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NEWS CLIPPINGS

17 October 2018

Wednesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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ENRILE JOINS POLITICAL SCIONS IN SENATE RACE

STORY BY JOVIC YEE AND MAILA AGER

The veteran politician from Cagayan province filed on Tuesday his certificate of candidacy for senator, along with Imee Marcos, Mar Roxas, Chel Diokno, Erin Tañada, Bam Aquino, Pia Cayetano and Jinggoy Estrada.

By Jovic Yee
and Maila Ager
@Team_Inquirer

The nation thought that at 94, former Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile has had enough of politics.

Enrile pulled a surprise on Tuesday when he announced that he would run for senator, joining scions of premartial law senators like former Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, human rights lawyer Chel Diokno and former Quezon Rep. Erin Tañada in filing their certificates of candidacy (COCs) for senator.

Also filing their COCs for senator were Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee Marcos, Taguig-Pateros Rep. Pia Cayetano, former Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and reelectionist Sen. Bam Aquino.

Mar Roxas is the son of the late former Sen. Gerardo Roxas, while Chel Diokno is the son of the late human rights lawyer and former Sen. Jose Diokno. Erin Tañada is the grandson of the late former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada and the son of former Sen. Wigherto Tañada.

Bam Aquino is a nephew of former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., whose assassination on the tarmac of then Manila International Airport in 1983 sparked widespread protests that culminated in the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos three years later.

The elder Roxas, Diokno, Tañadas and Aquino had fought the Marcos dictatorship.

Imee Marcos is the eldest daughter of the dictator, while Pia Cayetano is the daughter of the late former Sen. Rene Cayetano. Jinggoy Estrada is a son of former President Joseph

Estrada, who is also a former senator.

Join the fun

"I want to join the fun," Enrile told Inquirer.net over the phone on Tuesday.

When his fourth term as senator ended in 2016, Enrile told his colleagues that his service to the nation also ended.

His fourth term in the Senate was tainted with allegations of corruption as he was accused of being involved in the P10-billion pork barrel scam. This led to his hospital arrest at the Philippine National Police General Hospital.

In August 2015, the Supreme Court, citing his age and health, allowed Enrile to post bail for the nonbailable offense of plunder.

Through his lawyer, Joseph Sagandoy, Enrile filed his COC at the main office of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in Manila.

Enrile said his age was not a hindrance.

"I'm 95 (years old), but you know, you don't need a wrestler in the Senate. You need somebody who understands the problems and the solutions (of the country)," he said.

Actually, he's only 94, having been born on Feb. 14, 1924.

While Enrile acknowledged having problems with blood pressure, weak hearing and poor vision because of his age, he said, "I think my brain is still up to it."

LP candidates

Roxas filed his COC at the Comelec headquarters as a candidate of the Liberal Party (LP), along with Aquino, Diokno and Tañada.

Marcos, a candidate of the Nacionalista Party, said she wanted to be the "alternative voice" of the people in the Senate.

She said she was not concerned with the antimartial law sentiment that many Filipinos still harbor to this day.

"Our country is already ready for a different perspective and to listen to our side of the story," she said.

No to admitting wrongdoing

Marcos noted that while the Marcoses had apologized to those "who were hurt due to unforeseen events" during his father's iron-fist rule, she and her family would never admit to any wrongdoing.

"Why would we admit something we never did?" she asked.

Diokno noted that no matter what the governor said, the country "knows the truth."

"The facts are there. It is fully documented not only by our agencies but even in other countries," he said.

According to Tañada, the narrative that the Marcoses

Edsa People Power Revolution.

Mindful of the vitriol against him and his party, especially from administration supporters, Roxas said the LP campaign was not just a repeat of 2016.

"This campaign is about today, about our future. How an ordinary Filipino could be able to fit his P500. That is what we should provide solutions to," said Roxas, the LP standard-bearer in the 2016 presidential election.

Despite the widespread use of social media, Aquino said the LP would employ "old-school" strategies to win back the Senate.

"We would go around communities, talk to various sectors and engage the public. We have to go back to the people and ask them what they want from the government," he said.

Not a token advocate

Amid criticisms of her being a token women's rights advocate, Cayetano urged her critics to look at her record.

Cayetano, who has repeatedly been called out for her soft stance on President Duterte's statements against women, said these were matters best left to the President's spokesperson.

Citing "unfinished business" as his motivation, Estrada expressed confidence that his pending cases would not adversely affect his comeback bid for the Senate.

Estrada, out on bail for his alleged involvement in the P10-billion pork barrel scam, said he would be able to win one of the 12 Senate seats up for grabs in May given his "track record" and the public's "sympathy" toward him.

His confidence stems from the fact that he won in the 2004 Senate race despite being charged with plunder.

As of Tuesday, the Comelec had received 104 COCs for senator and 115 applications for party-list representatives. INQ

were trying to propagate that the martial law era was only a fight between Marcos and Aquino was not accurate as it could be said that it was, in fact, "the people against Marcos."

In February 1986, Marcos and his family were forced to live in exile in the United States after they were booted out of power by Filipinos in the 1986

Cops, military going after election guns

By CECILLE SUERTE FELIPE

As the campaign season nears, the police and military are poised for tougher and more coordinated operations against gun-for-hire groups and owners of loose firearms who could end up as private armed groups (PAGs) or security escorts of candidates and politicians – and potential perpetrators of poll-related violence.

This was according to Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Albayalde, who stressed that the PNP – along with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) – would be working vigorously to ensure peaceful and orderly polls in May 2019 under the supervision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

The official campaign season begins in February.

“As deputized agencies of the Comelec, the AFP and PNP shall take frontline initiatives to carry out aggressive operations against loose firearms and gun-for-hire groups, some of which are known to double as PAGs during elections,” Albayalde said.

He has ordered an intensified

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Cops From Page 1

monitoring of activities of PAGs as part of security preparations for next year's midterm elections. He warned all commanders, from regional directors to provincial directors, of severe consequence if they fail to address the problems with such armed groups.

The PNP chief said he is also considering reassigning some officers who are related to candidates or incumbent officials seeking reelection. But he stressed such reassignment may be temporary.

"After the elections, we can put him back, especially if he has not committed any

offense," Albayalde said.

Earlier, Albayalde said the PNP has activated the National Task Force on Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections to make early preparations to address possible security concerns ahead of the May 2019 polls.

This developed as PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Benigno Durana Jr. described as generally peaceful and orderly the filing of certificates of candidacy (COCs) for the past four days.

He said security preparations set into motion two months ago were paying off.

The filing of COCs is from Oct. 11 until today.

Durana said that as of the second quarter of 2018, the PNP has detected at least 77 active PAGs with 2,060 members and 1,574 firearms.

Of the 77 armed groups, 72 are reportedly based in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

He said the police are also monitoring 226 inactive groups with 2,028 members and about 1,000 firearms.

The PNP spokesman noted most militias are "seasonal" in nature and mostly based in Mindanao.

He said the PNP is determined to stop any PAG from engaging in violence during

the elections.

Durana also named Abra as a potential election hot-spot, judging from the level of violence reported in the province during the 2010 and 2016 polls.

Meanwhile, the AFP is also implementing rotation of assignments for militiamen to prevent them from being used for partisan purposes by local politicians during the elections.

AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez said that while President Duterte's instruction to the military is very clear - that no soldier should engage in partisan politics - the message might not be so clear to members of Citizens Armed Forces

Geographical Unit (CAFGU).

"Our strategy here is to rotate their (CAFGU) assignments to other areas as what the Philippine National Police has been doing," Galvez said at the Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Council meeting at Camp Crame yesterday.

"We in the military have established distance with different officials (politicians). Even civil-military officials are prohibited from conducting activities during elections," Galvez said.

Political warlords, in troubled areas, often enlist the services of armed groups to influence the outcome of the elections. In some instances, some members of the armed

groups came from the ranks of militiamen from local government units.

Just like the PNP, Galvez said the military's main concern in the upcoming midterm elections is the proliferation of armed groups that could be hired by unscrupulous politicians to eliminate their opponents.

For the AFP, election hot-spots are mostly in Mindanao and in the Cordillera Administrative Region, particularly in Abra.

Based on threat assessments, candidates from these possible election-troubled areas can be allowed to have military or police escorts.

- With Jaime Laude

Draft WPS exploration framework 'looking good' in all aspects - DFA

A Philippine-crafted draft framework on the joint exploration in South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) is now shaping up ahead of the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano has

said. "I still have the whole day (Tuesday) para tapusin (to finish it) but I can say it's looking good from legal, moral, from point of view of protecting territorial rights and economic rights, it's looking

good, the agreement on joint exploration," Cayetano told reporters, three days before he exits as DFA chief. Cayetano is expected to resign and file his certificate of candidacy as representative of Taguig City ▶4

Draft WPS exploration... ◀1

on Wednesday. Replacing Cayetano will be Permanent Representative to the United Nations Teodoro Locsin Jr., who will receive Wang on October 29 during the latter's official visit to Manila.

Wang's slated trip is focused on continuing talks on exploration in the contested waters which are believed to be rich in oil and gas.

Manila is keen to pursue the venture to sustain power in the country as Malampaya, which supplies 40 percent of Luzon's power, is set to close down

in 2027 or 2028. "It takes 3-7 years to put up these oil rigs, one that is full production. So the time to do it is now," Cayetano said in a separate interview.

Meanwhile, he assured that any deal will not affect Manila's rights and claims in the region.

"We're still targeting na makasama ito sa pipirmahan sa (to have this signed during the) state visit," he added, referring to the upcoming trip of President Xi Jinping to the Philippines in November (PNA)

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PH readies WPS exploration framework

Outgoing Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano yesterday said a Philippine-crafted draft framework on the joint exploration in South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) is now shaping up ahead of the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"I still have to finish it, but I can say it's looking good from legal, moral point of view and in terms of protecting (our) territorial rights and economic rights. It's looking good, the agreement on joint exploration," Cayetano said.

However, he stressed that any deal will not affect Manila's rights and claims in the region.

Cayetano is expected to resign and file his certificate of candidacy as representative of Taguig City Wednesday.

President Rodrigo Duterte has named Permanent Representative to the United Nations Teodoro Locsin Jr., as Cayetano's replacement. It is Locsin who will receive Wang on 29 October during the latter's official visit to Manila.

Wang's official trip is focused on continuing bilateral talks on exploration in the contested waters, believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits.

Manila is keen to pursue the venture to boost the country's energy security as Malampaya, which provide fuel to plants supplying up to 40 percent of Luzon's power requirements, is set to close down in 2027 or 2028.

"It takes three to seven years to put up these oil rigs that are in full production. So, the time to do it is now," Cayetano said.

He said the Philippines is hoping the joint exploration agreement could be signed during the state visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to the Philippines in November.

CRP

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10/18/18

DFA chief crafting SCS oil exploration deal with China

A PHILIPPINE-CRAFTED draft framework on the joint exploration of the South China Sea or West Philippine Sea is shaping up ahead of the visit of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said Tuesday.

"I still have the whole day [on Tuesday] to finish it, but I can say it's looking good from the legal, moral point of view of protecting territorial rights and economic rights," Cayetano told reporters.

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Meanwhile, he said any deal would not affect Manila's rights and claims in the region.

"We're still targeting to have this signed during the state visit," he said, referring to the coming trip of President Xi Jinping to the Philippines in November. **PNA**

Duterte, Xi: Triumphant duo

“Duterte wins the trade war keeping both China and market open while preserving US goodwill.”

By Zaida Reyes, Contributor

COMMENTARY

The two men who changed the 21st Century – President Rodrigo Duterte and President Xi Jinping – will meet next month. It will be a meeting of two historic achievers. It is a meeting that some have tried to becloud, if not stop, by intrigue and a fog of information war. A month before the meeting however, efforts to muddle the waters have been cleared away.

Diversionsary tension

A major effort in distracting and spoiling the scene for the historic meeting between the presidents of China and the Philippines (when a major portion of the \$24-billion investment commitment of President Xi Jinping to President Duterte will be signed) was the global media campaign to create tension with a so-called naval exercise of the US and its allies (read with the Philippines) extending from the South China Sea to the Taiwan Strait.

CNN's Barbara Starr reported this naval exercise on 5 October 2018 saying "The plan suggests sailing ships and flying aircraft near China's territorial waters in the South

China Sea and Taiwan Strait in freedom of navigation operations to demonstrate the right of free passage in international waters." This was followed up by many reports and opinion pieces in global media, including the *Asia Times* where Richard Heydarian wrote a piece entitled "US, Philippines tacitly realign against China."

"If and when the United States sails warships and flies fighter planes in a massive and potentially provocative show of force near China's territorial claims in the South China Sea, the Philippines will be there in spirit though not in force," Heydarian stokes speculation. Others in *Asia Times* also chimed in with Bong Sarmiento writing "China leaves Duterte's dream train at the station" and Jason Castañeda in "Duterte creating cracks in his military's command."

Xi winning the trade war

President Xi, on the other hand, has been winning the battles against Trump's Trade War quietly, lowering tariffs on imports from all other countries, except the US – winning global good will while isolating America. Xi lowers as well as domestic costs for its own huge middle class consumers – the largest consumer market not only in the world today but also in all of human history onto the next century (only India may hope to catch up).

President Donald Trump, on the other hand, while talking tough along with the member of his economic and political team from trade adviser and China basher Peter Navarro saying "They (China) are attacking our (US) crown jewels. They make no bones about it," Larry Kudlow said "I think Xi is holding the game up..." the fact is President Xi and China are just waiting for the US to clarify first what it really wants from its trade war.

“
The US cannot win a trade war against China with the Philippines and the ASEAN.

China export surge to US despite trade war

While Trump has said that “a trade war is easy to win” the latest trade statistics of US imports from China does not bode well for the Trump trade warriors. Here are some samples: *Reuters*, 12 October: “China September exports surge, creating record surplus with US despite tariffs”; *SCMP*, 12 October: “China’s trade surplus with US hits record high of \$34-billion as trade war rages on”; UK based *Business Insider*, September 2018: “Ford sales in China collapsed 48% in September amid Trump’s trade war...” Does any of that sound like the US is winning?

It is, therefore, no surprise that the US media and this VoA (US government’s Voice of America) have since reported “China said Friday it is in contact with the US amid reports of a planned meeting between President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump next month following a dive in the US stock market blamed partly on a growing trade war between the world’s two largest economies.”

Dictates of geography

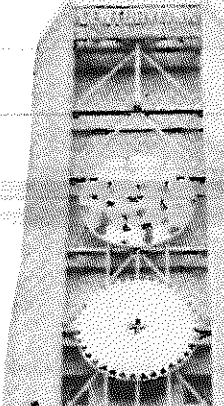
The US cannot win a trade war against China with the Philippines and the ASEAN, it goes against the dictates of geography. By telegraphing his advice to Trump, Duterte has already decided and won the trade talks with the US, expressing his clear position ahead of any talks with the US. Otherwise no talks should even happen to save the Trump and the US’ face.

President Duterte is a “win-win” President, winning the \$24-billion investments fulfillment from China, signing big ticket projects this November



Ties that bind Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with President Rodrigo Duterte during their bilateral meeting in Beijing last year. AFP

and continuing through to mid-2019, as well as signing the Joint Oil Exploration in the South China Sea. With President Xi and China, Duterte wins the trade war keeping both China and market open while preserving US goodwill. 16



2 more boats from France to be delivered

By **EVELYN MACAIRAN**

Two more fast patrol boats from France are expected to arrive in December to boost the Philippines' maritime capabilities.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey on Monday attended the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)'s ceremonial commissioning of the 24-me-

ter long *BRP Boracay* and *BRP Panglao*, two of the four fast patrol boats manufactured by French shipbuilder OCEA.

"France has much to offer the Philippines in terms of maritime, military and defense equipment, as well as expertise in these fields. We stand ready to present our proposals according to the priorities of the Philippine

government," Galey said in his speech.

"We welcome the conclusion of this agreement between the Philippine government and OCEA, which is one of the global leaders in the shipbuilding industry, to acquire these vessels with the aim of developing the maritime capabilities of the PCG and protecting the country's

borders," Galey added.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III was guest of honor and speaker.

In 2014, a contract worth 97 million euros or P5.82 billion was signed between France's OCEA and the Department of Transportation (DOTr) for the acquisition of four fast patrol boats and an 82-meter offshore patrol vessel.

These ships would be operated by the PCG and Bureau of Customs to intensify anti-smuggling sea operations and border protection missions.

The PCG said the offshore patrol boat is scheduled to arrive in the country by August next year.

Under the contract, the OCEA would provide the

training of the crew, a five-year period maintenance of the vessels and the provision of spare parts.

The agreement was financed through an export-credit loan structured by the French banks BNP Paribas and Crédit Agricole, with a guarantee from the French state.

- With Pia Lee-Brago

Militant nominees slam party-list bastardization

VOTE 2019

#ELECTION2019

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABalagtasSeeINC

Since Oct. 11, the session hall of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) on the eighth floor of the Palacio del Gobernador in Intramuros, Manila, has been bustling with party-list nominees trying to beat the Oct. 17 deadline for filing their groups' certificates of candidacy as advocates of marginalized groups.

That is also where the party-list system, which was intended to give voice to the voiceless, gets "bastardized," according to Ferdinand Gaité of the government workers' group, Courage.

"There are so many candidates vying for party-list positions who are not genuinely representing the sectors they claim to represent," said Gaité, who is running as second nominee of Bayan Muna. "It's [now] an entry point for those who have no district representation to enter Congress."

He said the system had been used by members of political dynasties and the elite, who, in their desire to grab congressional seats, usurped positions reserved for the poor and underrepresented sectors.

"There are so many wealthy people who have gotten into the party-list system. It's true that the system has been bastardized. Political dynasties, questionable representatives have seized what was already a tiny representation of just 20 percent (of the House of Representatives)," he said.

Familiar faces

Instead of the political novices and unknowns, the familiar faces of former politicians, their children, wives and relatives, prominent figures like businessmen and ex-Cabinet secretaries and politicians accompanying party-list nominees dominated the crowd in the Comelec's eighth floor session hall.

One of them was former boxer Bobby Pacquiao, who is running as representative of the OFW Family Club. His brother, Sen. Manny Pacquiao, came along to show support.

There was former Speaker Sonny Belmonte, who accompanied nominees of Serbisyo sa Bayan, and Cavite Gov. Strike Revilla, who arrived with nominees of 1-Pacman.

1-Pacman Rep. Michael Romero was last year's richest congressman, with a net worth of P7.29 billion. He is the party's first nominee again.

"What is happening right now is a mockery of the [party-list] system," said former Comelec Chair Sixto Brillantes.

The Comelec has a duty to

ensure that only those who deserve to run should be given space on the ballot, he said.

Different group

He cited former Assistant Presidential Communication Secretary Mocha Uson and former presidential spokesperson Harry Roque, who, in their desire to get into Congress, are running as party-list nominees.

Uson is a nominee of corruption-tainted AA Kasosyo. Roque is supposed to be a nominee of Luntian Pilipinas.

"What is Harry Roque's ad-

vocacy? Last time he ran under a different party-list [group]. He won and was unseated. Now, he's going to run under a different party-list [group] again," Brillantes said.

Ironically, Brillantes was in the session hall on Tuesday accompanying former Rep. Gina de Venecia, wife of former House Speaker Jose de Venecia and the first nominee of Inang Mahal, a recently formed party-list group that has yet to get Comelec accreditation.

Brillantes defended De Venecia, who, he said, was unlike other nominees and has

continued to serve the women sector.

For many nominees, it seems "delicadeza," or propriety, is not an issue.

"It's a free country," said Emily Alvarez, wife of former Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez and first nominee of newly formed Metro party-list group.

Ernani Calica, first nominee of Tribal Communities Association of the Philippines, said the rich should run in the regular polls.

"If they have enough money and resources, they should run in the normal elections," Calica said.

Calica said many of those in Congress who claim to represent marginalized sectors had done nothing to serve them.

Legislation key

So, when the party-list system turns into a "trapo" (traditional politics) institution, how can it be returned to genuine sectoral representation that it was supposed to stand for? Gaité and Brillantes believe legislation is the key.

Gaité said it was the Supreme Court that "watered down its essence."

Both Gaité and Brillantes believe that Congress should pass a new law defining the parameters for party-list groups.

Farmer Honorio Samiengo of Kaisaban ng Maliliit na Magsasaka could only wish for the country's party-list system to genuinely serve its purpose.

"The big parties have their own party-list [groups] that are not marginalized. I believe the genuine party-lists would have difficulty winning because those groups have the money," he said.

Revelry at Comelec office

Outside the Palacio del Gobernador, supporters of party-list groups accompanied their nominees in rambunctious revelry, beating drums, singing hymns, dancing and giving speeches as they tried to grab the attention of the public and the media.

One popular former party-list nominee, Rafael Mariano, whose appointment as agrarian reform secretary in President Duterte's administration was rejected by the Commission on Appointments, is again running as second nominee of the left-wing Anakpawis party-list group.

"From the beginning we have always fought for the advocacies of farmers, workers, urban poor as we fought for democratic, civil, political, economic and cultural rights for the masses," Mariano said.

Members of the right-wing Guardians Brotherhood party-list group sang their hymn, fists raised, as they accompanied their nominees led by Leborio "Abraham" Jangao Jr.

The Guardians, which traces its origins to the "Diablo Squad" fraternity of Mindanao-based soldiers in the late 70s, has been fielding party-list candidates in past elections. It supports the Duterte administration.

Meldy Alfonso, a nominee of Tindorong Pinoy, said vendors also suffer from inflation due to declining incomes.

If his group wins a seat, Alfonso said he would push for the establishment of a state-owned bank that would provide capital, with little interest and no collateral, to small vendors, sellers and entrepreneurs in the country. --WITH A REPORT

FROM JEROME ANING INQ. *A*

Duterte tells gov't forces: Stay neutral in polls

By ARGYLL E. SEDUCOS
and GENALYN D. KANILING

President Duterte urged the police and the military not to engage in partisan politics, reminding them that they are prohibited from doing so by the Constitution.

The President made the statement as the filing of the certificate of candidacy (COC) by aspiring candidates in next year's mid-term elections draws to a close this week.

In a speech during the change-of-command ceremony of the Philippine Army, Duterte said that government forces should not show support for any candidate.

"Wala akong sinasabi na botohan niyo [si Bong] (I am not saying that you should vote for him). And let us make a deal here, promise, to make a commitment to the Filipino people. This election, strictly neutral tayong lahat (we will all remain neutral)," he said Monday evening.

"The Armed Forces, the police, and the uniformed personnel of government. I am asking you not to indulge in partisan politics. Wala tayong susupportahan (We will not support anybody)," he added.

Duterte, however, said that only he can campaign for candidates next year while saying that uniformed government personnel should follow the prohibition so as to usher in an honest election.

"Yung mga kandidato ko, ako lang (It is only me who can campaign for my candidates) because this is a political position. But I expect everybody to respect that constitutional prohibition," he said.

"It's good, it's good for the ▶4

Duterte tells gov't...

◀1

country and I'll announce to the country now that we make a pledge. There will be an election and it will be an honest one," he added.

He also assured the public that no candidate, not even Go, can have access to government resources.

"Nobody but nobody can use government resources, not even Bong. I will not allow it. As a friend, I can invite him but he should not..." Duterte said.

"Of course I will campaign for my candidates. Wala pa namanakong slate, so hanggangdiyanlangtayo (Though I don't have a slate yet, but that is where we draw the line)," he added.

President Duterte had earlier promised that next year's election will be honest. He had earlier encouraged some of his Cabinet members to run for office, including Go and former Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque.

PNP, military prepare poll security measures

BY ROY D.R. NARRA

THE Philippine National Police (PNP) and the military have started preparing security measures to prevent rebel groups and other armed groups from mounting attacks during the election period.

PNP Chief Oscar Albayalde said police teams had started conducting simulations to respond to attempts to take over police stations or sow chaos during the campaign period.

"We have given directives to regional directors down to the station level to strengthen their defense plan in order to avoid [any groups] overrunning small police stations nationwide. We did not lack in reminders," he said.

Armed Forces chief Carlito Galvez said the Army and the police have taken steps to combat political armed groups who may cause trouble during the elections.

"We see that political armed

groups and gun-for-hire (can be hired) to eliminate opposition. That is why we allow security to some candidates," he said.

Galvez said some candidates in Abra and other provinces in Mindanao also need additional security because of the heated electoral contests and election-related violent incidents in the past.

Albayalde earlier said Abra, Masbate, Lanao provinces, and Zamboanga provinces are possible election hotspots because these are "perennial" areas of trouble during elections.

The police will release a validated list of election hotspots within the week.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines is expected to control situations in conflict areas like Mindanao.

Vote-buying

Aside from preventing attacks from armed groups, the police will also help in the campaign to stop vote-buying.

However, Albayalde said it is difficult to arrest people buying votes because for a case to prosper, suspects should be caught in the act of giving and receiving money.

"In vote-buying, there should be the giver and the receiver of money and they also need to testify in order to know who was originally giving the money. It's really hard sometimes," Albayalde said. "If you gave money, that's not necessarily vote buying. They can say that they just have a loan to pay and they're just paying them."

Under the Omnibus Election Code, candidates proven guilty of

vote-buying will be removed from their post if they win.

Also on Tuesday, the police and the military reminded their personnel to avoid showing partisanship to any candidate.

Albayalde said men in uniform should remain apolitical.

Galvez agreed with the PNP chief, saying he already ordered soldiers and military personnel not to support any candidate.

"We have a strong directive that they should not make any move that would really tend to support any candidate. In the military, we have established distance with the difference officials," he said.

To prevent policemen from being influenced by politicians, the PNP reshuffle some police officers.

Any police officer who has a relative involved with a running politician will be reassigned. ^{A3}

"We initiated a reshuffle, a lot of police officers were already reshuffled from station to provincial level," Albayalde said.

PN joins ASEAN-China maritime drill

The Philippine Navy (PN) will hold a send-off ceremony today for logistic support vessel BRP Dagupan City (LC-551) and the 300-man contingent who will participate in the first-ever maritime exercise between the People's Republic of China and ASEAN members states on 21 to 28 October in Zhanjiang, China.

According to Navy spokesman, Commander Jonathan Zata, the send-off event will be held 7:30 a.m. at Captain Salvo Pier, Naval Base, Cavite City.

The exercise, dubbed as ASEAN-China Maritime Exercise 2018, will be hosted by the Republic of Singapore Navy and China's People Liberation Army Navy.

It aims to provide military exchanges between ASEAN member states navies and their Chinese counterpart.

The exercise will focus on maritime safety and search-and-rescue at sea with emphasis on the use of Code of Unplanned Encounters at Sea.

BRP Dagupan City has a displacement of 4,265 tons at full load, are 273 feet long, has a draft of 12 feet and has a top speed of 12 knots. It was commissioned in PN service in the 1990s.

Defense spokesman Arsenio Andolong earlier had said the

proposal for a joint ASEAN and Chinese naval exercise was submitted during the ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting in Singapore in February this year.

The exercise will focus on maritime safety and search-and-rescue at sea.

Early this month, the Philippine Navy vessel BRP Tarlac had made a historic port call to Vladivostok, Russia on 1 October as part of President Duterte's foreign policy pivot to Russia and China.

PN spokesperson Commander Jonathan Zata, said the Philippine contingent conducted "a series of confidence-building activities" with their Russian counterparts.

Military officials saw this development as a "great platform" to advance Russian-Philippine navy ties and also Manila's wider approach to strengthen partners with other navies to address common challenges.

EWB



Duterte defends appointment of ex-soldiers

By Kristina Maralit

President Rodrigo Duterte yesterday defended his appointments of ex-military men to the bureaucracy.

Duterte recently named newly retired Philippine Army (PA) chief Rolando Bautista Jr. as incoming Social Welfare secretary, making him the 60th appointee to the Duterte Cabinet from the military.

"When I appoint you, it's not about friendship. It has nothing to do with that. Now let me just make it clear to everybody," Duterte said during the Army Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony at Fort Bonifacio in Taguig City on Monday night.

He said many people close to him, including some ambassadors, have asked why he keeps choosing former military or police to civilian posts.

Duterte said he chose to appoint them because "they are honest and competent."

"I was not elected by the military. I was not elected by the police. I was elected by the Filipino people. You have your mandate, I have mine. If we can agree on so many things, good. If not, then I'm sorry. I have to make decisions that are really very hard. That's all," he added.

Replacing Bautista, who reached the mandatory retirement age of 56, as PA commanding general is Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Maj. Gen. Macairog Alberto.

Bautista will take over the helm of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) left by Judy Taguiwala for over a year now after failing to get the nod of the Commission on Appointments.

"I was looking for an honest and competent guy and I choose Rolly Bautista to be the next DSWD secretary," the President said.

I was looking for an honest and competent guy.

Before Bautista, other former high-ranking officials from the Armed Forces and Philippine National Police (PNP) appointed by Duterte to Cabinet positions are Secretaries Roy Cimatu (Environment); Eduardo Año (Interior Undersecretary-OIC); Eduardo del Rosario (chair of Housing and Bangon Marawi Task Force); Commissioner Isidro Lapena (Customs) and Glorioso Miranda (Bases Conversion and Development Authority).

In the same event, the Chief Executive tagged the Philippine Army as "professional workforce that is stronger, more empowered and even more dependable." He urged the entire Army organization to support its new commander as the country continues to deal with threats and challenges to its security.

"I also ask our troops to support the leadership of General Alberto as we sustain the gains of our reforms."

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Trillanes summoned by Pasay court for sedition rap

SENATOR Antonio Trillanes IV faces yet another case after a Pasay court issued a subpoena to the senator to comment on a sedition case filed against him.

Trillanes, who is facing separate cases over two failed military uprisings in 2003 and 2007, after his amnesty was declared void by President Rodrigo Duterte, and a libel case by Duterte's son Paolo, was summoned in connection with the sedition case filed by lawyer Manuelito Luna

Luna actually filed the case last year, as he accused Trillanes for allegedly calling on soldiers to kill President Duterte over his supposed ill-gotten wealth, in a privilege speech.

"Trillanes used words and language tending to incite the people to cast anger, hatred against the President or the

government. Much worse, he urged the military through the use of words to overthrow the duly constituted authorities against the Duterte administration," Luna said.

"This is a very serious action on his part, very irresponsible at that," he added.

Luna filed the complaint in behalf of complainants led by Labor Undersecretary Jacinto Paras.

Trillanes was arrested last month over the 2007 Manila Peninsula siege, but was immediately released after posting bail.

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Stay out of politics, Duterte exhorts AFP

By Efren Montano

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has ordered members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to refrain from taking sides in the mid-term elections next year.

In a speech before the Philippine Army turnover of command ceremonies, Duterte also assured the public that there would be an election "and it would be an honest one."

"Let us make a deal here to make a commitment to the Filipino people. This election, strictly neutral tayong lahat," Duterte said Monday.

"The Armed Forces, the

police and the uniformed personnel of the government. I am asking you not to indulge in partisan politics," he added.

Duterte indicated that he would endorse and campaign for certain candidates but those in the armed forces should not.

"Wala tayong susupportahan. Yung mga kandidato ko, ako lang," Duterte said.

Duterte said government funds would not be used in the campaign of administration-backed candidates including his trusted aide Bong Go.

"Nobody but nobody can use government resources. Not even Bong. I will not allow. As a friend,

I can invite him," Duterte said.

Duterte witnessed the turnover of command between the retiring Lieutenant General Rolando Bautista and new Army commanding general Major General Macarrog Alberto.

Duterte again mentioned the forthcoming appointment of Bautista as secretary of social welfare and development.

He also cited the supposed accomplishments of the former military men in his Cabinet to justify his decision to appoint yet another retired officer to his official family.

Duterte said former military officers Environ-

ment Secretary Roy Cimatu, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council chair Eduardo Del Rosario were appointed to their posts because they are honest and competent.

"Let me just make it clear to everybody, many are questioning me. 'Why do you choose military or police retired?' Well, I choose them because they are honest and competent," Duterte said.

"Kung hindi ko nilagay si Del Rosario dyan matapos kaya ang Marawi on time? Kung hindi si Cimatu at Año, malinis pa kaya ang Boracay?" he added.

Duterte tells AFP, PNP to stay neutral

President Duterte urged the police and the military to not engage in partisan politics, reminding them that they are prohibited from doing so by the Constitution.

The President made the statement as the filing of the certificate of candidacy (CoC) by aspiring candidates in next year's mid-term elections draws to a close this week.

In a speech during the change-of-command ceremony of the Philippine Army, Duterte said that government forces should not show support for any candidate.

"Wala akong sinasabi na botohan niyo. And let us make a deal here, promise, to make a commitment to

the Filipino people. This election, strictly neutral tayong lahat," he said Monday evening.

"The Armed Forces, the police, and the uniformed personnel of government, I am asking you not to indulge in partisan politics. Wala tayong susuportahan," he added.

Duterte, however, said that only he can campaign for candidates next year, while saying that uniformed government personnel should follow the prohibition so as to usher in an honest election.

"Yung mga kandidato ko, ako lang because this is a political position. But I expect everybody to respect that constitutional prohibition," he said.

"It's good, it's good for the country and I'll announce to the country now that we make a pledge. There will be an election and it will be an honest one," he added.

Digong sa AFP, PNP

Maging 'neutral' sa 2019

Mahigpit ang direktiba ni Pangulong Duterte sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na maging "neutral" at huwag magpapagamit o di kaya'y kikiling sa mga pulitiko laho ng ngayong papalapit na ang 2019 midterm elections.

"Let us make a deal here to make a commitment to the Filipino people. This election, strictly neutral tayong lahat," mensahe ni Pangulong Duterte sa change of command ng Philippine Army kamakalawa.

Ayon sa Pangulo, nais niyang manatiling tapat sa watawat at Saligang Batas ng Pilipinas ang mga sundalo dahil ito ang kanilang sinumpaang tungkulin.

The Armed Forces,

the police and the uniformed personnel of the government. I am asking you not to indulge in partisan politics," dagdag ng Pangulo.

Gitil nito na hayaan na lamang na siya ang sumuporta sa mga kandidato dahil siya naman ay isang pulitiko, ngunit wala pa naman siyang opisyal na listahan ng kaniyang susupertahan sa darating na halalan.

"Wala tayong susupertahan. Yung mga kandidato ko, ako lang," dagdag pa ng Pangulo.

Tiniyak din ni Duterte na walang pondong gobyerno ang gagamitin sa kampanya ng mga kandidato ng administrasyon kahit ang kanyang close

aide na si Special Assistant to the President Bong Go na naghain ng kanyang certificate of candidacy kamakalawa bilang senatorial candidate ng PDP-Laban sa Comelec.

"Nobody but nobody can use government resources. Not even Bong. I will not allow. As a friend, I can invite him," sabi pa ng Pangulo.

Hindi lamang ang militar ang sinabihan ng Pangulo na maging non-partisan sa nalalapit halalan, kundi maging ang PNP.

Magugunitang ilan sa mga dating heneral na sasabak sa halalan ay si dating PNP chief at outgoing Bureau of Corrections Director Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa. *(Rudy Andai)*

Senate, AFP stay ahead in UNTV Cup

straight win in as many games.

Kenneth Emata buried a buzzer-beating three as the PhilHealth Plus defeated the Kamao, 90-87, in the tournament organized by UNTV president and CEO Daniel Razon.

Emata finished with 9 points, while former Letran star Jonathan Aldave exploded for a game-high 36 points, aside from grabbing seven boards in the tournament offering P4 million to the chosen charity of the champion team.

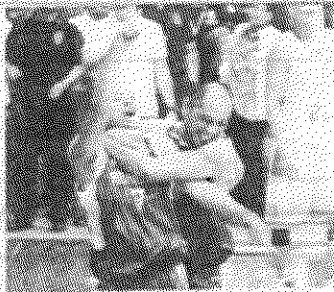
PhilHealth's win was its second straight since dropping its first two games, while the Palace absorbed its first loss in three games.

Senate held DOJ to just two points in the second quarter after the latter fell into a maze of errors in the face of the Defenders' air-tight defense, giving them a 44-23 halftime lead.

Former PBA player Jeff Sanders led the Mike Fermin-mentored Senate with 23 points and 20 boards, while Garry Sevilla and Sen. Joel Villanueva added 15 and 10 points, respectively.

DEFENDING champion Senate and Armed Forces of the Philippines kept their share on the Group A lead by downing their respective rivals, even as PhilHealth stunned Malacañang-Philippine Sports Commission in the 7th UNTV Cup held over the weekend at the Pasig City Sports Center.

The Senate Defenders rode on a big second quarter show to beat the Justice Boosters, 87-72, while the AFP Cavaliers downed the PITC Global Traders, 78-68, for their third



KENNETH Emata (left) celebrates with Jonathan Aldave after burying a buzzer-beating three that lifted PhilHealth to a 90-87 win over Malacañang-PSC in the UNTV Cup.

Senate, AFP keep win streaks

Games Sunday
(Pasig City Sports Center)
2 p.m. – GSIS vs PTC
3:30 p.m. – Agriculture vs Judiciary
5 p.m. – PNP vs Senate

Defending champion Senate and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) kept their share of Group A lead by downing their respective rivals even as PhilHealth stunned Malacañang-Philippine Sports Commission in the 7th UNTV Cup held over the weekend at the Pasig City Sports Center.

The Senate Defenders rode on a big second quarter show to beat the Justice Boosters, 87-72, while the AFP Cavaliers downed the PTC Global Traders, 78-68, for their third straight wins in as many games.

Kenneth Emata buried a buzzer-beating three as the PhilHealth Plus defeated the Kamao, 90-87, in the tournament organized by UNTV president and CEO Daniel Razon.

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Aldave exploded for a game-high 36 points aside from grabbing seven boards in the tournament, offering P4 million to the chosen charity of the champion team.

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Lawmaker says suspension of fuel tax hike misleading

By **DING CERVANTES**

CLARK FREEPORT, Pampanga – The government's announced suspension of excise tax implementation next year is misleading, as what would be suspended is the tax increase of P4.50 per liter for diesel and P9 for gasoline and

not the excise tax now in force under the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law, a party-list representative said yesterday.

"The government has neglected the already catastrophic socio-economic impact of TRAIN law's first tranche excise tax on fuel," Anakpawis party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao said in a statement.

"What the poor is demanding is the scrapping of regressive provisions of the TRAIN law, especially the excise tax on oil products that has triggered skyrocketing of prices, especially food items," Casilao said.

Despite the government's announcement of excise tax suspension next year, "the imposition of P2.50 excise tax per liter of diesel and P7 per liter of gasoline remains, and what was actually suspended was increasing it to P4.50 and P9, respectively," he said.

Casilao noted that in 2010,

about 1.3 billion liters of diesel were used for transport, and another 1.1 billion liters for machineries and equipment.

"Thus, imposing the excise tax would roughly add P6 billion to the costs of production," he said.

"The added costs in production are obviously passed on to consumers via surged levels of prices. It is elementary to conclude we are facing unabated inflation to a large extent because of the first tranche of the TRAIN law imposition of excise tax, not the forthcoming second tranche next year," he pointed out.

"The suspension of the second tranche is the administration's very own admission of the calamitous impact of the TRAIN law in the country. The implementation triggered broad people's protest and condemnation, leading to the presidency's 'winding trust ratings,'" he said.

"The suspension of the excise tax imposition next year was actually a desperate measure. As we all know, the first quarter is very crucial when majority of the poor are totally drained of means of livelihood. Also historically, the people power protests were carried out on a February and January," he added.

Congress OK needed

As some quarters insist that what should be suspended is the oil excise tax hike that took effect this year, a finance official said this would be possible only with Congress approval.

Finance Assistant Secretary Tony Lambino said TRAIN does not have a provision on the rollback of excise tax on oil products.

"There is no provision on the rollback of the current excise tax (on oil) that was implemented this year. So, that will need a congressional action," Lambino said at a press briefing yesterday in Malacañang.

TRAIN, the first package of the government's tax reform program, imposes new taxes on diesel, liquefied petroleum gas, kerosene and bunker fuel for electricity generation and higher taxes on other oil products. The excise taxes on oil products would be gradually increased until 2020.

The next round of oil excise tax hike is supposed to take effect on Jan. 1 next year. The law allows the temporary suspension of the increases if the average price of Dubai crude based on Mean of Platts Singapore reaches or exceeds \$80 per barrel for three consecutive months.

While the condition provided by the law has not been met, President Duterte agreed this week to suspend the second round of increase to stabilize prices.

Economic managers have said crude prices are likely to stay above the \$80 threshold over the next two months.

But some senators believe the suspension should cover not just the next round of increase but any further hikes in excise taxes on fuel.

In a letter sent to the President last week, 17 senators from the majority bloc said the suspension of oil excise tax increases would lift the "heavy burden" carried by Filipinos affected by high com-

modity prices.

Asked if the next round of increase would be suspended even if average crude prices do not breach \$80 per barrel over the next few months, Lambino said: "Well, if for instance a dollar (lower than the threshold), we do not need to discuss that. We will find a way."

"But if it's \$60, \$20 dollars below the threshold, which is close to impossible, we have to talk about it. But it's unlikely that the threshold would not be exceeded," he added.

Lambino said the possibility of a suspension not happening next year is very slim. He cited the huge demand from countries experiencing winter, the rift between Iran and the United States and the economic problems hounding Venezuela.

Finance officials previously said the government would not be able to collect about P40 billion next year if the next tranche of oil excise tax increase is suspended.

Lambino said the government would cut expenditures on non-infrastructure programs to offset the effect of the foregone revenues and to meet this year's deficit target.

On the revenue side, Lambino said the government would continue to improve collection efforts and strengthen the campaign against smugglers and tax cheats.

Meanwhile, the National Democratic Front-North Eastern Mindanao Region (NDF-NEMR) said on Monday that the Duterte regime must answer for the alleged deliberate manipulation of the economy that has resulted in severe rice crisis and steep increases in the prices of goods.

"The regime shamelessly blames farmers for the soaring price of rice supposedly caused by elevated selling prices imposed by farmers on traders," Maria Malaya, NDF spokesperson said in a statement posted on the group's website.

"Almost half of the selling price of rice is pocketed by traders as profit. In fact, farmers are victims of high usury rates, lack of government subsidy, costly farm inputs and low prices of their products. Because of this, farmers, especially rice farmers, are constantly in a shortfall," Malaya said. 2

- Alexis Romero, Jose Rodel Clapano

Palace: Dec. plot vs Du30 credible

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said it came as no surprise to him that communist rebels would again try to oust President Duterte in December after the "Red October" plot fizzled out, according to a new military report.

Panelo said nothing was new about the military report that communist rebels would again attempt to remove Mr. Duterte from power because the rebels had been trying to oust administrations for the last 50 years.

"That's what the military said, and I'm not surprised that there's such a development," he said in a press briefing at the Palace.

CPP anniversary

Panelo made the remarks after the Armed Forces of the Philippines said the plot to oust the President was a "rolling plan" that would culminate in December.

The ouster move will sup-



ERSTWHILE PALS Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte delivers a speech during the turnover of New People's Army captives to him in April 2016. —INQUIRER PHOTO

posedly coincide with the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) celebration of its golden anniversary on Dec. 26.

Earlier, the military said the Red October plot against the President was discovered and eventually fizzled out.

While he did not disclose what he knew of the supposed destabilization, Panelo said the military had "the resources and intelligence to validate what they're saying."

"I won't even wonder why there's always a plot," Pane-

lo said.

"That's precisely the rationale of the creation of the CPP, to oust the present government," he said.

He said communist rebels had been plotting to oust the government for the past 50 years but always ended up failing.

Normal for rebels

"It would be strange if they didn't plan ouster moves every day," Panelo said.

"They've been doing so for 50 years, but they have always failed," he added.

Despite the supposed revival of the destabilization plot, Panelo said the President remained open to the possibility of a reconciliation with the communist rebels.

"For now, they [communist rebels] do not honor what has been agreed on before," Panelo said.

"But definitely, the President's mind is always open to reconciliation. He said we, Filipinos, cannot be killing each other," Panelo said. INQ

Military nabs 'ouster plot' Reds in Laguna

By JAIME LAUDE

Five alleged communist rebels, including a peace talks consultant, believed to be involved in the plot to oust President Duterte were arrested at an Army checkpoint in Sta. Cruz, Laguna last Monday afternoon, the military reported yesterday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Carlito Galvez claimed that the arrest of Adelberto Silva, freed peace talks consultant and current head of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) National Organizing Department (NOD), has disrupted the communist's mobilization and recruitment activities.

"They want to oust, their sinister objective is to overthrow the government. So we are trying to continue to insulate the vulnerable sectors from them," said Galvez at a Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Committee (JPSCC) meeting with Philippine National Police (PNP) officials.

The military said Silva

and his companions - Edicel Legaspi alias Joventud del Fierro and the secretary of the CPP's Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee, a certain Oyong, certain Wena and certain Batu, all NOD staff members - were on board a Suzuki Swift car when they were intercepted at an Army checkpoint along Sta. Cruz highway, Barangay Pagsawitan in Laguna at around 1:30 p.m. the other day.

Maj Gen Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the Taray-based Army 2nd Infantry Division, said troopers from the 1st Infantry Battalion of the 202nd Infantry Brigade under Brig. Gen. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos intercepted the CPP members while they were on their way to Pagsanjan, Laguna.

Burgos said the arresting team recovered from the suspects' vehicle two caliber .45 pistols, four hand grenades, one claymore type improvised explosive device (IED), loaded gun magazines and rebel documents.

"The search of the vehicle

was witnessed by barangay officials," said Lt. Col Jonathan Manio, commander of the 1st Infantry Battalion.

Manio said the rebels were turned over to the PNP-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region (PNP-CIDG-NCR) for the filing of appropriate charges.

Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo, AFP spokesman, said that while Red October has fizzled out, the communists' ouster plot against the President is continuing.

The military described Red October as a plot hatched by the CPP-New People's Army with the support of various anti-government and political groups.

After Red October, Arevalo said the communist leadership is once again planning to unleash their ouster plot against President Duterte on Dec. 26, in time for the CPP's golden anniversary celebration.

At the joint AFP-PNP press briefing at Camp Crame in Quezon City, Galvez claimed that they have dissolved the

supposed "Red October" ouster plot against President Duterte.

"*Yung isa sa batayan na naitawag*, this is an indication of the ongoing awareness with the different people and the public. The people now, including the parents, are aware of this sinister act. And through this awareness, we were able to deter any violent mobilization," Galvez said.

"*Kung makikita natin, ang target nila* since Sept. 21 is to have a critical mass. But because of the positive response of our students and other agencies, including parents, teachers, we were able to dissuade them," he said.

The PNP and the AFP held a Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Committee meeting at Camp Crame in preparation for the May 2019 elections and internal security, anti-criminality and counterterrorism efforts.

PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde assured the people that appropriate security measures are in place to maintain peace and order and secure

protest actions set on Oct. 17.

Albayalde described as "not that serious" the threat being posed by the Red October plot as far as the PNP is concerned.

He clarified that President Duterte has "unlimited" source of information, which he personally does not have access to. "I think there is a basis for the statement of the President. Remember the President has unlimited access to information, not just the PNP. There is a reason for this... probably not even the intelligence community," he added. Duterte claimed the opposition groups are plotting to ouster him. Earlier, the AFP claimed that communist rebels are expanding their network to launch Red October.

The military also linked the supposed ouster plot to a raid on a farm in Rizal where several firearms were confiscated.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said communist rebels have been planning to overthrow the government for decades.

"I won't be surprised if

there is such plot because that is precisely the rationale of the creation of the Communist Party of the Philippines to oust the present government," Panelo said.

"So it would be unusual if they do not plot an ouster move. They have been planning that for 50 years but failed," he added.

Last month, Duterte claimed some soldiers are conniving with communists and the opposition Liberal Party to overthrow him. The military later accused communists of crafting a Red October plot to destabilize the administration, a claim that the rebels dismissed as "paranoia."

Last week, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the Red October ouster plot had fizzled out because security forces were able to expose it.

But military officials claimed the rebels are expected to hatch destabilization plans to commemorate the CPP's 50th anniversary in December. - With Cecille Suerte Felipe, Alexis Romero

NDFP consultant nabbed by policemen in Laguna

PNP says guns, explosives recovered from ex-political detainee, 4 others

By Maricar Cinco
@maricarcincoINQ

SAN PEDRO CITY—A consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) was arrested along with four others in a police operation in Santa Cruz town, Laguna province, on Monday afternoon, police said on Tuesday.

Adelberto Silva, 71, a former political detainee released along with Communist Party of the Philippines leaders Benito and Wilma Tiamzon in August 2016, was arrested at 2 p.m. on Monday at Barangay Pagsawitan.

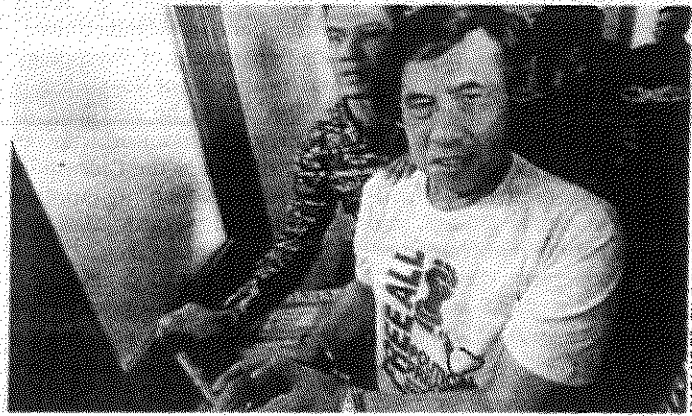
Arrested with Silva were Erineo Atader, 55; Edicel Legaspi, 60; Hedda Calderon, 63; and Julio Lusania, 53.

A report from the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) regional police on Tuesday said the "manhunt operation" against Silva was carried out by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG)-National Capital Region for possession of illegal firearms and explosives.

This came months after the Manila Regional Trial Court in January issued an order to rearrest Silva and the Tiamzon couple after it revoked their temporary liberty.

They were released in 2016 supposedly to join peace negotiations with the government. President Duterte later terminated the talks.

Supt. Meliton Salvador, commander of the Laguna po-



POLITICAL DETAINEE Adelberto Silva in this 2016 photo arrives in a Manila court in handcuffs to attend a hearing.

lice's public safety company, said Silva and his companions were in a car headed south of Laguna when arrested.

'High-risk'

"[But] as to the details [of where they were headed and the case], it's the CIDG that has them. We (Laguna police) only provided security," Salvador said in a telephone interview.

He said the suspects were considered "high-risk."

According to the police report, among those recovered from Silva's group were a .45-caliber gun, a rifle, a hand grenade, an improvised explosive and bullets.

The report showed Silva's home address to be in Pagsanjan, a town next to Santa Cruz.

Casey Cruz, spokesperson for Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Southern Tagalog,

said the five political activists were taken to the Philippine National Police headquarters at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

She said they would undergo inquest proceedings in Santa Cruz on Tuesday.

Crackdown

"As we can see ... the government is serious about its crackdown against leader-activists in Southern Tagalog [to justify its claims] of the 'Red October' [destabilization] plot," Cruz said in a telephone interview.

"But we remain steadfast in our calls to resume peace talks and our calls for the government to address our legitimate issues," she added.

In Nueva Ecija province, four women suspected to be New People's Army (NPA) rebels were arrested on Saturday by the mili-

tary and the police in Rizal town. Yolanda Ortiz, Eulalia Ladesma, Rachel Galario and Elaine Amocling were allegedly conducting "recruitment, propaganda and extortion" activities at Barangay Agbannawag when they were arrested, the military said.

The military also reported seizing from them a submachine gun, bullets, four hand grenades and improvised explosive devices.

Not rebels

But human rights watchdog Karapatan on Tuesday said they were activists, not NPA rebels, and asked for their release.

According to Cristina Palabay, Karapatan secretary general, Ortiz, 46, is a member of Anakpawis, and Ladesma, 44, of Gabriela.

Amocling, 23, and Galario, 20, are youth activists who have been advocating farmers' rights, Palabay said.

She said Ortiz and Ladesma had been "badly beaten by their captors," citing bruises on their faces.

But Lt. Col. Eugene Osias, public information chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said Karapatan had no evidence that the four women had been tortured.

Osias said the four women were "declared OK" after they underwent medical examination following their arrest. —WITH A

REPORT FROM TONETTE GREJAS INQ

NDF consultant nabbed in Laguna

THE Philippine Army arrested a high-ranking consultant of the National Democratic Front (NDF) as the alleged "Red October" plot against President Rodrigo Duterte has suffered a "meltdown," Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. said on Tuesday.

In a joint press conference at Camp Crame with Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Oscar Albayalde, Galvez told reporters that NDF consultant Adelberto Silva and four others were apprehended in Santa Cruz, Laguna at 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

Brig. Gen. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos Jr., commander of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade (202IB), said that aside from

Silva, also arrested were Edicel Legaspi alias Iuventud del Fierro, Ernesto Lorenzo alias Adlai, a certain Wena and Batu.

In his report, Burgos said Silva was the current head of the NDF's national organizing department while the four others were members of the group.

Galvez earlier announced the arrest of Silva, who was granted a reprieve by the Duterte administration in 2016 in anticipation of the peace negotiations with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the NDF supposed to be held in Oslo, Norway. The negotiations fell through, however.

Galvez said, recently Silva again floated the idea of the al-

leged Red October plot supposedly being brewed by the CPP.

"If we can see, their target was to enforce this on September 21 and to have a critical mass of 30,000 to 40,000 [people] because we saw there was a positive response coming from the students, to include the teachers and parents and other organizations," Galvez said in a news conference.

"Their sinister objective is to overthrow the government, so it will continue, so we are trying to continue to insulate vulnerable sectors from them," he added.

Galvez and Albayalde met at Camp Crame for the joint Peace and Security Coordinating Committee (JPSCC), which

aims to curb terrorism and insurgency in the country as preparations for 2019 elections heat up as the deadline this Wednesday for the filing of certificates of candidacy comes up.

Galvez said the AFP's collaboration with the PNP also recently resulted in the arrest of five high-ranking communist rebels and two Maute members.

The military and the police added that the JPSCC framework will be applied to the operations being conducted in response to the President's directive that all agencies of government must work towards ensuring peaceful and orderly 2019 midterm elections.

DEMPSEY REYES



5 ranking CPP-NPA leaders captured in Laguna

By Alfred Dalizon

COMBINED agents of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces on Monday captured five ranking officials of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front in an operation in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

The five were identified as Adelberto A. Silva, tagged as the head of the National Organization Department (NOD) of the CPP-NPA-NDF and one of the NDF consultants released from detention by the government in 2016, Ediel Rodriguez Legaspi alias "Jed" (Kobe/Trike), described as the secretary of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee, alias "Oyong," an NOD staff member and member of Silva's support group, alias "Batu," another NOD staff member, and alias "Wena," said to be a secretary of the CPP-NPA-NDF's

National Women's Bureau.

Alias "Oyong" was initially identified as Ernesto Lorenzo alias "Adlai," another freed NDF consultant although it turned out that he merely resembled the latter.

The five are undergoing police investigation.

bayan Muna leaders denounced the arrest of the 70-year-old Silva and his four companions whom they identified as Legaspi, 60; Ireneo Alcedero, 55; Hedda de Luna Calderon, 63; and their driver Julio Luisana, 53.

In June 2015, Silva, his party wife Sharon Cabusan, and Isidro de Lima were also arrested in Bacoor, Cavite by security agents on the basis of a warrant of arrest for 15 counts of murder in relation to the 1985 Inopacan, Leyte massacre.

When he was first arrested, the military tagged Silva as the head of the NOD and secretary gen-

eral of the CPP Central Committee and the one who reportedly replaced Wilma Tiamzon who together with her husband Benito was arrested in Cebu in March 2014.

The arrest of the five came just hours before top PNP and AFP officials led by Director General Oscar Albayalde and General Carlito Galvez Jr. met in Camp Crame yesterday to discuss their joint operations to counter terrorism and criminality.

Galvez told Camp Crame newsmen that they have effectively disrupted communist plots, one of them the alleged Red October plot to undermine the Duterte government with the arrest of the five.

"Nakikita naman natin yung mobilization ng recruitment ng CPP-NPA ay continuing. Sa ngayon, nakita natin that we effectively disrupted yung ginagawa nila and

we will continue. That's why ang pinag-usapan natin ay how to end this and we're very happy yesterday we have a very good accomplishment against them as we were able to arrest Mr. Silva who is the head of their national organization department," said the AFP chief.

Galvez expressed confidence that they have foiled any CPP-NPA plan to undermine the administration, with the arrest of several ranking rebel leaders and the surrender of thousands this year.

"Kung makita natin target nila nung September 21 is to have a critical mass of 30,000 to 40,000. Because dun sa nakita nating positive response ng mga estudyante, to include the teachers and also yung parents and other organizations, we were able to dissuade would-be supporters and to convey a strong message to the CPP-NPA," he

said. "Ang nakita natin lahat ng President they want to oust their sinister objective is to overthrow the government so it will continue. So, we are trying to continue to insulate vulnerable sectors from them," he added.

PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Benigno Durana Jr. said that as of yesterday, they are continuing their talks with Commission on Higher Education chair Dr. Prospero de Vera, who agreed to liaise with officials of different universities and state colleges amid the PNP's plan to hold dialog with them.

The plan was made amid the AFP's revelation that CPP-NPA personalities have infiltrated at least 18 colleges and universities in Metro Manila and are currently embarking on a program to recruit more members and sympathizers.

3 NPAs surrender in Compostela Valley

By FRANCIS T. WAREFIELD

Three Communist New People's Army (NPA) terrorists, belonging to the Guerilla Front 14-North Eastern Mindanao Regional Committee (GF14-NEMRC), surrendered to the military in Monkayo, Compostela Valley.

The three were identified as alias Lito, 27, a member of Squad Uno, Abe, GF 14, NEMRC; an alias Topher, 28, team leader of Abe, Segunda, Platoon Uno, GF 14; and an alias Ros, 23, also a member of Abe, Segunda, GF 14.

A military report disclosed that the three surrendered at about 11:50 p.m. on October 11, bringing with them their weapons, to Lt. Col. Oscar B. Balinasay Jr., the commanding officer of the Army's 25th Infantry Battalion, through the efforts of Bravo Company under First Lt. Desmond E. Castillo at the 25th IB headquarters, Camp Kalaw, Barangay Poblacion, Monkayo.

The firearms included a KG9 9mm Luger, with one magazine; a Norinco caliber .45, with a magazine; and a Colt Defender cal. 45 and a magazine.

According to the three, they sur-

rendered due to the hardships in the movement, and fear for their lives due to the nearly incessant encounters with government forces.

The three also alleged corruption and abuses in the NPA.

Army 10th Infantry Division Commander Major General Noel S. Clement commended the troops' accomplishment.

"We continue to accept NPAs who want to surrender. It is our hope that the remaining NPA terrorists will go back to the folds of the law and be with their families come Christmas season," Clement said.

"Christmas is worth celebrating seeing NPAs living in the mainstream with their families as they swear allegiance to the Philippine government and be productive citizens," he added.

The surrenderers are now undergoing interview/ custodial debriefing at the 25th IB headquarters.

Peace possible in our lifetime - Joma

BY DR. DANTE A. ANG, Chairman Emeritus

Second of two parts

UTRECHT, Netherlands: "Possible. Peace during our lifetime is possible," Jose Ma. Sison said, as he sat for the interview with *The Manila Times* ruminating on the prospect.

At the people's level in his organization back home, they have laid out their views and programs and considered everything, and have reached a degree of understanding about the emergence of the Duterte administration when it started. Sison said. They have welcomed the election of then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Roa Duterte to the presidency. Prior to that, "they could not imagine someone like Digong" surfacing to become a national leader, much less winning the presidency. Duterte's background in cooperating (with the Left when he was still Davao City mayor) in Southern Mindanao region was "OK" with them.

Sison supports Duterte agenda

It would be quite an achievement for President Duterte if he could industrialize the country like South Korea and Japan have become, and "establish an independent political track," Sison said. The country, he said, is still semi-feudal, controlled by the ruling class. "Even now the super-rich are all land-based and they use and accept people's land as collateral."

He quoted the President as saying he wanted the country to industrialize, create jobs, and for Filipino workers overseas to come and settle back in the Philippines. There are more than 10 million Filipinos living overseas, most of them as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Saudi Arabia alone accounts for more than 1 million Filipino contract workers, records at the Department of Labor and Employment show.

Sison, agreeing with Duterte's assessment, said these Filipinos can be given jobs in the Philippines if the country is able to industrialize. "Under our proposal, the landlords will be com-

pensated," referring to his group's version of a land reform program.

Open to participating in the election

The CPP/NDF group is willing to participate in an open, free and honest election under a peace agreement. "If the agreement becomes substantial, sabay na reconciliation, mayroon pang explicit agreement, may ceasefire pa, (it will have provisions for reconciliation, an explicit agreement, plus a ceasefire)" Sison stressed.

The constitutional conditions should allow all parties to compete in the elections, except the fascists, he said.

Sison acknowledged that the people want to elect their leaders and that the time is ripe for a federal form of government. "Magandang pagkakataon (It is a good opportunity) that Duterte wants a federal form of government. (It's a) win-win, provided

Despite a series of reversals, the founding chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the umbrella organization of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the New People's Army (NPA), is hopeful that peace with the government will be achieved sooner or later. "Ang magandang pagkakataon para sa ating mga komunistang kasapi at para sa kapangyarihan ng mga tao."

EXCLUSIVE

"bakin hindi? Kung makakata sa wagas bakit kailangan pang tumibay sa pakikipagkasunduan? (If we are able to reach a peace agreement, and if it's for the benefit of the people, why not? (If we can talk and settle our problems, why do we have to resort to violence and force, fighting?)" he asked.

By Joma A2

from the exercise. *"Mabuti pa magpalista na kayo para clear na kayo, meron pa kayong cash award, home and job. (The best thing is to enlist for clearance, then receive their cash, a home and a job.)"* Unfortunately, the list," he said, "becomes a surrenderees list."

"Atas malaki ang kita ng AFP sa pagpatay (AFP earns bigger bucks from killing)," he added.

No precondition to peace talks resumption

For the sake of the Filipino people, the CPP/NDF/NPA would welcome the resumption of the peace talks if the President wanted it. Sison said it is the policy of the NDF to continue the peace negotiations despite his hostile exchanges with President Duterte and the communist group's bloody confrontations with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

"Wala kaming preconditions (We have no preconditions)," Sison emphasized, except he said, for the President to reaffirm all previous agreements between the Philippine group panel and the CPP/NDF/NPA since 1992.

He recalled the difference between now and the first time they met Duterte as Davao City mayor. They embraced Digong's promise of a general amnesty to release all political prisoners early on. They were reluctant to clash with him then. "He showed some flexibility," Sison said. But when the peace talks were terminated and the word war between them escalated, he started calling the President a thug. "It is better to talk than to fight," he added.

It is up to the President to continue the peace negotiations, according to Sison. *"Open pa rin akong kausapin si (I remain open to holding talks with President Duterte)."*

However, the NPAs are not willing to lay down their arms as a prelude to lasting peace. "The NPA is a revolutionary force and the only way [to achieving peace]

is to satisfy the people's demand for social and economic reform," Sison said.

The communist leader is willing to come to the Philippines from his Utrecht base to sit down with the President face-to-face when the conditions obtaining are favorable. "At a certain point in time when the end of hostilities [is at hand] *at pag naayos na ang* (and when the) comprehensive agreement on social and economic reform is all ironed out, I will come to the Philippines very confidently," Sison said. "I have to heed the advice of my lawyer and Congress on whether it is legal and the security arrangements are ensured."

Skeptical about Cha-cha

Sison's support for Charter change is conditional. He said the concept of Charter change is fine by him provided there is a fair chance for the NDF to make its proposal and for it to participate in the proposed Constitutional changes. He said he would support Cha-cha "if the peace talks are resumed, and the NDF are given a chance to participate in the drafting of the new Constitution."

He warned that "social and economic reforms cannot be implemented without funding and without reaching an agreement for peace." The problem, Sison said, is *"itimigil ang* (they suspended the) peace negotiations" and the NDF was kept out of the loop in the framing of the new Constitution. The NDF was frustrated that President Duterte did not give them five seats out of the 25 for ConCom members.

Sison also accused the Office of Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP) Secretary Jesus Dureza of making hay.

"Ang OPAPP kumikita kahit wala pang (The OPAPP was already making money even before the) peace talks," he said. He did not elaborate. "The security cluster is against peace talks," Sison laments. "Where do we go from here?"

the democratic provisions of the 1987 Constitution are carried over with the provisions against political dynasty and foreign bases," he said. He also stressed that "to make sure the economic programs are carried out, there must be constitutional reform."

Sison said they are willing to help "co-found the federal government of the Philippines" but that they were excluded from the framing of the draft of the new Constitution. Out of the 25 members of the ConCom (Constitutional Commission), they were hoping that they would be given five seats. They were disappointed.

'Unli'-ceasefire

The CPP/NDF/NPA supports a continuing ceasefire, which "can go on and on until you have a permanent truce," Sison said. "To achieve a permanent truce, *madali* [is easy]." Once peace is achieved, members of the NPA can be given jobs as environmen-

tal guards, industrial guards or security guards, he added.

Sison opposes the localized peace talks initiated by the government. He said Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the Peace Process, was "negotiating on a super-big table, but that the peace process may not even be included in the localized peace negotiations. They are simply offering goodies to the surrenderees."

He belittled the capability of the government to pay off all the rebel returnees who would lay down their arms and surrender to the government. "I do not think the government has the money."

Sison does not believe that the localized peace negotiations will succeed. *"Mahirap yon* (That's difficult). It doesn't amount to peace negotiations. They do not cover the national issues. Limited ang discussions. Unauthorized," Sison emphasized.

Sison also questioned the motive of the military's rebel returnee program, accusing it of making profit

Palace: Reds to blame for 'doomed' peace talks

MALACANANG on Tuesday said the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) should be blamed for the collapse of peace talks, but added that President Rodrigo Duterte remained open to "reconciliation."

Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo made the statement after communist leader Jose Maria "Joma" Sison, in an exclusive interview with *The Manila Times*, blamed Duterte's security cluster for the derailment of talks between the CPP and the government.

In a news conference, Panelo said peace talks with the communist rebels collapsed because the rebel group was not sincere in ending armed conflict.

"Perhaps, the peace talks were derailed because they're not keeping their word. There's supposed to be no gunfight, killings and ambush, but they violated it," Panelo told reporters in Filipino.

"So if you're in the position of the President, why would you talk peace with them, they're not sincere," he added.

Panelo said the government was not yet ready to resume talks with the communist group, but Duterte was open to reconciliation.

"Definitely the President, his mind is always open to reconciliation, as he said he does not want to see Filipinos killing their countrymen," Panelo said.

Sison, in an exclusive interview with *The Times* Chairman Emeritus Dr. Dante Ang in Utrecht, the Netherlands, accused members of the Cabinet security cluster of opposing the signing of the initial document that was earlier agreed upon with the government, and for swaying Duterte into suspending the peace talks.

"Digong (Duterte) stopped everything *habang pinagaaralan ang* (while he was examining the) peace agreement," Sison said, referring to the public statements of the President.

To Sison, it was obvious that the President was convinced by Acting Interior Secretary Eduardo Año and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana

that they could employ a military solution to end the decades-long problem with the communists.

No overthrow

Panelo also expressed confidence the communist group would find it difficult to overthrow Duterte.

This was after Sison himself admitted "he believes the communist group in the country does not have the ability to topple the Duterte government by force and that the conditions for a regime change do not exist at the moment."

Sison has denied any connivance between his group and the opposition Liberal Party (LP), as well as some members of the military, to topple the government.

Duterte revealed on September 8 the supposed unified efforts among the communist group, LP, and the Magdalo group led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th to remove him from office.

'Frothing lies'

Also on Tuesday, Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. lashed out at Sison for accusing the security sector of torpedoing peace negotiations with the Philippine government.

"Jose Maria Sison is once again frothing lies in his mouth as he desperately attempts to circumvent the facts on the ground and regain relevance in their so-called armed struggle," Galvez said in a statement.

"The communist armed group cannot force the people into thinking that the terror group is representative of the public and is in any position to negotiate with the government," he added.

He said the peace negotiations were terminated because of the rebels' "exploitation" of the cease-fire declaration through rampant recruitment and extortion, as well as the need to review past and future agreements and hold consultations with the public.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE
AND DEMPSEY REYES

Peace talks consultant, 4 other NPAs arrested

BY VICTOR REYES AND RAYMOND AFRICA

SECURITY forces on Monday arrested two officials of the communist New People's Army and three other NPA members at a checkpoint in Sta. Cruz town in Laguna, the military reported yesterday.

Nabbed were Edicel Legaspi alias Jovenitud del Fierro, secretary of the NPA's Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee (STRPC) which is the highest NPA organ in the Calabarzon and Mimaropa

regions, and Adelberto Silva, head of the NPA's National Organizing Department (NOD) and consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) which held peace negotiations with the Duterte government.

The three others are Ernesto Lorenzo, former first deputy secretary of the NPA's STRPC; one alias Batu, a member of the NOD; and one alias Wena, secretary of an NPA faction.

Maj. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno,

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PEACE

2nd ID commander, said the arrest of the Silva and Legaspi will lead to a leadership vacuum in the NPA in Southern Tagalog, making it easier for the military to speed up the defeat of the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Silva is one of 23 NDFP consultants released from detention in 2016 to join the peace talks. The consultants were ordered re-arrested by President Duterte after he first cancelled the peace negotiations in November last year. The formal negotiation was supposed to resume last July but Duterte suspended it so that government can review all agreements signed by the two sides.

Parayno also said the five are not connected with the supposed "Red October" plot to oust President Duterte, which the military said failed because it was exposed.

"There is no link yet but of course we are not discounting the possibility," Parayno said.

The military on Monday said the communists have set a new target

for Duterte's ouster — in December as part of their celebration for the 50th anniversary of the CPP.

Capt. Jayrald Ternio, spokesman of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, said the five were nabbed by members of the Army's 1st Infantry Battalion and PNP at around 1:30 p.m. along the Sta. Cruz highway in Barangay Pagsawitan. They were aboard a Suzuki Swift car which was traveling towards Pagsanjan town, he said.

But PNP chief Oscar Albayalde said the five were arrested by joint police and military agents at a safehouse in Sta. Cruz town.

Recovered from their possession were two cal. 45 pistols, four hand grenades, a claymore type improvised explosive device, magazines with ammunition and documents.

Ternio said Silva has standing arrest warrants, issued by a Manila court, for 15 counts of murder.

The four others do not have arrest warrants "but they were taken into custody to face charges for illegal possession of firearms and explosives," Ternio said.

The five are in the custody of

the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez belied a claim of CPP founder Jose Maria "Joma" Sison, chief political consultant of the NDFP, that the security sector is to be blamed for the stalled peace process.

In a statement, Galvez said the communists are responsible for the collapse of the talks, and Sison is attempting to "circumvent the facts on the ground and regain relevance in their so-called armed struggle."

Sison has said defense and interior department officials were able to convince President Duterte they can defeat the NPA by force, leading to the collapse of the talks.

The military said the collapse of talks was prompted by the NPA's violation of a ceasefire agreement and its continued extortion activities.

"We advise Joma Sison to get over his delusions on his relevance and the strength the NPA. It is only a matter of time, and it is quite sooner than he expects, that the terror of the communist group will end and communities on the ground will be liberated," Galvez said.

NDF MAN NAILED

Red plotters busted

Arrested was NDF consultant Adelberto Silva, a former political detainee

By Elmer N. Manuel

The arrest of a National Democratic Front (NDF) consultant, along with four activists in Sta. Cruz, Laguna late Monday afternoon, could provide more details to the Red October plot to unseat President Rodrigo Duterte.

This was claimed yesterday by the joint operatives of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) who believed to have broken a crucial chain in the alleged plan to destabilize the government.

Arrested was NDF consultant Adelberto Silva,

a former political detainee who was released from detention along with Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) leaders and Benito and Wilma Tiamzon in August 2016.

He was cornered by operatives of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region (CIDG-NCR).

Also nabbed were Ermeo Atader, Edicel Legaspi, Hedda Calderon and Julio Lusania. They were charged with illegal possession of firearms and explosives.

The AFP and PNP quickly linked them to the Red October which they claimed had fizzled out after it failed to receive support from the political opposition and the masses.

AFP Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez Jr. said

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Red plotters busted

Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate slammed the arrests of Silva and his companions, saying these are happening while Duterte has refused to revive the peace talks with the communist group

From page 1

their arrest weakened plans to unseat President Duterte.

The Manila regional trial court in January ordered the arrest of Silva and the Tiamzon couple after the court revoked their temporary liberty for being NDF consultants in the aborted peace negotiations between government and the Maoist rebels.

Instead of resuming the peace negotiations and solve the roots of the armed conflict, this is what the Duterte administration has been doing.

The peace talks were terminated by Mr. Duterte.

Supt. Meliton Salvadora, commander of the Laguna Police Public Safety Company, said Silva and his companions were aboard a car heading south of Laguna when they were arrested.

"As to the details of where they were headed and the case, it's the CIDG that has them. We only provided the security," Salvadora said. He described the suspects as "high security risks."

Recovered from them were a .45 caliber pistol, a rifle, a hand grenade, an improvised explosive device and several rounds of ammunition.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan in Southern Tagalog (BAYAN-ST) spokesman Casey Cruz, meanwhile, said the five activists were first taken to the PNP headquarters at Camp Crame in Quezon City and will undergo inquest proceedings in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

"As we can see, the government is serious about its crackdown on leader-activists in Southern Tagalog still (to justify its claims) of the Red October (destabilization) plot," Cruz said. "But we remain steadfast in our calls to resume the peace talks and our calls for the government to address our legitimate (social) issues."

The AFP and PNP quickly linked them to the Red October which they claimed had fizzled out after it failed to receive support from the political opposition and the masses.

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate slammed the arrests of Silva and his companions, saying these are happening while Duterte has refused to revive the peace talks with the communist group.

"Instead of resuming the peace negotiations and solve the roots of the armed conflict, this is what the Duterte administration has been doing," said Zarate in a statement Tuesday.

According to the lawmaker, the peace, reconciliation and unity committee in the House of Representatives already approved House Resolution 2065 which urged the government to resume the peace negotiations but Zarate stressed the Palace is not heeding the demands of the public.

"Apparently Malacañang is deaf to the demands of the people," Zarate said, adding that many lawmakers have signed and supported the resolution.

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'Red December' plot emerges as new threat on Du30—military

By Nat Mariano

THE Palace said Tuesday it was not surprised to hear possible destabilization moves against President Rodrigo Duterte as the military again warned that communist rebels were planning another ouster plot by December.

"I am not surprised that they have a plot because that is precisely the rationale of the creation of the Communist Party of the Philippines—to oust the government," said Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo told reporters.

"So it's doubtful if they don't plan an ouster move every day. For 50 years they have been planning, but so far they have failed."

Panelo made his statement even as the police and military said seven alleged terrorists linked to the "Red October" plot to remove Duterte from power this month were arrested on Tuesday.

Among those nabbed in separate operations were five high-ranking communist terrorists and two leaders of the Maute Group, the security agencies said in a joint statement.

Panelo said the Armed Forces of the Philippines had the resources and the intelligence to validate any information on any ouster plot.

Panelo's remark came after military warned of another destabilization plot against the administration in December after the reported "Red October" plan fizzled out.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Edgard Arevalo claimed the communist leadership was planning to proceed with its plan in time for the golden anniversary of the Communist Party of the Philippines on Dec. 26.

"We described this destabilization plot as rolling as the communist leadership intends to sustain their anti-government moves this October, November and until their December founding anniversary celebration," Arevalo said.

He said the Red October plan failed after the authorities revealed it to the public and discouraged groups not to join the opposition.

But he said the communists' plan to overthrow the government was still on, adding the military could not afford to relax in the face of the communist threat.

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For Reds, its now Xmas plot

THIS time it's "White Christmas."

Malacanang said it is no longer surprised that the Reds have supposedly rescheduled their ouster plot against President Rodrigo Duterte for December after the "Red October" plan fizzled out.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edgardo Arevalo said the plan to topple Duterte was a "rolling plan," adding that the members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) wanted a big celebration during their golden anniversary on December 26.

"I said that's what the AFP said and I'm not surprised there's such a thing," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a Palace briefing yesterday.

Panelo said the AFP "have the resources, intelligence to validate what they're saying."

"You know hindi naman ako magtataka na palaging mayroon plot because that's precisely the rationale of the creation of the Communist Party of the Philippines to oust the present government," he said.

EMontano

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PNP, AFP address threats to orderly, peaceful polls

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

ARMED political groups, gun-for-hire syndicates, and the New People's Army rebels are still the biggest threats to orderly and peaceful mid-term elections next year.

This was the consensus of PNP chief Oscar Albayalde and AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez after emerging from a joint peace and security coordinating committee

conference on internal security, anti-criminality, and counter-terrorism at Camp Crame.

Galvez said the political armed groups, or what the PNP describes as private armed groups, and gun-for-hire syndicates need to be controlled, if not totally eliminated. He said this is true in most parts of Mindanao, Abra, and other areas considered as election hotspots.

"These political armed groups

and guns-for-hire are what we see as the biggest threat, to eliminate their opponents. That's why there are instances we allow security (for candidates)," Galvez said.

Albayalde said NPA rebels charge candidates election fees before they are allowed to campaign in rebel-held areas.

"This is the reason why we have this JPSCC conference as early as

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PNP

now to address these activities by the CPP-NPA," Albayalde said.

"As deputized agencies of the COMELEC (during the election period), the AFP and PNP shall take frontline initiatives to carry out aggressive operations against loose firearms and gun-for hire groups, some of which are known to double as private armed groups during elections," he added.

Albayalde said camp defense plans of different police stations, especially those in NPA-infested areas, have been intensified.

"We need target-hardening, and intensify intelligence gathering to pre-empt attacks on our police stations," he added.

Albayalde said

the conference was aimed at finding ways and means on how to maintain peace and order not only during the election period but throughout the whole year.

"Under this joint security framework, the military and police organizations seek to establish greater inter-operability in our continuing operations to address security concerns within our respective areas of concern, including all other major national events where we join hands in support of national government initiatives," Albayalde said.

Private armies, NPA still biggest threat to polls

By Alfred Dalizon

PARTISAN armed groups and guns-for-hire including some members of the New People's Army yesterday were tagged by both Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar D. Albayalde and Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Carlito G. Galvez Jr. as the biggest threat to the holding of peaceful, orderly and credible 2019 mid-term elections.

"Ang nakikita namin yung political armed groups at gun-for-hire in order to eliminate the opposition. That's why we allow security. Based on our assessment, these candidates need security lalo na yung taga-Mindanao, mga taga-Abra and other identified election watchlist areas," said Gen. Galvez when asked by the Journal Group which group poses a major threat to the 2019 polls.

The country's top cop said that since last August, their intensified nationwide crack-down against gun-for-hire syndicates and private armed groups has already resulted in the neutralization of 82 known guns-for-hire, 30 of them included in the PNP list and the seizure of 35 assorted firearms.

Gen. Albayalde said that they have likewise neutralized 47 Partisan

Armed Group members, eight of them in the government list and confiscated 19 various high-powered firearms from the suspects.

He said that focused intelligence operations are now being directed against more or less 77 active PACs with 2,071 members believed armed with an estimated 1,582 firearms. A large majority of these active PACs operate in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

"We are also monitoring the activities of 217 other groups that have the potential of being utilized as PACs by some politicians," he said.

Gen. Albayalde said that this early, they have organized their Joint Peace and Security Consultative Committee to address threats to the mid-term elections next year including the collection by the NPA of so-called revolutionary tax or permit-to-campaign-fee from candidates venturing into their territories.

"That's why we have this JPSC as early as now in order to address these activities of the CPP/NPA/NDF," the PNP chief said.

Gen. Galvez expressed belief that the AFP and the PNP can effectively ensure the holding of a peaceful

polls next year. "Normally during elections, we have the JPSC headed by the Comelec. We have a lot of experience wherein we have a very peaceful and honest elections, including the recent barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections for the first time, walang nag-declare na failure of elections.

And we were able to refine coordination and maganda yung coordination namin ni Chief PNP kasi pareho kaming Charlie (Company) sa PMA. Yan ang talagang kaganidahan. We have also personal friendship since we were in PMA," the AFP chief said. **TO REMAIN APOLITICAL**

The two top security officials vowed to fully adhere to President Duterte's instruction for them to remain apolitical and see to it that their men won't be allowed to be used in any partisan politicking activities except to secure polling precincts, campaign rallies and the community.

"Ever since naman bawal sa amin ang mag-ing partisan, even sa AFP. Bawal na bawal sa uniformed service ang kumiting kanino mang partido, bawal na bawal po yan. That's why on our part, we initiated a reshuffle, kung makikita nyo marami nang na reshuffle, sa station up to the provincial level," Gen. Albayalde said.

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Troops bag 5 CPP/NPA leaders

By ALFRED DALIZON
COMBINED agents of the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces on Monday captured five ranking Communist Party of the Philippines/National Democratic

Front/New People's Army personalities during an operation in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, officials announced yesterday.
The five were identified as Adelberto A. Silva, tagged as the head of the National Organization Department of the CPP/NDFNPA and one of the NDF consultants released from detention by the government in 2016; Edicel Rodriguez Legaspi alias 'JDF/Kobe/Trike,' described as the secretary of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee, one alias 'Oyong,' an NOD staff and member of Silva's support group; one alias 'Batu,' also described as a member of the NOD Staff; and one alias 'Wena,' said to be a secretary of the

CPP/NDF/NPA's National Women's Bureau.
The one who goes by the alias 'Oyong' was initially identified as Ernesto Lorenzo alias 'Adla,' another freed NDF consultant although it turned out that he merely resembled the latter. The five are now undergoing police investigation.
Bayan Muna leaders denounced the arrest of the 70-year old Silva and his four companions whom they identified as Legaspi, 60; Ireneo Atadero, 65; Hedda de Luna Calderon, 63, and their driver Julio Luisana, 53.
In June 2016, Silva, his party wife Sharon Cabusao and one Isidro de Lima were also arrested in Bacoor, Cavite by security agents on

the basis of a warrant of arrest for 15 counts of murder in relation to the 1985 Inopacan, Leyte massacre.
When he was first arrested, the military tagged Silva as the head of the NOD and secretary general of the CPP Central Committee and the one who reportedly replaced Wilfredo Tiambazon who, together with her husband Benito, was arrested in Cebu in March 2014.
The arrest of the five came just hours before top PNP and AFP officials led by Director General Oscar D. Albayalde and General Carlito G. Galvez Jr. met in Camp Crame yesterday to discuss their joint operations to counter terrorism and criminality

5 top CPP-NPA officials arestado!

Inaresto ng pinagsanib na elemento ng militar at pulisya ang limang matataas na opisyal ng Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) sa isinagawang operasyon sa Sta. Cruz, Laguna nitong Lunes ng hapon.

Kirilala ang mga nasakote na sina Adelberto Silva, chief ng National Organization Division ng CPP-NPA; Edicel Logazpi, gumagamit ng mga aliyas JDF Kobe na nagsisiiling Irika secretary ng Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee; Ernesto Lorenzo aliyas Adial, deputy secretary ng STRPC; Ernesto Lorenzo, 1st deputy secretary ng STRPC; NCD staff ni Silva, aliyas Batu, dating deputy secretary ng organisasyon at aliyas Wena, secretary ng National Women's

Bureau (NWB).

Si Silva ay consultant ng National Democratic Front na napalaya noong nakalipas na taon sa ilalim ng Joint Agreement on Immunity and Safety Guarantees (JASIG) kaugnay ng peace talks sa pagitan ng pamahalaan at ng CPP-NPA.

Magugunita na matapos na bumagsak ang peace talks noong Nobyembre 2017 ay ipinagutos ni Pangulong Duterte ang pag-aresto sa mahigit 30 lider ng komunisang grupo kabilang dito ang 20 National Democratic

NI JOY CANTOS

Front (NDF) consultants.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police are exploring all available avenues for better coordination and cooperation under the framework of the Joint Peace and Security Coordinating Committee (JPSCC) in our operations on internal security, anti-criminality and counter-terrorism," pahayag ni PNP Chief P/Director Gen. Oscar Albayalde.

"This excellent collaboration has recently resulted to the arrest of five (5) high-ranking

communist-terrorists. We expect this collaboration to bear much fruit as we address other security challenges in the future," ayon pa sa PNP Chief.

Patuloy naman ang pagtugis sa iba pang mga lider ng CPP-NDF-NPA na may standing warrant of arrest.

Samantala, dalawang lider ng Maute-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ang nasakote, pero tumanggi muna si AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. na tukuyin ang pagkakailan ng mga ito habang patuloy pa ang dragnet operation sa kasamahan ng mga ito.

AFP, PNP SUSUPILIN ANG PRIVATE ARMED GROUPS SA ELECTIONS

Nakahanda ang pamunuan ng AFP at PNP na supilin ang private armed group na banta sa matiwasa sa susunod na taon.

Ayon sa liderato ng AFP at PNP na ipatutupad nila angistratehiya ng seguridad upang matiyak ang Honest, Orderly and Peaceful Elections.

Sa ginanap na Joint Peace and Coordinating Committee (JPSCC) sa Camp Crame, nagpulong ang mga opisyal ng AFP sa pamumuno ni Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. at ng pulisya sa pa-

ngunguna naman ni PNP Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayalde upang talakayin ang pagsupil sa lahat ng banta sa halalan.

Ang PAGs at mga gun for hire na ginagamit ng mga mandarayang pulitiko ang nangungunang banta sa pagdaraos ng matiwasa

at mapayapang eleksyon sa susunod na taon.

Ang mga opisyal ay nagkasundo upang lansagin ang Private Armed Groups (PAGs) at gun for hire na balakid sa mapayapang 2019 midterm polls.

Idinagda pa ni Albayalde na banta rin sa eleksyon

ay ang mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA) na nagsasamantala sa paningil ng Permit to Campaign (PTC) at Permit to Win (PTW) sa kanilang mga balwarteng teritoryo sa mga mangangampanyang kandidato. - *Joy Camos*

Suspected ISIS commander deported

By JUN RAMIREZ

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) has deported a suspected commander of the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria (ISIS), eight months after he was arrested by military and police authorities in Manila.

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said Egyptian Fehmi Lassoued, 33, was flown out of the country last October 6 to Egyptian capital Cairo where he was later taken into

government custody.

Morente said Lassoued was expelled for violation of the Philippine Immigration Act.

It can be recalled that Lassoued and his Filipino girlfriend were arrested last February after the joint police and military operatives allegedly found a gun, several improvised explosives, an ISIS flag, and maps with drawings of the group's probable operational plans.

Police intelligence showed that Lassoued was a recruiter for ISIS, and was a former negotiator of ISIS for local government officials in Syria and Turkey.

It was also believed that he is an ISIS commander at the Syria-Turkey border.

However, government prosecutors dismissed the complaint in March due to insufficiency of evidence.

"Despite the dismissal of the criminal complaint, we saw that Lassoued definitely violated Philippine immigration laws, which prompted us to assume jurisdiction over his case so he may be subjected to deportation proceedings," Morente said.

He said the Egyptian was found guilty of misrepresentation for submitting false information in his application for a working visa,

for using an altered Tunisian passport, and for being an undesirable alien due to his alleged terrorist links. 3

Egyptian terror recruiter deported

By Anthony Ching

One less headache for the Philippines.

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) announced yesterday that it had deported an Egyptian suspected of being a member of the Islamic State (IS), eight months after his arrest for trying to recruit members for the terror group.

Fehmi Lassoued, 38, was quietly flown out of the country via Thai Airways on 6 October and was turned over to Egyptian authorities to face charges in his home country, BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said.

Foreign terrorists, criminals not welcome — BI.

The flight had a stopover in Bangkok before heading for Cairo where Egyptian policemen took custody of the IS recruiter, the immigration chief added.

The deportation of Lassoued was ordered by the BI Board of Commissioners on 6 September for violation of the Philippine Immigration Act. He was also put on the BI blacklist to prevent his return to the country.

Lassoued and his Filipino girlfriend were arrested last February by the police and military operatives

following reports of their recruitment activities. Seized from them were a gun, improvised explosive devices, an IS flag and maps with drawings of possible bombing targets.

Intelligence reports culled by the Philippine National Police said Lassoued worked for IS in Syria and Turkey.

The charges against Lassoued and his girlfriend were dismissed due to insufficiency of evidence last March, but Morente said they definitely violated Philippine immigration laws thus, they were ordered deported.

The Egyptian was found to have used a fake Tunisian passport while submitting false information.

Lassoued used several aliases, said the BI, including Haytham, Haytam Abdulhamid Yusof, Haitam Abdel Hamid Ahmed Youssef and Youssef Haitam Abdelhamid.

Previous media reports also referred to him as John Rasheed Lassoued.

"The arrest and subsequent deportation of Lassoued are definitely a big accomplishment of the bureau. We have strengthened our Anti-Terrorist Group which actively coordinates with local and foreign counterparts to ensure that we keep our country safe from these foreign terrorists," Morente said.

"Let this serve as a warning to other terrorists and criminals who plan on residing in the Philippines. You are not welcome in our country," he added.

Ex-ISIS commander deported by BI after 8 months

By ITCHIE G. CABAYAN

A SUSPECTED former commander of the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was deported by the Bureau of Immigration (BI) nearly eight months after he was arrested by military and police authorities in Manila for being an alleged recruiter of the international terrorist group.

Egyptian national Fehmi Lassoued, 33, was flown out of the country last October 6 aboard a Thai Airways flight to Bangkok en route to his final destination in Cairo where he was later taken into government custody.

Reports from the PNP said that Lassoued was a recruiter for ISIS, and was a former negotiator for ISIS for local government officials in Syria and Turkey. He is also believed to be an ISIS commander at the Syria-Turkey border. However, government prosecutors dismissed the complaint in March due to insufficiency of evidence.

The BI said Lassoued was expelled pursuant to a deportation order that was issued against him by the BI Board of Commissioners last September 6 for violation of the Philippine Immigration Act. Said deportation order likewise directed his inclusion on the BI blacklist to prevent him from re-entering the country.

It can be recalled that complaints were filed against Lassoued and his Filipino girlfriend upon their arrest last February after the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Philippine Army allegedly found a gun, several improvised explosives, an ISIS flag and maps with drawings of the group's probable operational plans.

"Despite the dismissal of the criminal complaint, we saw that Lassoued definitely violated Philippine immigration laws, which prompted us to assume jurisdiction over his case so he may be subjected to deportation proceedings. As a result, he remained in detention until he was deported," the BI said.

It was learned that the Egyptian was found guilty of misrepresentation for submitting false information in his application for a working visa, for using an altered Tunisian passport, and for being an undesirable alien due to his alleged terrorist links.

Records also revealed that Lassoued's declared employer in his working visa petition was found to be fictitious and that his Tunisian passport was fraudulently altered.

He was likewise discovered to be using several aliases including Haytham/Haytam Abdulhamid Yusef, Haitham Abdel Hamid Ahmed Youssef and Youssef Haitham Abdelhamid. Previous media reports also refer to him as John Rasheed Lassoued.

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Suspected ISIS leader deported

By JUN RAMIREZ

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) has deported a suspected commander of the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria (ISIS), eight months after he was arrested by military and police authorities in Manila.

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said Egyptian Fehmi Lassoued, 33, was flown out of the country last Oct. 6 to Egyptian capital Cairo where he was later taken into government custody.

Morente said Lassoued was expelled for violation of the Philippine Immigration Act.

It can be recalled that Lassoued and his Filipino girlfriend were arrested last February after the joint police and military operatives alleg-

edly found a gun, several improvised explosives, an ISIS flag, and maps with drawings of the group's probable operational plans.

Police intelligence showed that Lassoued was a recruiter for ISIS and a former negotiator for ISIS for local government officials in Syria and Turkey.

It was also believed he is an ISIS commander at the Syria-Turkey border.

However, government prosecutors dismissed the complaint in March due to insufficiency of evidence.

"Despite the dismissal of the criminal complaint, we saw that Lassoued definitely violated Philippine immigration laws, which prompted us to assume jurisdiction over his case so he may be subjected to

deportation proceedings," Morente said.

He added that the Egyptian was found guilty of misrepresentation for submitting false information in his application for a working visa, for using an altered Tunisian passport, and for being an undesirable alien due to his alleged terrorist links.

An official of the BI anti-terrorist group said Lassoued's declared employer in his working visa application was found to be fictitious and that his Tunisian passport was fraudulently altered.

He was likewise discovered to be using several aliases including Haytham/Haytam Abdulhamid Yusof, Haitam Abdel Hamid Ahmed Youssef, and Youssef Haitham Abdelhamid.

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Suspected ISIS commander ipina-deport

Ipinatapon palabas ng bansa ng Bureau of Immigration ang isang himihinalang dating commander ng Islamic State ng Iraq at Syria (ISIS) na nadakip ng mga militar at pulis sa Maynila dahil sa pagiging recruiter ng international terrorist group.

Ipina-deport ni BI Commissioner Jaime Morente, ang Egyptian national na si Fahmi Lassoued sakay ng Thai Airways flight na-Bangkok patungo sa kanyang destinasyon sa Cairo.

Si Lassoued ay pinatapon alinsunod sa deporta-

tion order dahil sa paglabag nito sa Philippine immigration act bukod pa sa blacklisted na ito sa bansa.

Matatandaan na inireklamo si Lassoued at kanyang Filipino girlfriend noong Pebrero kung saan nahulihan ito ng mga tauhan ng Philippine National Police (PNP) at Philippine Army ng baril, ilang improvised explosives, ISIS flag, at mga mapa.

Sa ulat naman na PNP, si Lassoued ay recruiter ng ISIS at dating negotiator ng ISIS sa mga opisyal ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Syria at Turkey na pinani-

niwalaang commander sa Syria-Turkey border.

Napatunayang guilty nito pagbibigay ng tamang impormasyon sa kanyang aplikasyon para sa working visa dahil sa paggamit nito ng Lebanese passport at pagiging undesirable alien dahil sa kanyang pagkaka-sangkot sa terorismo.

Gumagarant din ito ng mga aliases na Haytham/ Haytam Abdulhamid Youssef, Haitam Abdel Hamid Ahmed Youssef, at Youssef Haitham Abdelhamid. **-Doris Franche-Borja**

ARMM HOLDS EMPLOYEES' SUMMIT FOR BANGSAMORO TRANSITION

COTABATO CITY: The Department of Trade and Industry in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (DTI-ARMM) conducted a three-day Trabaho Negosyo Kabuhayan Konsyumer (TNKK) summit here over the weekend. DTI-ARMM Secretary Anwar Malang on Monday said the event was part of the Consumer Welfare Month that focuses on the protection of consumers, as well as in promoting their interests and the vitality to the economy. He said the TNKK summit was aimed at discussing consumer protection and promote business, emphasizing the smart and proper investment of money. He also mentioned the significance of the activity to ARMM employees who will be affected by the transition to a new Bangsamoro region. Hannadi Mundos, 19, a marketing management student from Notre Dame University who attended the sessions, gave a positive feedback on the activity. Jahara Nginding, 33, an employee of the regions Interior and Local Government department, said the lectures were helpful to her, especially since she is among those who will be affected when the new government becomes operational.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

San Romero

Long before his canonization, he was already being referred to as "San Romero" by people in Latin America. On Sunday, he was finally canonized, and might easily become one of the most popular, but also controversial, saints of our times, especially in Latin America and the Philippines.

I'm referring to Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was killed while saying Mass in a hospital chapel on March 24, 1980. Although no one was ever arrested for his murder, a United Nations-sponsored truth commission concluded, in 1993, that the assassination was carried out by a death squad under the orders of Roberto D'Aubuisson, a military man and, later, politician.

The archbishop was outspoken in defending the rights of the poor. For this, he was considered a communist by the military, by the country's economic elite, and even by members of the Catholic hierarchy.

The road to his canonization was an uphill one, with many within the Catholic Church arguing he was killed not because of his faith, which would make him a martyr, but because of his politics.

There is much for us in the Philippines to learn from this new saint, his life and his times.

Like the Philippines, El Salvador suffered from a feudal system that dated back to the Spanish colonial period, with the Catholic Church itself a landowner and an institution that sided with the rich.

The archbishop was himself a staunch conservative through most of his life, even as El Salvador—as with the rest of Latin America and, across the Pacific, with the Philippines—went through political turbulence. By the 1970s, there were communist-led guerrilla movements throughout the region (and the Philippines).

The rulers responded ruthlessly with arrests, torture, assassinations. Amid all this unrest, Oscar Romero was appointed bishop of an impoverished rural diocese called Santiago de Maria, where he saw firsthand the miserable conditions of the peasants, as well as rampant violations of human rights. He began to speak out against the killings, thus incurring the wrath of the rich and powerful. One time, when he visited a local military commander to protest a massacre, the officer threatened him: "Cassocks are not bulletproof."

Romero continued to be outspoken. Contrary to popular myths, he never subscribed to liberation theology, which had many followers in Latin America and the Philippines. The theology was labeled as leftist, if not Marxist, but he allowed liberation theology-oriented priests and nuns to continue to organize. One time, he listened to the lecture of a local priest who had been accused of being communist by landowners. Asked later about the priest, he replied: "If he's a communist, I'm a Martian."

So, late in life—he was in his 50s—Romero was going through a change of heart, even as the country's violence escalated, culminating with a right-wing junta taking over the country in 1979, supported by the United States.



PINOY KASI
MICHAEL L. TAN

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On the eve of his assassination, Archbishop Romero preached a homily calling on the military "to obey your consciences rather than the orders of sin. In the name of God, therefore, and in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I beg you, I beseech you, I order you in the name of God: Stop the repression."

An estimated 250,000 people turned out for his funeral, during which snipers—there are still debates as to who they were—fired and killed between 30 and 50 people.

Some 75,000 people were killed in the civil war that stretched from 1980 to 1992, when the United Nations was able to broker a peace agreement. The deaths included four American Catholic sisters who visited El Salvador in December 1980 as part of an international humanitarian mission.

We've had our own long, dark nights of impunity in the Philippines—during martial law, and once again today. I wonder at times if perhaps El Salvador has seen more justice. The four Catholic sisters' killers were convicted in 1984 and sentenced to 30 years in prison, and although no one was ever arrested for Archbishop Oscar Romero's murder, El Salvador's president, Mauricio Funes, issued an official apology for the archbishop's murder in 2010.

At the canonization on Sunday, Pope Francis wore the blood-stained rope belt that the archbishop was using when he was assassinated in 1980. In 2015, during the beatification rites for "San Romero," Pope Francis had declared that the archbishop was killed for his faith. This is, thus, an important milestone in the Catholic Church's history, with the recognition that dying in defense of justice is to die for one's faith.

Marawi, one year later

United Nations deputy humanitarian chief Ursula Mueller came to a sobering conclusion after an eventful meeting last week with residents displaced by the Marawi conflict. One year after the end of the war, more help from the international community is desperately needed. "To see is to understand the challenge," said Mueller, who visited the devastated city as part of a three-day humanitarian mission.

The challenges are indeed daunting. "There is a long road ahead" for the over 320,000 people who have returned to Marawi City, said the August 2018 report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Unocha). Marawi folk have to rebuild their lives and regain employment or sustainable livelihoods to put them firmly on the road to recovery. School-age children are especially at risk—"of dropping out of school, recruitment by extremist groups and exposure to increasing poverty," according to the Unocha report.

Basic services in Marawi City are just gradually scaling up a year since the end of the clash. The Unocha report noted that water supply systems and health facilities have yet to be restored to full capacity, and while schools are being repaired, there is simply not enough space for senior high school classes.

The most immediate need for many residents is to be able to go back to their homes, which were practically reduced to rubble following the raging battle that lasted from May to October 2017, far longer than what the government had expected. The clash was among the deadliest in recent memory, with more than 800 militants and 162 government forces killed.

While the guns have gone silent, the government still has a disaster on its hands. Marawi remains a city in utter ruin. The responsibility for its recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and those of other affected localities, was placed with the inter-agency Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), which is chaired by the head of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, with the secretaries of defense and public works as vice chairs.

A full year later, it is just about ready to begin the long-awaited rehabilitation of the most-affected area, kicking off with the debris-clearing of the first 6-hectare area. The groundbreaking was originally scheduled for Oct. 17 but has been moved, again, to Oct. 28 so that President Duterte himself can lead the ceremony.

TFBM chair Eduardo del Rosario had assured the residents in various town hall meetings that the rehabilitation of Marawi is indeed underway, but grumbling continues to be heard over the slow pace of the efforts. Residents are also crying out for more inclusion in the government's rebuilding program. The Kanaw Multi-Sectoral Movement pointed out to Mr. Duterte in a March 30, 2018, statement that "plans have been made without our participation. Plans that neither bear the stamp of our will nor reflect our culture. Plans whose mechanics and implementation are not clear to us. But one thing is clear: The people of Marawi are largely left out. Those who came to present the plan dismissed our comments, recommendations and protestations as though we knew nothing and have no business getting involved in rebuilding our very own city."

TFBM's data indicates some progress. As of September 2018, the number of internally displaced persons is down to 11,949 from 76,284 at the start of the year. Evacuation centers are now 23 from 67, while transitional shelters have reached 1,522 units; a second site is underway, with 1,500 units more to be completed.

TFBM has also started the Kambisita program to define anew land boundaries and ownership, and assess the cost of damaged structures. The Kathanon program is likewise underway, which aims to collect the number, location and status of Marawi evacuees and returnees to help improve the delivery of services and generate better programs and projects for Marawi folk.

But more needs to be done, and done fast. The government has projected that residents will only be able to return by the first half of 2020, when the flattened 250-hectare main battle area has been completely rebuilt. That timetable is unacceptable to many residents, who simply want to be allowed back into their shattered city to be able to resume their lives and rebuild their homes in their old neighborhoods. As young Marawi residents have posted on social media: "Hear me as I speak, listen with pure hearts. I don't need much, we don't need much. I just want to go home. Let me go home."

ED: TCM/ML

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The last reinvention of Gloria

IN recent years, never has there been a major traditional politician who reinvented herself quite so often as Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. A political survivor of the first caliber, she has sunk to the nadir of power but once enjoyed its zenith; and descended to depths of despair... ("Games of thrones," March 22, 2018, *The Manila Times*). But today, she has resurrected and is perched over the most traditional and distrusted political entity, with power to vanquish those that condemned her to years of personal deprivation within the confines of a hospital prison.

In the HBO series "Game of Thrones," there is this character that hews close to her image, Jaqen H'ghar, the Faceless Man of Braavos, with the cunning and magical ability to change appearance at will. GMA could very well be the Jaqen H'ghar of Philippine politics. She shapeshifts at will and in this twilight of her political career — this is her last and third term as congresswoman — she is attempting to fashion another role for herself as the political consort and handmaiden to a president. And along with it is the political restructuring of the country, whether this is good for the country is of no moment — if it benefits the Gloria.

And GMA has a superb sense of timing as the Deegong is so occupied with affairs of the state. The economy has been floundering although the economic managers have been all over themselves assuring the citizenry that it is stable and growing. This is belied by the accelerating street protests. Consider the following national concerns, three of which have a direct impact to the poverty alleviation program of government: runaway inflation and rising prices of staple goods; stagnant wages; and the paucity

of jobs. These issues could very well make or unmake the administration leading towards the midterm elections. If these are not addressed well by then, we will witness the annihilation of the Deegong's chosen candidates, making his presidency a lame duck in his term's second half.

The opposition has been speculating that the bureaucracy and the military have been distracting people from these gut issues by again raising the "communist bugaboo" with the "Red October" plot — that the CPP/NPA is reportedly organizing students and conspiring with the Liberal Party and the Yellow army to ouster the president. As of this writing, we are on the third week of October. The opposition may be right, that the Red October plot is a hoax. On the other hand, the administration and the military can claim victory for having "discovered the plot" and exposed it, preventing its execution.

Parallel developments that reinforce these diversions are the recent moves of the President, effectively co-opting the headlines and the news cycles: the silencing of his critics, Sereno and Trillanes. On the latter, the talk is that the civilian component bungled the amnesty of Trillanes. The military did not look kindly at this which could produce unintended consequences.

On the political front, reports have been persistent that the dominant PDP-Laban is in political limbo with many of its leading lights working out a *modus vivendi* with *Hugpong ng Pagbabago* (HP), and news of Imee Marcos, Pia Cayetano and Cynthia Villar revitalizing the Nacionalista (NP), their "mother party," and abandoning their alliance with the PDP-Laban (*Balita*, Oct. 8, 2018), impacting negatively the



LITO MONICO C. LORENZANA

unbranded senatorial line-up of the administration. This election may signal the fragmentation of dominant parties and the regrouping of old ones, led by the same traditional politicians who may have sensed the vulnerability of the president's own and now circling like vultures over their political carcasses.

While these are going on, GMA managed to get her minions to revive Resolution 9 at the HOR to start the process of amending the Constitution, with or without the cooperation of the Senate. Or, if the Senate were to be involved, both houses will follow the current legislative process with each coming up with their own version and a bicameral conference committee to reconcile the differences.

It proposes a federal system with a presidential government composed of a bicameral body. In a departure from other proposals, the creation of the federal states would now be left solely to Congress. The Centrist Proposals call for negotiations between provinces, municipalities and cities to form federal states based on certain strict criteria.

The whole process of public consultation and constitutional revision will run two years within the term of DU30 still under the overarching provisions of the 1987 Constitution. But the anomalous proposal is a shameless attempt to short-circuit the role of Vice President Robredo, excluding her from the line of succession and putting the Senate President in her instead, should the position of president become vacant during the in-

terim. This supposedly addresses the "...uncertainty in the vice presidency amid the ongoing electoral protest of Bongbong Marcos against the VP..." (*PDI*, Oct. 10, 2018).

The nuances need to be understood here. Firstly, Gloria as the Deegong's handmaiden aided by her cohorts in Congress, no doubt with his imprimatur, will have to ram down the constitutional revisions. With Congress' unconscionable track record, the carving up of the country will be left to political dynasties now populating the chamber. This is unacceptable!

GMA, who now leads these current initiatives, has totally departed from her position articulated by her 50-man Consultative Commission created in 2005 during her presidency, calling for a parliamentary form first before transitioning to a federal system. This is the Centrist Proposals which should have been considered by the committee on constitutional amendments.

These initiatives by Congress have reverberated with dissonance in the Cabinet. The DILG has focused on the three glaring and anomalous positions: "...taking out the vice president from the line of presidential succession; removing term limits for lawmakers during the transition to the proposed federal form of government; and the scrapping of a self-executing anti-political dynasty provision..." (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, Oct. 12, 2018)

But the Senate made sure that there will be no federalism and Charter revisions before midterm elections next year, before GMA steps down. But it is not too late for Gloria to again reinvent herself and put on her last face. With her traditional influence in Congress and in tandem with DU30, they can together work out the much-needed reforms without touching the 1987 Constitution: passing the political party reform act, now pending in both

houses; universal freedom of information bill; and the electoral reforms needed to clean out the dubious election process. *AB*

This last reinvention of Gloria may not exculpate her of her past transgressions but could elevate her reputation as The Reformer. That indeed is something she can leave behind as her legacy.

Those who can, are underground; those who can't, teach or write columns

THAT title of course is a paraphrase of British playwright George Bernard Shaw's aphorism, a rather harmless barb to deflate pompous



RIGOBERTO D. TIGLAO

professors' egos: "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach."

However, in our country since the 1970s it has been a phenomenon that has had terrible and bloody consequences for our people. It partly explains why the Communist Party has been able to recruit idealistic yet naive college students in the universities, and why, as communist leader Jose Ma. Sison wrote, there has been a "flow of continuous successors in the revolutionary movement" from the youth.

An Army general's recent claim that the Communist Party has been recruiting students intensively creates an image of shadowy recruiters infiltrating campuses, luring teenagers to join the New People's Army.

That image is not quite accurate. It is the leftist professors who have long been in the universities who have been preparing students' minds to join the communist revolution, by romanticizing armed rebellion as a legitimate project, and depicting Marxism and even Mao Zedong Thought as ideas that could stand academic rigor.

They don't really tell the students to join the Communist Party or the NPA. They just tell them it's OK or cool to be an activist, to be patriotic and "serve the people." It would be

the full-time cadres in the cells in the universities (called the Party Group), who would actively recruit the radicalized student, first by getting him to join rallies and then visiting guerrilla zones where NPA life is romanticized.

I should know. Many of these university professors had been my former comrades who no longer by choice or circumstance live the hard life in the urban underground, much less fight as guerrillas with the New People's Army. Some have never actually joined the underground, unable to give up their petty-bourgeois lifestyle, and instead enjoy a vicarious life as leftist intellectuals.

Ipil Rehabilitation Center

Take Judy Taguiwalo, whom I can identify since she has chosen to be a public figure when she accepted President Duterte's appointment as secretary of social welfare and development. (She was not confirmed by Congress, however.)

The last time I personally saw her was during a stormy night in November 1974 in the biggest political prison then called the Ipil Rehabilitation Center at Fort Bonifacio. She had crawled, covered with mud, to the quon-

set hut I was detained in, to convince me (unsuccessfully) to join her and her companions in their escape. With 12 other top communist and NPA cadres detained there, she stealthily crept inch by inch to reach the prison's fences, and bolt out.

Taguiwalo of course rejoined the communist insurgency, and I had heard stories of her exploits as one of the boldest NPA "amazon" commanders. She was recaptured in 1984 and released only after EDSA I. After that, she became an academic at UP, getting a doctorate in Philippine Studies, and becoming a professor at the UP College of Social Work and Community Development. The *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, in its usual naivete or ignorance, of course portrayed her as a freedom fighter when she joined Duterte government, saying that she had "spent over three years in various prisons for resisting the Marcos dictatorship."

From her positions in leftist organizations and her published works (*Serve the People, Ang Kasaysayan ng Radikal na Kilusan sa Unibersidad ng Pilipinas* was one), I don't think she ever abandoned Maoism. Do you think she ever denounced the Communist Party to her students? Most likely she even ide-

alized the NPA, of which she was after all a leader, and encouraged them to join the Revolution.

Another case is that of this former top communist leader captured in 1974 and released, who went on to become an instructor in Philippine Studies at UP Diliman for decades. Only when he died did the Communist Party itself issue a long statement that eulogized him as responsible for the growth of the youth and student movement in the 1970s, for reasons that are publicly unknown. Before he was captured, he was number three in the Communist Party hierarchy.

Even if he probably was no longer a party cadre at UP when he became a teacher, do you think he didn't constantly tell his students to "serve the people" and join the NPA?

Martial Law

UP's Vice President for Public Affairs Jose Dalisay quickly condemned the Army's claims that the communists have been actively recruiting in the university, pointing out that these "claims were nothing new, considering the university has had to deal with such accusations for almost 70 years since Martial Law."

That was so intellectually dis-

honest of Dalisay. A renowned writer, few know that Dalisay was first recruited into a leftist organization at the UP, the *Samahang Demokratiko ng Pilipinas* in the 1970s, and then recruited into the party's Cultural Bureau. He was with Taguiwalo (and me) for two years at the Ipil political prison. He should know from his *very own experience* that there is basis for the military's claim.

One episode very clearly demonstrates how even the university's top professors have romanticized the communist movement.

In 2011, the launching of communist leader Sison's biography was held at the UP, attended by a significant number of UP faculty. The book was an unabashed paean to Sison, depicting him as national hero deserving of a place in the same pantheon of national heroes as Rizal and Bonifacio, as is obvious from the book's title, *Jose Maria Sison: A Celebration*.

It was published by Aklat ng Bayan headed by Luis Teodoro, former dean of the UP College of Mass Communication, who I think single-handedly radicalized a generation of media men to be anti-government and pro-communist. Anthologist (who for some strange reason became a National Artist) Bienvenido Lumera in that launching praised Sison to high heavens, saying that "he made the masses the center of his brand of intellectualism."

"The art and culture in Sison's intellectualism have had political content that is being practiced by all believers of national democracy," Lumera said.

I know of several other faculty members at UP who had been leftists or even party cadres in their youth, some of whom even spent years abroad as academic OFWs to earn enough money to build their retirement nest, and then to return home to remain as fans of the communist insurgency.

Bloody useless project

None of them have ever denounced the communist insurgency as a bloody, useless project that cannot by any stretch of imagination win in this day and age.

At the minimum level of support for the communists, they tell their students that there will always be a communist insurgency as long as the country's poor remain poor. They never discuss the point that one reason the country remains poor is because of the threat to security that have discouraged businesses because of the communist insurgency. They never wonder why in all of Southeast Asia, we are the only country with such an insurgency.

What kind of mindset do you think a teenager in angst and seeking meaning in life have, after listening in the classroom to his teachers glorifying the communists and the NPA, telling them they are heroes "serving the people"?

The communists' pedagogic reach has extended beyond the university. Except for this newspaper — which has two columnists with leftist backgrounds in their youth, myself and Mauro Gia Samonte, but who have denounced the Left — all of the country's five broadsheets have leftist columnists who consistently espouse the Communist Party's propaganda line, often disguised as its struggle for "national democracy."

I can name them as they have been public figures of the Left movement. Satur Ocampo, who had once been the political officer for the National Democratic Front and former representative of the Red party-list Bayan Muna writes in the *Philippine Star*. Ironically, two columnists who have spent almost their entire life as leftists are writing for *Business*

World, the paper by, of and, for capitalists. These are Teodoro, publisher of Sison's glowing biography and Carol Araullo, current chairman of Bayan Muna.

The communists claim Duterte is a tyrant. But what other country in the world has communist propagandists writing in mainstream newspapers, and teaching in universities funded by the government?

At least revolutionaries in the mountains risk their lives. But these academics and writers enjoy their comfortable lives in the city, several even having "rest houses" in adjacent provinces. They discuss politics and poetry over wine and cheese, yet continue to prod our youth to kill and die in some godforsaken jungle. All because it is their way of reliving their glorious, rebellious past.

Sison — whom the Philippine and US governments have concluded is a terrorist — has deviously created an entire pedagogic infrastructure defending his communist party and its propaganda.

No wonder this insurgency, which only idiots would believe has any chance of victory in this day and age, continues to survive and pull down the nation.

Restart confidence-building measures with NDF

THE EXILED communist leadership represented by Jose Maria Sison has made one thing clear in *The Manila Times*' two-part exclusive report written by our Chairman Emeritus Dr. Dante A. Ang: despite fiery rhetoric on both sides, the rebel leaders have not closed the door to restarting peace negotiations with the government of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Following his recent interview with Sison in Utrecht, the Netherlands, Dr. Ang reported that a breakthrough could have been achieved in the peace negotiations if not for the moves of the defense and military establishments to end the talks.

If Sison is to be believed, the Cabinet's security cluster had convinced the President that a "military solution" to end the communist insurgency was more viable than talking peace and making political and economic concessions with the rebels.

As a result, President Duterte canceled the resumption of peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front (NDF), the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), which was set on June 28, 2018.

The cancellation was supposed to pave the way for nationwide consultations to engage the "bigger peace table," meaning the public, and elicit more support for the peace process.

Today, four months later, both sides need to get real if they are serious in achieving long and lasting peace.

We have, in fact, not seen any honest-to-goodness nationwide public consultation held by either side of the table; this lends credibility to the NDF's earlier allegation that the announcement of public consultations was just a pretext to put the talks in the freezer.

For the Cabinet security cluster, it should be clear by now that a military solution is not the final solution, no matter what the real size of the Red army is (the military estimates it at between 4,000 and 5,000; Sison did not give a specific number when asked during the interview, but another source quoted him as saying it could be between 9,900 and 13,200, or more than double the size estimated by the military).

It seems the strategy now involves arresting all rebel leaders tapped to become NDF consultants: on Monday, Adelberto Silva, 71, was arrested with four others in Santa Cruz, Laguna. If this strategy really worked, the NPA should have been dismantled when Benito and Wilma Tiamzon, the top rebel leaders in the Philippines, were arrested in 2014.

The theory that Sison told Dr. Ang about the communist cause had a ring of truth to it: "*Kailangan ubusin muna nila ang naghihirap* (eradicate poverty first)," because hungry stomachs and politically marginalized voices continue to fuel the half-century-old rebellion. Sison's thesis is simple, and not novel: address the roots of armed conflict through peace negotiations. Both sides have, in fact, reached a meeting of minds on agrarian reform and rural development, as well as on national industrialization and economic development, and they could have proceeded to social and economic reforms if the talks resumed as scheduled in June.

What was going for the Duterte administration was the introduction of federalism into the mix. Sison and his comrades, as Dr. Ang reports, see a political future under a new system of government. This is another opening that should be exploited.

Sison, however, needs to get real as well. What was left unaddressed in his one-on-one with our chairman emeritus was the egregious ceasefire violations committed by NPA rebels, who had no qualms attacking military and police outposts and killing uniformed men in the middle of the peace talks. These bloody attacks had forced Duterte's hand and drained trust levels on both sides.

The talks cannot be expected to resume posthaste given the stalemate. At this point, both sides should launch into confidence-building measures, tone down or avoid heated rhetoric, and eventually reopen the backchannels.

What needs to happen is for both sides to meet in the middle before any hardening of extreme positions becomes permanent.

Seriously funny

Coming off a bad script, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is offering a new one. But it's not a better version of the old one and it's not exactly new, either.

The supposed Red October plot flopped. Or it allegedly did. That's what the AFP now wants to project even though the plan's supposed participants know it was a failure from the start. There could not have been a Red October at all, unless the AFP will declassify supposed documents to prove there was a plan to oust President Rodrigo Duterte, indeed.

The original plan that is, in which the AFP had branded the political opposition as the leading figures in the supposed plot in connivance with the communists.

The AFP's mistake was that it grew soft on its earlier projection of the political opposition leading the Duterte ouster plot. Then it singled out the communists and that's where bad penmanship messed up everything.

Not too many bought the Red October stretch. The AFP did not look good on its claim, really. What made it worse was the Philippine National Police's (PNP) initially feigning diffidence in following the AFP line.

All the PNP promised was to hold a dialogue with college and university officials after the AFP furthered its claim of the schools being breeding grounds of communists and ergo recruitment pools for the Red October.

It was fun watching the PNP hesitate whether to take up the AFP line or not. But they just grew wilder and wilder every day, until that time last week, when it finally said the Red October was over, just days before the month crossed its second week.

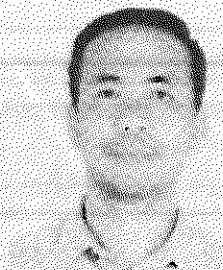
PNP officials could have heaved sighs of relief.

But wait! The AFP seems not done yet.

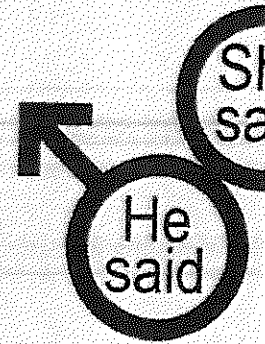
Because it claimed Red October was a "rolling plan," meaning it is a continuing plot, the AFP is now saying the ouster move is still alive and well into December, becoming longer than the Filipinos' celebration of the holidays and "grandiose" -- using the AFP's own description of the alleged communist plot in celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) golden anniversary on 26 December.

The story seems coming from an old fart. But no, it was delivered by the new breed of officers who rose from the post-Edsa bunch of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduates who have not seen the height of the Maoist insurgency but are

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It is also no secret that the NPA will be busy talking with politicians crossing what it deems as its "liberated areas" to raise funds.



Aldrin Cardona



keeping the old anti-communist fire.

The arrest and imprisonment of former Army Gen. Jovito Palparan did not seem to have given many of them a warning against an extreme right projection, especially after the Left movement had waned since 1986 after receiving intense pressure from government but also mainly due to the Left's own mistakes.

If it was a justification of its destabilization claim, the AFP kept silent on the fact that the communist movement's real aim is not only to bring down government but destroy the capitalist system to what it deems as just, classless society. Communies everywhere want that.

The AFP had also failed to consider that the mid-term elections are to happen soon. In two months, national and local candidates are to hit the streets and our homes to campaign and provide us with a show. Filipinos seem to enjoy watching.

Add to the fact that the campaign period would be an extension of the Christmas season, when each and everyone will be merry and gay, not even the most hardcore of destabilizers will be able to gain support from the masses the AFP seems wanting to spook.

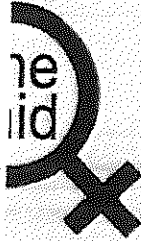
It is also no secret that the CPP's arm, the New People's Army, will be busy talking with politicians crossing what it deems as its "liberated areas" to raise funds, this will be an opportunity for the communists and their armies to regroup and stock up on food, arms and money.

It would be stupid for them to "surround the city and claim the seat of power" during a Christmas season when everyone will not care to do anything more than go shop, spend and enjoy.

This premise could be shallow but it could equal a destabilization plot complete with Christmas trees, mistletoes and a soundtrack probably coming from a Jose Mari Chan album.

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Red, white and blue



Dinah S. Ventura

It's still October, but the Reds' plan seems to have fizzled out. That is what the military claimed has happened, simply because they had gone right out and bared the dastardly plot.

It must be true because at about this time (again, if military intelligence was right), "intensive orchestrated nationwide moves," or something to that effect, should have been happening already.

Instead, we have the same old dastardly problems hounding us on a daily basis, like traffic, increasingly bad roads and a general feeling of malaise, especially now that the prospect of becoming a billionaire is gone for the millions of Pinoys who kept betting on the Ultra Lotto these past weeks. Betting on a dream, that's what they were doing.

But back to that Red October plan, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) called it a "fairytale" – something that the military dreamed up.

Fiction, pure and simple, but what is worrying, the leftists allege that it is something the military is using to wreak "more" abuse in the guise of the law.

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The
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What's more, the CPP leadership has come out with taunting comments against Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, who they say made himself look "stupid by claiming that the AFP had successfully foiled 'Red October.'" The communists still insist it was invented by the military.

In any case, the military is keeping on its toes, warning the public that it's not over yet.

They are relating this to when the communist rebels mark the 50th anniversary of the CPP. For this event, the communists want something remarkable to happen, the military is saying.

What this "something" could be, the military brass has jokingly named "White December." And this, of course, brought on the scoffs and snorts anew.

Short of saying, "We are on to you," the armed forces are simply going on with their anti-terrorist programs and one more thing that it has warned the public about is the supposed recruitment of students from 18 universities and colleges in Metro Manila to be part of the ouster plot.

Military officials affirmed that the recruitment had been going on and, to prove their point, cited the killing or capture of students following clashes with government troops.

This, according to a news report, was the capture recently of "four female suspected rebels allegedly involved in indoctrination and recruitment, including a student of Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Nueva Ecija province."

Again, the CPP denied this.

I suppose the AFP and CPP can throw accusations and allegations at each other till they are blue in the face, but we, the hapless public watching this never-ending pingpong match, may never get past the fact that with the rising costs of food and other prices, we could end up with a blue Christmas. And that will make people see red for sure.

ONLINE NEWS

17 OCTOBER 2018

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ACTIVATED | AFP forms Joint Task Force Katagalugan

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

CAMP GEN MATEO CAPINPIN, Tanay, Rizal (DWDD) – Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez Jr. led the formal activation of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Katagalugan in a simple ceremony last 13 October 2018, at the Headquarters of the 2nd Infantry “Jungle Fighter” Division (2ID) at Camp General Mateo Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

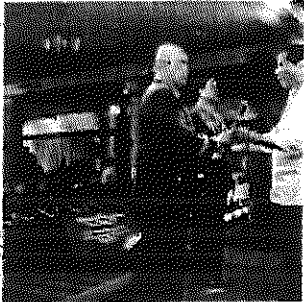
According to Major General Rhoderick Parayno, 2ID commander and head of JTF-Katagalugan, the newly activated JTF will facilitate the smooth coordination of the Air Force, Navy, and Army units in Southern Luzon to hasten accomplishment of desired objectives.

The JTF-Katagalugan will also help address various threats including insurgency, terrorism, criminality, and natural disasters in Regions 4A and 4B (except Palawan).



CHANGE OF COMMAND | PH Army has new Commanding General

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)



FORT ANDRES BONIFACIO, Metro-Manila (DWDD) – The new Commanding General, Major General Macairog S. Alberto, formally assumed command of the Philippine Army in a simple Change of Command and Retirement Ceremony at Fort Andres Bonifacio, Taguig City.

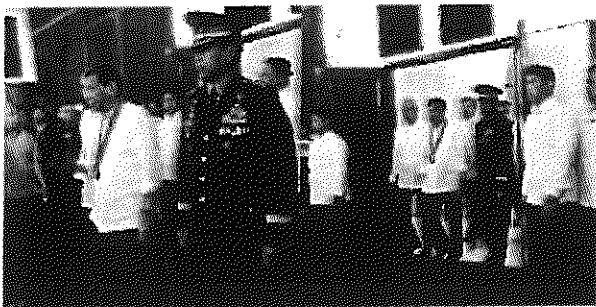
Major General Alberto who was the Chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (J-2) replaced Lieutenant General Rolando Joselito D. Bautista who just bowed out from the military service upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56

The new Commanding General is a member of PMA "Sinagtala" class of 1986. He is the 60th Commanding General of the Philippine Army. He is also a bemedalled officer who had spent most of his career serving as part of the Special Operations Forces and in the field of intelligence.

With the current trend in the Philippine security environment, Major General Alberto said, *"I will endeavor to make the Philippine Army a more agile force, one that is prepared and able to meet current and emerging threats."*

The new Army Chief is yet to discuss his command thrust. However, during the assumption ceremony he expressed his commitment to develop the Army capabilities, organize and train soldiers both in active and reserve units, and look after the moral and welfare of the troops.

Moreover, with the Philippine Army gaining its momentum in its Army Transformation Roadmap, Major General Alberto expressed that he will continue to sustain the implementation of its ATR initiatives in order to meet its vision to be a world-class Army by 2028.



DONNING OF RANKS | Mech Inf Div dons ranks to 16 Armor Officers

Posted by [Alvin Santiago](#)

CAMP O'DONNELL, Capas, Tarlac (DWDD) – The Mechanized Infantry Division, Philippine Army conducted donning of ranks to the sixteen (16) newly promoted Major of this unit held at Mechanized Division conference room.

Brigadier General Bismarck D Soliba AFP, Assistant Division Commander, led the donning of ranks to the newly promoted officers and witnessed by the officers, key Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) and Civilian Employees of the command.

Cpt Reyanldo C Valencia of TAS, Cpt Emmanuelle S Adriano of DPAO, Cpt Aristotle G Sumajit of 3Mech Bn, Cpt Leo M Mirador of GSMO, Cpt Rommel M Montemayor of OIG, Cpt Joel R Aclan of AABn, Cpt Donny Val C Gamao of OG3, Cpt Raymund V Velasco of OSGS, Cpt Debbie S Iglesia of GADO, Cpt Marlon R Maggay of OG8, Cpt Reymund M Cueva of OG7, Cpt Irben G Rimando of AABn, Cpt Edgel E De Vera of ACDO, Cpt Ernan C Capulong of 1LACT, Cpt Richard B Sacpa of 3Mech Bn and Cpt Mae Cairene B Arabening of OG1 were promoted to the rank of Major.

BGen Soliba in his message congratulates the newly promoted officers for their well-deserved promotion.

Congratulations, Mandirigmang Armor Mech Division.



www.pna.gov.ph

New PA chief eyes programs to boost troop morale

By Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – Living up to his reputation of giving premium to the welfare of troops, newly-appointed Philippine Army (PA) Chief, Major Gen. Macairog S. Alberto, vowed to institute programs that would boost the morale of soldiers.

"I will also look after the morale and welfare of our troops by supporting our soldiers' family program, and improving the way we care for our wounded soldiers and surviving family members," Alberto said in his assumption speech on Monday.

He vowed to enhance the leadership development of all officers and non-commissioned officers to better prepare them for positions of higher responsibility.

"I will continue to pursue capability developments focusing on improving in the areas of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities," Alberto added.

"I will endeavor to make the Philippine Army a more agile force, one that is prepared and able to meet current and emerging threats," he added.

He also expressed commitment to develop the Army capabilities, organize and train soldiers both in active and reserve units, and look after the morale and welfare of the troops.

Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva, PA spokesperson, earlier said Alberto is a well-rounded officer and highly respected leader and commander, having distinguished himself in the field of combat, intelligence, and civil military operations.

He added that the new PA chief is known for his dedication, a "silent worker" yet a "passionate performer."

"He always puts his heart in every mission that needs to be accomplished. He is kind-hearted, cool, and always gives premium on the welfare of his men," Villanueva added.

Alberto, a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1986, replaced Bautista, a member of PMA Class of 1985, who formally retired Monday.

Bautista was earlier named by President Rodrigo Duterte to head the Department of Social Welfare and Development. (PNA)

www.pna.gov.ph

New Army chief vows to continue reforms

By Priam Nepomuceno

MANILA – Efforts to transform the Philippine Army into a first-class military will continue, newly-appointed PA chief Major Gen. Macairog S. Alberto said Monday.

Alberto made the promise during his assumption-of-command ceremonies at PA headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

This will be done by continuing the implementation of the Army Transformation Roadmap (ATR) initiatives which seeks to turn PA into a world-class Army by 2028.

"Moreover, with the PA gaining its momentum in its Army Transformation Roadmap, Major General Alberto expressed that he will continue to sustain the implementation of its ATR initiatives in order to meet its vision to be a world-class Army by 2028," Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Louie Villanueva said in a statement Monday.

Alberto said he will try to transform the 98,000-strong PA into a force capable of meeting current and emerging threats.

"I will endeavor to make the Philippine Army a more agile force, one that is prepared and able to meet current and emerging threats," he added.

The new PA chief also expressed commitment to develop Army capabilities, organize and train soldiers both in active and reserve units, and look after the moral and welfare of the troops.

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Alberto, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1986, replaced Bautista, a member of PMA Class 1985, who formally retired Monday after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Bautista was earlier named by President Rodrigo Duterte to head the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Villanueva said Alberto is a graduate of various courses both local and abroad.

"Significant is the Scout Ranger Course, Strategic Intel Course, Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program and Master of Arts (Strategic Studies) from (the) National Defense University, USA. He also hold masters in Public Management Major in Development and Security from (the) Development Academy of the Philippines," he added.

Alberto also served as commanding officer of the 2nd and 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion, Task Force Davao head prior his designation as 1001st Infantry Brigade head, a unit of the 10th Infantry Division in Mindanao before appointment as head of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"He is also a recipient of various awards and decors, to name a few, Military Commendation Medal, Military Merit Medal, Bronze Cross Medal, UN Service Medal/Ribbon, Silver Wing Medal, Gold Cross Medal and Distinguished Service Medal," Villanueva added. **(PNA)**