

Conclusion: This posting is not intended as a joke, and therefore should not be misquoted or taken out of context.

Please leave Belo clinics alone. They're not involved in fake news. Fakeness is different from alterations, repair or enhancement. Or is it?

I am not really sure if the group Kadamay is forging a partnership with a ride hailing group called "GRAB."

Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh is definitely tired. The US Senate seems to be looking for a candidate for Vatican papacy. On the other hand, this kind of scrutiny is most welcome. Here in PH, some justices and lawyers regard the SALN as mere pieces of papers and non-submission is not that important. Just my "serene" opinion.

\*\*\*

My friend told me that it is really an ordeal ordering in a classy restaurant. Here is how it goes:

Waiter: What would you like to have, fruit juice, yoghurt, tea, chocolate, cappuccino, frappuccino or coffee?

Me: Tea, please.

Tea, Herbal Tea, Kericho Gold Tea, Bush Tea or Green Tea?

Me: Ceylon Tea, please.

Waiter: How do you want it, black or with cream?

Me: With cream

Waiter: Evaporated, condensed or fresh cream?

Me: Fresh cream.

Waiter: Goat milk or cow milk?

Me: Cow's milk.

Waiter: Freezeland cow or Afrikaner cow?

Me: Uhm, I'll go with Freezeland cow.

Waiter: Would you like it with sweetener, sugar or honey?

Me: Sugar.

Waiter: Bee sugar or cane sugar?

Me: Cane sugar.

Waiter: White, brown or yellow sugar?

Me: Hmmmp! Forget about the tea, just give me a glass of water.

Waiter: Mineral, tap or distilled water?

Me: Mineral water.

Waiter: Flavored or non-flavored?

Me: In fact, just get me an empty glass!

Waiter: Do you want a tumbler, wine glass, champagne flute or a beer mug?

Me: Arrgh! My lunch break is over! I'm outa here!!!

\*\*\*

Nestor V. Tan, President and CEO of BDO Unibank, was recently voted as the Best CEO for Emerging Markets (Philippines) as conducted by New York-based magazine Institutional Investor. JG Summit Holdings President and CEO Lance Y. Gokongwei was ranked second and Ayala Corporation Chairman and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala was ranked third.

I think we consumers are responsible for the data that they considered as basis.

\*\*\*

Good work, good deeds and good faith to all.

# On the ratification process

**P**ENDING before the Supreme Court are petitions to declare invalid the Philippines' withdrawal from the Rome Statute (which created the International Criminal Court or ICC) because the decision to withdraw was made without the approval of the Senate.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines is one of the petitioners because of its laudable advocacy for defense of human rights.

The Philippine Constitution provides that "No treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Senate."

### DFA practice

Because the cited provision speaks only of Senate concurrence in the ratification of treaties, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) follows a procedure of referring to the Senate all treaties ratified by the President, but its consultation with the Senate ends after the Senate has given its concurrence. There is no language in the Constitution requiring Senate concurrence with respect to withdrawal from treaties.

This practice of the DFA is based on the principle of separation of powers and that treaty making is an executive power and part of the power of the President to conduct foreign affairs. On the other hand, the requirement of Senate concurrence in the ratification of treaties is part of the system of checks and balances in the Constitution.

Once the treaty enters into force for the Philippines, its implementation, including the terms for its termination, depends on the provisions of the treaty itself and the Law of Treaties, to which the Philippines is also a party. Thus, the Senate has already given its



AMBASSADORS' CORNER  
**JAIME S. BAUTISTA**

prior approval to the terms and the manner for the withdrawal from the Rome Statute, which is one of the ways by which the Philippines may terminate this treaty.

According to the Law of Treaties, whose provisions reflect in great part Customary International Law, the termination of a treaty or withdrawal of a party may take place because of a variety of circumstances, including a material breach of a treaty, supervening impossibility of performance, fundamental change of circumstances, severance of diplomatic relations, emergence of a new peremptory norm of international law, among many others.

The DFA is the institution in the government that has the expertise and the resources to make a diligent study regarding these matters. With its silence requiring Senate concurrence for withdrawal from treaties, the Constitution has opted not to impose a burden on the Senate to consider the wisdom of withdrawal.

### Senate's position <sup>43</sup>

During the present 17th Congress, the Senate has adopted the practice of imposing the condition that the President may not withdraw from the treaty without its concurrence, starting with its approval of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank Agreement. However, the Senate had imposed no such condition when it concurred in ratifying the Rome Statute in 2011 during the time of President Benigno Aquino 3rd. Some

senators have reflected that this recent Senate practice may be construed as an admission that the Constitution does not require Senate approval for Philippine withdrawal from its treaties.

With respect to the Rome Statute, some 14 senators signed Senate Resolution 289 in February 2017, when President Rodrigo Roa Duterte declared his intention to scrap the Visiting Forces Agreement and to withdraw from the ICC. The Resolution declared:

"A treaty or international agreement ratified by the President and concurred in by the Senate becomes part of the law of the land and may not be undone without the shared power that put it into effect."

This Senate Resolution was intended to have retroactive effect but it was not put to a vote and has not become the official position of the Senate. This has avoided a confrontation with the President when the DFA sent the Notice of Withdrawal from the Rome Statute in accordance with the procedure stated in the treaty.

Some senators have admitted that the current practice of the Senate of giving its consent to the ratification of a treaty, subject to requiring Senate approval of withdrawal from the treaty, could be questioned before the Supreme Court. Under this practice, a minority of senators may block the Philippines' withdrawal from a treaty,

### Supreme Court as arbiter

Since the Constitution is silent on the matter of Senate concurrence on withdrawal from treaties, the Petitioners have sought to fill this void through the interpretation of certain provisions of the Constitution and deductive reasoning based on the perceived similarity between a law and a treaty.



It is argued that, since the ratification of the Rome Statute by the President was concurred in by the Senate, withdrawal, as a constitutional matter, requires a similar concurrence. On the other hand, under the Constitution, the President nominates, and with the consent of the Commission on Appointments, appoints the heads of executive departments and Ambassadors but the President has exercised the power to dismiss them without consulting Congress.

Another argument presented is that, while the conduct of foreign affairs is a function of the executive branch, a treaty needs Senate action when it enters into force in the Philippines because it has the same binding effect as a statute. It is argued that allowing the Senate to ratify the Philippines' withdrawal from the ICC "is not a question of diluting the powers of the Executive, but of seeing to the non-dilution of legislative power by sole fiat of the Executive in respect to treaty-making or treaty-denunciation."

However, as stated above, the Senate does not exercise inherent legislative powers when it concurs in the ratification of treaties but acts as a check on the President's power. Thus, this power should be expressly delegated and consequently one cannot speak of dilution of the legislative power. The treaty has the binding effect of a statute because of the Constitutional provisions on treaty-making and that "the Philippines accepts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land." Without these constitutional provisions, the treaty might have to be passed into a law by legislative process to have the force of a statute.

A corollary argument advanced to support the thesis

of the petitioners is that the President would be granted broad law-making powers if the Senate did not have the power to withhold its consent on his power to withdraw from a treaty. If the President alone enjoyed the unfettered prerogative to enter into treaties, he could effectively alter the Philippine legal system and its legislative framework without the participation of the legislative. It is argued that the same thing would be true in respect of the denunciation or withdrawal from membership in a treaty organization.

As illustration, it is argued that the Philippines would obviously go through an overhaul of its legal system were the Philippines to denounce the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and that its effects on the definition of its territorial sea and its claims to sovereign rights would be severely altered.

But the overhaul of the legal system would not automatically take place. The denunciation of a treaty is not the same as the repeal of a law. If the Philippines were to denounce the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, this would not automatically repeal the laws passed by the Philippines to ensure that its laws are consistent with the Convention like the Archipelagic Baselines Law. There would be a need to repeal or amend them by new legislation if this was desired.

Moreover, the provisions of the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea would not be altered by the denunciation. The rules of the Convention on the sovereign rights and obligations of nations to the different maritime zones would remain the same. The Philippines' primary rights and obligations to its maritime zones could be modified only with the consent of the other parties affected.

A variant of the above argu-

ments is that the Rome Statute is a form of treaty that cannot be repealed without the approval of Congress. The Constitution expressly provides that the President has the duty to faithfully execute the laws. Since the Rome Statute has the same status as a law, the President has also the constitutional duty to faithfully execute this treaty. Therefore, it is suggested that this duty prevents the President from abrogating the treaty himself and that if abrogation is desired, the proper procedure would be for Congress to be the one to abrogate the treaty by passing a law, as a treaty can be repealed by a subsequent law.

While the President has the duty to faithfully execute the laws of the land, including treaties entered into, the Philippines as a Contracting Party to a treaty always has the right to terminate or denounce the treaty in accordance with its terms. The power to terminate or denounce a treaty is an executive power.

The remedy of abrogating a treaty by passing a subsequent law may not satisfy the requirements of the treaty for its termination or denunciation. While under Philippine law, if there is irreconcilable conflict between a treaty and a law, the rule is that whichever is later prevails. But this does not have the legal effect of the later law repealing the treaty. The provisions of the treaty itself would determine the status of the treaty under international law. *Az*

We await the Supreme Court's decision on this legal question. Supreme Court Associate Justice Mario Victor Leonen has cautioned: "The Court may not want to become the judicial dictator of this country over extending its power to realms which might be political in nature rather than legal."

# Editorial

## Albayalde is out of bounds

**P**HILIPPINE National Police (PNP) chief Oscar Albayalde is fast becoming an annoyance for speaking out of turn and sometimes, out of tune. Last week, he overstepped his boundaries when he warned teachers they could be held liable for "imputing" (sic) "false information" to their students.

Albayalde' laughable statements came after the equally laughable revelations by the military's assistant deputy chief of staff for operations, Brig. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., that linked 18 colleges and universities to the so-called "Red October" plot to oust President Rodrigo Duterte.

Parlade somewhat qualified his claims in explaining that the 18 schools were actually serving as recruitment grounds for the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army, supposedly through screenings of Martial Law documentaries.

Parlade misrepresents the situation. Of course the schools are rich grounds for recruiting future ideologues; but administrators cannot in reality prevent students from becoming Joma Sison's revolutionaries.

Neither can they prevent students from watching a Martial Law film or joining a leftist (militant) organization, at least not without restricting freedom of assembly, freedom of speech and freedom of thought — precisely the ways to drive the idealistic youth underground or otherwise rant on social media. Most of the schools tagged by Parlade, public and private, acknowledge this.

Parlade at least stopped short of recommending a crackdown on the university belt.

Albayalde, whose comments on the Parlade list were sought by reporters on Thursday, betrayed his police-state mentality (and ignorance) by saying that college professors teaching "false information and knowledge" should be charged with "contempt."

First of all, contempt powers properly belong to the courts and Congress, as a means to compel people to respect the proceedings of court hearings or legislative inquiries. Contempt is punishment for bad behavior or lack of courtesy, and in an already existing case or investigation.

Albayalde seems to be dreaming of an Orwellian thought police, which would be the only way he could monitor the content of classroom teaching.

By what right and capacity does the PNP chief have to pass judgement on professors' lectures, or even to distinguish between true and false information or knowledge? It's surprising that the Commission on Higher Education has not stepped in to educate Albayalde about the constitutional guarantee to academic freedom.

Albayalde's obliviousness is probably why, when he talked to the PNP press corps on Thursday, no punishment for his imagined infraction came to mind except "contempt." The penalty for lousy professors is that they lose their jobs, not prison time.

The PNP chief is also exercised over how students of state colleges and universities could criticize the government when "they are given free education by the government."

Ex-solicitor general Florin Hilbay fired the best response to Albayalde on social media: "Students don't owe government; they get free education from Filipinos who pay taxes."

Albayalde is treading dangerous ground by raising the sinister idea of policing colleges and universities and even the content of classroom instruction.

He should go back to ridding the police force of "ninja cops" and other scalawags, before he pokes his nose into school campuses and lesson plans. **A4**

# Addressing the inflation problem

**“As winter approaches the northern hemisphere and the demand for fuel for warming homes and industries increases.**

Nothing attracts the attention and concern of the average Filipino citizen more than an increase in the cost of living. Problems concerning the West Philippine Sea, the International Criminal Court, and a recalcitrant ex-military mutineer turned senator are suddenly inconsequential when the prices of prime commodities increase continuously at an alarming rate.

For the past four weeks or so, the nation's economic planners have attributed the problem to one word – inflation. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the average citizen does not comprehend the meaning of that term. They are more concerned about what the government is doing about the problem.

From a simple perspective, the term inflation means a reduction in the purchasing power of the Philippine peso. It is often triggered by an extraordinary increase in the cost of an important factor which determines the market prices of prime commodities. The problem gets more serious when artificial shortages are created by unscrupulous dealers of vital products.

It appears that the principal reason for the current inflation is the drastic increase in the pump price of fuel. That, in turn, is caused by many factors.

One factor is the unstable situation in the Middle East brought about by the war in Syria and the violence in Iraq. This steadily pushes up the purchase price of fuel imported by the Philippines.

As winter approaches the northern hemisphere and the demand for fuel for warming homes and industries increases, the purchase price of fuel goes up even further.

Adding to the fuel price problem is the substantial tax imposed by Congress on pump prices of fuel sold in the Philippines.

The increase in pump prices will always trigger



## THE SCRUTINIZER

Victor Avecilla

an increase in the prices of prime commodities because fuel is needed to transport people and goods, and fuel is necessary to generate electricity for the factories.

It will also

cause the prices of everything to go up. This results in a substantial reduction in the purchasing power of the peso.

The other factor – artificial shortages – is just as dreadful.

It is basic – the price of a commodity depends on how much of the commodity is available for sale, and how much the demand is for it. Therefore, when the supply of a commodity is substantially reduced, and there is no refurbishment, the price of that commodity will increase. The rate of the increase accelerates as the supply steadily decreases.

Under ordinary circumstances, the supply of commodities fluctuates on a seasonal basis, with natural calamities playing a role in this regard. There are times when there is more than enough of something, and times when it is the other way around.

Well aware of the correlation between supplies and prices, unscrupulous dealers in prime commodities form cartels and, in conspiracy with one another, they hoard prime commodities like rice, garlic, onions and pepper in secret warehouses. Eventually, a shortage is felt by the public and the prices of these commodities are dictated by the enterprising dealers.

Therefore, an artificial shortage can also trigger a reduction in the purchasing power of the peso.

45

First, taxes on fuel should be suspended, if not eliminated. There are other ways to make up for the lost revenue as in transferring the taxes on organized gambling and the consumption of tobacco and alcoholic beverages. Moreover, there is no such thing as an unreasonable tax on the pursuit of a vice.

Better yet, the pork barrel fund allotment of each member of Congress should be abolished. Infrastructure projects are the concern of local governments, not the legislature.

Second, the government should immediately import prime commodities like rice, garlic, onions and pepper and have them sold in the markets. That stupid rule requiring supermarkets to pay a fee of about a hundred thousand pesos for a permit to sell rice for the NFA must be set aside immediately. Whoever thought of that rule should be fired.

Actually, price manipulation by cartels is prohibited under Philippine law. It is called "a combination in restraint of trade." Under certain circumstances, it can qualify as economic sabotage.

The existence of such cartels is an established fact. A few months ago, a cartel manipulating the price of garlic was exposed in the Senate. Years ago, the late Manila Mayor Gemiliano Lopez, Jr. exposed the existence of a Chinese-operated rice cartel in Metropolitan Manila.

Speaking of rice, the National Food Authority (NFA) is mandated by law to maintain a sufficient supply of rice in its warehouses in order to stabilize the price of rice. If rice is readily available from the NFA, the rice cartels will have a very difficult time creating an artificial shortage.

Unfortunately, the NFA failed to live up to its mandate in recent times. As a consequence, the price of rice has been skyrocketing for the past several weeks, thus prompting an angry President Rodrigo Duterte to fire that incompetent NFA chief.

So what are the possible solutions to the inflation problem?

66  
*From a simple perspective, the term inflation means a reduction in the purchasing power of the Philippine peso.*

Once the supply of prime commodities stabilizes, the NFA should always be ready to import anew, once the supply situation approaches an unsettling level.

During his term, President Ferdinand Marcos addressed the problem of fluctuating fuel prices by creating the oil price stabilization fund. Under the Marcos measure, a motorist pays a separate fee — a fixed number of centavos (yes, just centavos) for each liter of fuel purchased — which goes to the fund. Whenever there is an extraordinary increase in world fuel prices, the sudden increase is absorbed by the fund. As a result, the people are spared the trauma of sudden increases in pump prices and in the cost of prime commodities.

Sadly, that Marcos measure was repealed by the post-Marcos Congress. It looks like the measure ought to be revived, for obvious reasons.



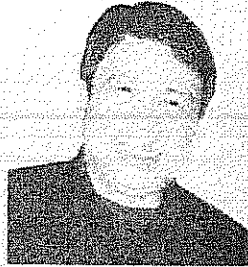
# Ever heard of context?

“  
The  
manner by  
which the  
prowlers  
or fault  
finders  
jumped  
on the  
opportunity  
has simply  
revealed  
their  
naivete.”

There is so much ado and  
crap over the one liner quip of  
President Rodrigo, in one of his  
public speeches, that his only “sin”  
is extrajudicial killings.

His detractors were quick  
to translate the “extrajudicial  
confession” into the a judicial and  
legally binding admission of guilt  
and plans to immediately send a  
video copy to the international  
criminal court. The quick brown  
foxes immediately jump over with  
the resurrection of *persona non  
habet*, the likes of accusers Edgar Matobato and  
Arthur Lascanas and, of course, their patron,  
beleaguered Sen. Antonio Trillanes!

When Jesus Christ in the gospel said, “It is better  
for one to have a giant millstone hung around his  
neck and thrown into the sea, than to be the cause  
of one of these little ones to sin” (Mark 9:42) many  
diehard fans of the re-imposition of the death  
penalty were quick to jot the statement as a strong



**TABLETS OF STONE**  
Larry Faraon, OP

biblical nod to death penalty.

However, for biblical scholars  
and devotional readers of the holy  
book, considering the integrity  
of the mind and heart of a Jesus  
Christ who is rich in mercy and  
compassion the quote should be  
understood in its correct context.

Furthermore, comprehending the  
totality of his evangelical messages,  
it would be quite incomprehensible  
to believe that Jesus would endorse a  
death sentence for being an occasion  
of sin of the innocent.

Hence, there must be a context somewhere, a  
frame where to put the quotation in the proper  
perspective. And many agree that it was the  
context of language called “exaggeration” to  
heighten emphatic tone over the seriousness  
of the offense. That is all there is to the quote.

How about this: Jesus also said strongly, that  
“if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off...and if  
your foot causes you to sin, cut it off...your eyes,

then pluck it out.” He would aver that it is better  
for you to enter heaven with one hand, foot and  
eye less than enter hell with hands, feet and eyes  
complete (Mark 9: 43-48).

There must be a context to this. It cannot be  
taken literally, even if some religions are still using  
presently this gruesome punitive practice, since it  
is bodily mutilation which is criminal and immoral.

However, in the Third Century, Origen, an  
illustrious Father of the Church, known for his  
philosophical and apologetical treatises within the  
circles of the Catholic defenders of the Church,  
seemed to ignore the context of the verses and  
castrated himself to literally “cut off” the cause  
of his lustful escapades.

He was almost a saint.

President Duterte’s quip must have come from  
some context such as, for instance, his language  
style. His Cebuano syntax articulated in his  
crude Tagalog would mean that, he has never  
been accused of any corruption, except that of  
extrajudicial killings. Or it was said in the context  
of a frustration over rampant corruption of which

he was never accused of.

“  
Many  
agree that  
it was the  
context of  
language  
called  
“exaggeration”  
to heighten  
emphatic  
tone over the  
seriousness  
of the  
offense.”

Furthermore, the deeper  
context would be a common  
sensual psychological given,  
that nobody especially a  
President Duterte in his right  
mind would admit lingering  
accusation – what, to the  
delight or his accusers?

In this issue, the manner  
by which the prowlers or fault  
finders jumped on the opportunity  
has simply revealed their naivete  
or better, their inanities, being  
paranoid at bringing down a  
popularly elected President.

But what about that video  
tape where Senator Trillanes openly admitted  
without pretensions and in unequivocal terms that  
he never admitted to his crime of mutiny or *coup  
d etat* but that he and his cohorts only violated  
some military rules.

But that is another issue altogether.



# Yellow voice box

*“The LP is a spent force considering the sparse crowd that it can muster during recent political rallies.”*

Vice President Leni Robredo would have received a better assessment from Rody had she proved she could assert herself and not merely act as a mouthpiece for the yellow Liberal Party (LP).

Leni again received a brutally frank review from President Rody Duterte when he again raised the prospect of him stepping down and not completing his term.

“In all fairness, I do not mean to offend the lady. She’s very good, she’s gentle but Leni is so weak,” Duterte said before members of the Philippine

Military Academy Alumni Association in a recent Malacañang ceremony.

There was no political tone in the review and Rody came off as providing an unalloyed assessment of the Vice President.

Putting Rody’s take on Leni in context, he delivered it as a form of a heart-to-heart talk with his officers who composed the crowd during his speech.

It was not about Leni but who to choose and how the military should make it if he is suddenly taken out of the equation prematurely.

His advice was that if the military wanted him out, he will not step down for a constitutional succession to take effect in which Leni takes over.

What bugs Rody is that the Vice President will merely kowtow with the wishes of her political masters in the LP and the members of the yellow mob that surround her.

Rody who is known to choose men in government based on their qualifications said Leni’s weakness is not about her intelligence since “she passed the Bar.”

Leni lacked the skills in standing her ground and making decisions herself.



This was shown in how it was always the LP, particularly former President Noynoy Aquino, who took the cudgels for Leni in parrying earlier similar statements of Rody on her capability to lead.

In naming other personalities who would have the leadership quality he is looking for, Rody was not even bound by party affiliations indicating that what he is dishing out comes from the heart.

In contrast, Noynoy was all yellow in defending Leni, saying recently the rules of succession under the Constitution will have her succeed Rody and no one else.

Such a prospect, with the yellow kingpins dictating on her, frightens Rody.

"Robredo would be vulnerable to the charlatans who surround her," he said previously.

The LP is a spent force considering the sparse crowd that it can muster during recent political rallies that it is looking at other desperate options to spring back to power.

An alliance with the Communist Party of the Philippines would be a quick fix since the communists have the ability to produce the warm bodies plus it has an armed component to do its biddings.

Put in for propaganda measure, the Magdalo Group that has dropped all pretensions of honor and ideology in becoming Trillanes' political tool.

The warning from Rody is that it will not be the yellow mob nor Noynoy's LP who would eventually reap the fruits from a Leni presidency but the Left "who will take over."

Robredo's response was a repetition of the yellow allegations against Rody which was apparently fed for her to deliver that did nothing to improve her image of being a mere echo of the yellow society.

"Because of the President's strategy these past two years, the prices of commodities increased, people became more impoverished," she said.

She must even have picked up a statement that was meant for Noynoy in whose term the poverty rate was constant at 25 percent while under Rody it is moving towards 20 percent.

Rody sees the possibility of the yellow mob, in its desperation to grab the presidency, forging an evil alliance with the communists while using Leni for a constitutional return to power.

66  
*Robredo  
would be  
vulnerable  
to the  
charlatans  
who  
surround  
her.*



## On JPE's riposte

**“ I could have been brought to Camp Crame if not for the timely intercession of a relative, Ali Dimaporo.**

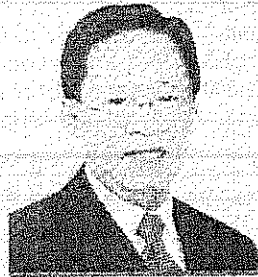
I grew up in the bucolic lakeside town of Wato, Lanao del Sur under the strict tutelage of my mother (Allah bless her soul). Our relatives called her “martial law” perhaps because of her uncompromising discipline over her children. I distinctly remember her advising us never to talk back to an elder even if we are on the right side of a verbal tussle. In fact among Maranaws, respect for elders is a cultural value that is sacrosanct.

I belong to a fraternity of men who values seniority to a fault. The phrase “senior brod” always precedes the name of an elder when addressed to. This discipline has seeped into our psyche that we carried it even after leaving the confines of the University of the Philippines.

Well-meaning brods advised me not to “talk back to a senior brod” but a much noble and greater reason impelled me to make this rejoinder. I will be betraying my *bangsa* (race), the truth and those who believe in what I have been writing about if I keep mum and let things pass.

Why mention these? My last column where I narrated in passing about the massacre of Moros during Marcos martial law regime drew a scathing riposte from Juan Ponce Enrile, a “senior brod” whom I hold to this day in high esteem. In a letter to the editor he strongly rebuffed me with words that I can only describe as unkind. (Am delighted no end that my column is now being read by “The” JPE!)

Readers, let me tell you that for weeks I was out of the loop on national issues because I was occupied with the special barangay election in



**SOUTHERN VOICES**  
Macabangkit B. Lanto

Marawi. I have no idea whatsoever about the alleged interview between former Sen. Bongbong Marcos and JPE that has stirred a political furor. We have no newspaper supply in Marawi and our Internet signal is very weak, faulty

and intermittently disrupted. I wrote that piece because it was the hot issue being discussed among Moro activists. Regional Gov. Mujiv Hataman made a stinging press statement about it describing how Moros suffered during that dark period of our history. This was followed by rejoinders from Moro civil society members in social media. Why my senior brod has picked on me when others have been harking on this issue for years really surprised me. In fact I have written about it in articles I contributed to and published in another major daily.

My version of history is bound to clash with that of JPE. His version was collated from reports submitted to him by subalterns while I have, in some instances, a first-hand knowledge of what really happened. JPE being a top lawyer knows what we, lawyers, call hearsay *vis-a-vis* personal knowledge. Take, for instance, the Tacub, Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte massacre of a truckload of Maranaws who were stopped at a military checkpoint and without any provocation mowed down by soldiers. I know personally some of them and in fact their relatives sought my legal advice on how to get justice. I remember likewise some of the relatives of the victims in the massacre in Wao, Lanao del Sur asking the assistance of the local Integrated Bar of the Philippines where I once served

as its president.

You mentioned senior brod that you don't remember my name among those detained during that martial law. But of course. How can you remember when you were preoccupied issuing arrest orders against the likes of Benigno Aquino Sr. and other prominent opposition leaders while I was just a young *probinsyano* Moro lawyer struggling to make both ends meet.

But let me tell you that a month after martial law was declared when the 1972 Marawi rebellion broke out a special team from the Presidential Security Group swooped down on Marawi. I was arrested and detained along with prominent local leaders, including mayors. When I asked their commanding officer of my crime he said rebellion and that I was no. 1 in the OB (Order of Battle). I could have been brought to Camp Crame if not for the timely intercession of a relative, Ali Dimaporo. I narrated my ordeal during my detention in an article I wrote and published in said major broadsheet.

Yes senior brod, I am the same Macabangkit B. Lanto you referred to in your letter but I take exception to the unflattering adjectives you used to describe me.

I really wish you have called me or asked Boy Reyno or Ferdie Domingo to set our meeting so that I could have told you the true facts not what was fed to you through reports.

Rest assured senior brod that this issue will not diminish a bit my respect for you and my wish to Almighty Allah to keep you in good health.

## ONLINE NEWS

### 05 OCTOBER 2018

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#### **Bautista to head DSWD; Solons lament Duterte's choice**

By: Julie M. Aurelio, Marlon Ramos - @inquirerdotnet

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:38 AM October 06, 2018

President Rodrigo Duterte now wants Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Bautista to head the DSWD upon the soldier's retirement on Oct. 15.

In a speech to a group of alumni of the Philippine Military Academy on Thursday night, the President announced Bautista as his choice for DSWD secretary.

"I'll announce it, the next DSWD secretary . . . Rolly Bautista," he said. The DSWD is presently headed by acting Secretary Virginia Orog.

Mr. Duterte seems to have changed his mind on the post-military career of Bautista. Last month, as he was making the rounds of regions ravaged by Typhoon "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut), the President initially said he wanted Bautista to take over the NFA, succeeding resigned Administrator Jason Aquino.

#### **'Social warfare'**

But the militant Makabayan party-list block in the House of Representatives opposed Bautista's looming appointment and what it described as the continuing militarization of the bureaucracy.

Gabriela Rep. Emmi de Jesus lamented that with another former general heading the DSWD, "social welfare will become social warfare."

#### **Civilian office**

"Delivery of social protection programs will be further militarized and the conditional cash transfer program will be further aligned to counterinsurgency operations that terrorize poor communities," De Jesus said.

Former Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo also scoffed at the President's choice as her successor, reminding him that the DSWD "is a civilian [office] mandated to provide welfare assistance to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society."

"Social welfare principles include upholding the dignity of individuals and respecting their rights. Hence, a strong emphasis on people's participation in the crafting and execution of the agency's programs is a given," Taguiwalo said.

“Under the present administration, which has again and again violated the rule of law, ‘civilian supremacy over the military’ is being thrown out of the window,” she lamented.

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate said Bautista’s appointment only showed the “continuing militarization and control of the bureaucracy by the de facto military junta now in place in the country.”

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## Artists, filmmakers rage against AFP 'slander'

By: Jhesset O. Enano, Melvin Gascon - @inquirerdotnet

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Hands off our films!

Some 700 members of the broad community of filmmakers and media workers on Friday called out the Armed Forces of the Philippines for saying that movies about martial law were being used to recruit students to the communist New People's Army (NPA).

In a statement issued during a press briefing at the University of the Philippines Diliman, the group described the AFP's allegations as "slander of the worst kind," and said the military's claims could endanger them and their audience while also impinging on the filmmakers' right to freedom of expression.

"We wonder why the AFP slanders us. Have they now become active defenders of the Marcoses and the criminals behind martial law?" the group asked.

### NPA 'recruitment' hubs

The AFP has been drawing flak from several groups following the claims of the assistant deputy chief of staff for operations, Brig. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr., that at least 18 Metro Manila schools were being used as recruitment hubs by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

In particular, Parlade claimed that movies about human rights abuses under the Marcos dictatorship were being shown "to incite students to rebel against the government ... while projecting President Duterte as the new Marcos."

Contrary to the AFP's claims, the signatories said, their screenings provide "invaluable service" to the youth by educating them on the atrocities committed under martial law during the regime of then President Ferdinand Marcos.

"The screenings hope to provide them with knowledge and insight into that dark chapter in our history, especially since many of the actual perpetrators and beneficiaries of that fascist dictatorship have fully rehabilitated themselves back into mainstream politics and into positions of power," their statement said.

### FB page trolled

Kip Oebanda, director of the independent film "Liway," said that since the military released its unverified report, the Facebook page of his movie tackling martial law had been flooded with accusations that they were part of the so-called Red October ouster plot against Mr. Duterte.

"This is not brainwashing, but a challenge to students to respond to films, whether they agree with them or not," said visual artist and filmmaker Kiri Dalena.

## **Ping, Chiz weigh in**

Also on Friday, two senators criticized the AFP for lacking “common sense” and trying to “curtail freedom of speech and expression as well as academic freedom,” with its unvalidated intelligence report on the “recruitment” activities of communist rebels in schools.

Sen. Panfilo “Ping” Lacson, a former Philippine National Police chief, said it did not make sense to preemptively identify the schools since “[a]nnouncing targets of intelligence efforts effectively renders the mission accomplishment extremely difficult if not impossible. It is common sense.”

Sen. Francis “Chiz” Escudero said the list should never have been released to the public, “as they curtail freedom of speech and expression and academic freedom.”

The Campaign Against the Return of the Marcoses to Malacañang (Camma) said the government’s attempt to equate protests against the Duterte administration with communism was a “desperate effort” to discredit the people’s movement and intimidate those who supported it.

“These protests are legitimate and were built on the basis of widespread repression and oppression perpetrated by the Duterte government,” said Camma lead convenor and former Social Welfare Secretary Judy Taguiwalo.

## **Joma: What teleconference?**

CPP founding chair Jose Maria Sison described as “a psywar (psychological warfare) lie” the military allegations that he had held teleconference calls with several students. “That’s not true ... Where are the recordings?” Sison said in an online message sent to reporters.

Even if it were true, there was nothing malicious about it, Sison said, since “students and all people have the right to speak freely and teleconference about the terrible conditions in the Philipines under the brutal, corrupt and mendacious Duterte regime.” —WITH REPORTS FROM DJ YAP, JAYMEE T. GAMIL AND CEDRIX PEREZ