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NEWS CLIPPINGS

13 September 2018

Thursday



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Ompong may be worse than Ondoy - Pagasa

*Heavier rains,
stronger storm
surge expected*

By HELEN FLORES

Super typhoon Ompong barreled toward Eastern Luzon yesterday, with the state weather bureau warning residents to brace for possible devastating storm surges of up to six meters high or about 19.6 feet and rains heavier than that brought by Ondoy.

The predicted storm surge from Ompong (international name Mangkhut), described by meteorologists as the strongest cyclone to hit the country this year, is worse than that spawned by Super Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in November 2013 that killed thousands in Eastern Visayas.

Vicente Malano, administrator of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), said Ompong may generate storm

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Ompong

From Page 1

surges of at least six meters high along Cagayan and the eastern and northern coastal areas, including Aparri.

In November 2013, Yolanda brought five-meter high storm surges in the eastern coastline of Leyte and Samar, such as Tacloban, leaving widespread destruction and loss of lives.

Malano said they would provide the public "more precise" storm surge advisory every six hours once the typhoon is already close to landmass.

Ompong, which has been categorized as a super typhoon by the US Joint Typhoon Warning Center as early as Tuesday, entered the Philippine area of responsibility at around 3 p.m. yesterday.

It is forecast to make landfall over Cagayan on Saturday.

PAGASA advised residents in many parts of Luzon to seek safer grounds as Ompong is expected to lash the region with heavy rains and powerful winds beginning tomorrow.

PAGASA, however, maintained its typhoon category for Ompong, which packed maximum sustained winds of 205 kilometers per hour (kph) as of 5 p.m. yesterday.

PAGASA classifies a cyclone with 220 kph and above maximum sustained winds as a super typhoon.

Malano said there is still a possibility that Ompong will reach the super typhoon category.

Ompong was forecast to bring damaging winds and torrential rains in many areas in Northern and Central Luzon.

"Ompong's winds could uproot many trees and topple electric posts. We urge the public to evacuate to safer grounds and to coordinate with their local government officials," Rene Paciente, assistant weather services chief of the PAGASA's weather division, said.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the eye of Ompong was spotted at 1,145 kilometers east of Virac, Catanduanes.

Ompong packed maximum sustained winds of 205 kilometers near the center and gusts of up to 255 kph.

The typhoon slowed down from 30 kph on Tuesday to 20 kph yesterday.

Ompong was expected to slightly change its track from west to west northwest in the next hours as the high-pressure area north of it moves, according to PAGASA weather forecaster Gener Quitlong.

Lead time

PAGASA raised tropical cyclone warning signal no. 1 over Catanduanes as of 5 p.m. yesterday.

The province will experience occasional rains and gusty winds from Ompong's outer periphery.

Areas under signal no. 1 can expect winds

of up to 60 kph within 36 hours.

"When we raise signal number 1, it doesn't mean that they could already feel the effect of the typhoon. The warning gives (residents) a 36-hour lead time. They have to evacuate by (tomorrow)," Quitlong said.

Signal no. 1 is also expected to raise over the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Aurora, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur this morning.

The trough or extension of Ompong and the southwest monsoon was already dumping rains over Palawan, Bicol region, the Visayas and Mindanao yesterday.

Heavy rains and strong winds, however, are expected over Northern Luzon and parts of Central Luzon by tomorrow due to the cyclone's outer periphery.

The typhoon is also expected to enhance the southwest monsoon, which will bring rains over Palawan, Mindoro provinces and Western Visayas by tomorrow and Saturday.

Quitlong said moderate to heavy to at times torrential rains are expected over Southern Luzon, including Metro Manila, by tomorrow due to the combined effect of the southwest monsoon and the outer cloud band of Ompong.

Paciente said signal 1 may be raised over Metro Manila as it is also expected to experience gusty winds from Ompong.

Ondoy-like rains

Malano said the rains to be dumped by Ompong and the southwest monsoon could surpass the rains brought by Tropical Storm Ondoy in 2009.

"If there's southwest monsoon plus the rains

from the typhoon, we could experience the volume of rain brought by Ondoy or even surpass it," Malano said.

Malano said Ompong is expected to weaken once it slams into the Sierra Madre, the longest mountain range in the country.

Palace monitoring

President Duterte will be monitoring the developments and the impact of Ompong.

As part of precautionary measures, Malacañang has postponed

Duterte's trip for the test firing of Spoke Extended Range of BRP *Davao del Sur* (LD602) in Lamao Point in Limay, Bataan this afternoon.

"Due to (Ompong), we were advised that the Bataan event is cancelled," Malacañang said in its media advisory.

Special Assistant to the President Christopher Go said the President will be in Manila in the next days to monitor the impact of the weather disturbance.

"He might go to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC)," Go said on the sidelines of the awarding of certificates and incentives to the medalists in the 18th Asian Games, presided over by Duterte at Malacañang yesterday.

Go said the President's schedule is "fluid" in the next few days, depending on the weather and the advice of his security team.

Earlier in the day, presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. advised the public to be updated on the weather and alert issuances of PAGASA and NDRRMC.

The NDRRMC is ready to release funds, food packs and relief assistance to affected families through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

"As I speak, there is an ongoing pre-disaster risk assess-

ment meeting now to ensure the orchestrated response of the government to (Ompong)," Roque said.

NDRRMC executive director and Office of Civil Defense administrator Ricard Jalad said the Operations Center is currently on red alert and the Response Cluster has been activated.

The NDRRMC is closely monitoring Ompong with the regional councils to ensure orchestrated response by the government.

On the other hand, DSWD has ensured the prepositioning of food and non-food items on the ground and is preparing for possible augmentation of relief supplies for affected communities.

LGU response

As Ompong is barreling down on the north, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered governors, mayors and other local executives to ensure immediate government response or face sanctions.

DILG officer-in-charge Eduardo Año said local chief executives should be physically present in their respective local government units (LGUs) during the onslaught of Ompong.

"Those who fail to show up and remain absent when Ompong rakes through the country will be sanctioned by the department," he warned.

As this developed, the Batanes Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council is in the thick of preparations to avert any disaster that the super typhoon may bring, while the National Food Authority has prepositioned emergency stocks in the island-municipalities of Sabtang and Itbayat.

Several LGUs have suspended work and classes this week in anticipation of the impact of Ompong, including the Ilocos region; Albay; Masantol, Pampanga; Dolores, Abra; Apayao; Apalit, Pampanga; Dagupan City and Isabela, Cagayan.

In Bulacan, at least 300 cubic meters per second of water was released at Bustos Dam yesterday afternoon.

Full alert

The PNP today placed all its forces in Luzon on full alert as part of its preparations for the effects of Ompong.

The highest alert status will take effect at 6 a.m., PNP chief Director General Oscar Albayalde said at a news briefing yesterday.

It means vacation leaves of police officers are cancelled to ensure the availability of all personnel and resources for disaster response operations.

"Resources and personnel from these operational support and maneuver units with disaster response capability are directed to preposition within closest and safest proximity to threatened and high-risk areas along coastlines, riverbanks and geo-hazard zones for rapid deployment in the event of contingency," he said.

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport terminals/aerodrome will be closed if Ompong packs 35 knot-crosswinds, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) general manager Ed Monreal said yesterday afternoon after meeting with the Airline Operators Council at the MIAA board room. - With Christina Mendez, Jaime Laude, Cecille Suerte-Felipe, Janvic Mateo, Jack Castaño, Eva Visperas, Cesar Ramirez, Raymund Catindig, Emmanuel Tupas, Edu Punay, Rudy Santos, Ramon Efrén Lazaro

TYPHOON TAKES AIM AT NORTHERN LUZON

STORY BY MELVIN GASCON, JEANNETTE LANDRADE AND INQUIRER BUREAU

'Ompong' has gained strength and its diameter has widened to 900 km as it nears the country. It is expected to make landfall either in Cagayan or Batanes on Saturday, but will bring stormy weather to most of Luzon as early as Friday. **A10**

FROM A1

By Melvin Gascon,
Jeannette I. Andrade
and Inquirer Bureau
@Team_Inquirer

Typhoon "Ompong" further intensified as it entered the Philippine area of responsibility on Wednesday afternoon, growing in diameter from 600 kilometers on Tuesday to 900 km and prompting more areas to take precautionary measures.

"There is still a possibility that it will reach the super-typhoon (category)," said Vicente Molano, administrator of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Packing sustained winds of 205 kilometers per hour and gusts of 255 kph on Wednesday, "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) is forecast to strengthen to 220 kph on Thursday, enabling the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration to categorize it as a super-typhoon.

At 4 p.m. on Wednesday, the typhoon was tracked at 1,145 km east of Virac, Catanduanes province, moving westward at 20 kph.

Landfall

Ompong is expected to make landfall in northern Cagayan province or the Batanes group of islands on Saturday, but it will bring stormy weather to most of Luzon as early as Friday, according to weather specialist Gener Quitlong.

Pagasa raised Storm Signal No. 1 in Catanduanes on Wednesday afternoon and in southern Luzon on Thursday.

Forecasters warned residents in the coastal villages along the eastern seaboard of Luzon to brace for storm surges of up to 6 meters.

The dangers posed by Ompong have prompted the authorities, schools and residents to take a number of measures.

- Early harvest of rice in Cagayan Valley

- Preemptive evacuation by Thursday of those in areas prone to floods and landslides, and those near rivers and coasts

- Postponement of the University of the Philippines College Admission Test scheduled for Saturday and Sunday

- Suspension of classes in Ilocos towns and cities, including Dagupan City, for Thursday and Friday. Also suspended are

- classes in all elementary and high schools in Lapu-Lapu City on Wednesday and in preschool, elementary and high school in Albay province on Thursday.

• Cancellation of the trip of 301 Davao City delegates to the Batang Pinoy (Philippine Youth Games) in Baguio City. The opening of the games was moved from Sept. 16 to Sept. 17.

• Cancellation of sea trips in Cebu on Sept. 13

Strong winds, heavy rain

The outer bands of Ompong could extend to Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon, bringing strong winds and heavy rain, according to Pagasa.

Other parts of Luzon and portions of the Visayas and Mindanao will experience rain brought by the induced monsoon.

Among regions where preparations have begun are Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol and Caraga.

Renato Solidum, undersecretary for disaster risk reduction and climate, urged residents in areas lying along the projected path of Ompong to take safety precautions.

"We reiterate that we expect strong winds, heavy rains, severe flooding and landslides with this typhoon," Solidum said.

"We ask our people in vulnerable areas to check out possible evacuation sites, and get set to flee from their homes whenever necessary," he added.

He also warned residents living on mountain slopes of the risks of landslides.

Three waves of response

At a press briefing on Wednesday, Executive Director Ricardo Jalad of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDR-RMC) said the council had crafted three waves of response.

Damage to crops

The first wave of responders will come from local governments and the second wave from the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO).

The third wave involves the DRRMO in areas outside the affected areas and the national agency.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said Cordillera, Ilocos and Cagayan Valley could suffer up to P7 billion in agricultural damage.

Piñol said on his Facebook page that his office was expecting about 1.2 million hectares of rice and corn farms to be devastated.

Rice and corn losses may amount to P3.3 billion and P4.2 billion, respectively, since these crops were mostly ready for harvest, he said.

Early harvest

In Isabela province, Romulo Caspe said he quickly harvested his palay produce in Barangay San Antonio as a precaution.

At the farming village of Bungcag in Dingras town, Ilocos Norte, Jude Valencia and his nephew, Lyndon Madrid, plucked green papayas so they could sell these in the market for P15 a kilogram.

Valencia said he feared that his 500 papaya trees may not withstand Ompong. His solution was to peel off the leaves to help the trees recover once Ompong barreled out of the country.

Sierra Madre

"One optimistic thing about this typhoon is that it may be weakened once it hits the Sierra Madre mountain range (in Isabela), which usually serves as a natural barrier," Pagasa's Molano said in a press briefing.

"Also, the seabed along the coastal areas in Cagayan and Isabela is relatively deep, which could help minimize the occurrence of storm surges," he added.

In Ilocos Norte, Gov. Imee Marcos asked volunteers to prepare more food packs, medicines and other supplies sufficient.

In Bicol region, the Office of Civil Defense advised local disaster councils to prepare and activate their operation centers.

—WITH REPORTS FROM LEILANIE ADRIANO, VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., GABRIEL CARDINOZA, VALERIE DAMIAN, CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE, MAR S. ARGUELLES, FRINSTON LIM, MATTHEW REYSIO-CRUZ, JAYMEE GAMIL AND KARLO CAMPO INQ

INQUIRER

China FM visits next week for joint exploration talks

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit Manila next week to discuss a framework agreement with the Philippines for joint oil and natural gas explorations in the West Philippine Sea. The Department of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday said Wang's visit from Sept. 16 to 18 would "continue discussions on oil and gas cooperation, with [a] view [to drawing] up a framework for cooperation that conforms to respective rules and regulations and international laws." Foreign Secretary Alan Cayetano visited

Beijing for the third time less than three weeks ago to push the agreement. To assuage critics, Cayetano said the joint exploration would comply with the country's constitutional requirements. —DINA

Chinese envoy visits PH to discuss WPS joint exploration

By Vito Barcelo

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi will visit the Philippines next week to discuss infrastructure projects, as well as joint oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea, the Department of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday.

Wang, who is also a Chinese state councilor, will visit the country on the invitation of Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano.

The two officials will discuss the framework on the possible projects which is expected to conform to domestic rules and regulations and international laws as both sides had stated in the past.

In a statement, the DFA said Wang will visit the country on Sept. 16 to 18 which is aimed at further building on the increasingly strong foundation of friendship between the Philippines and China.

"With continued dialogue and consultation anchored on mutual trust and respect, and the resolute pursuit of mutually beneficial practical cooperation, Philippines and China will continue to work together in managing differences and addressing issues pertaining to the West Philippine Sea or South China Sea," the DFA statement said.

Wang visited the Philippines in July 2017, where both the Chinese official and Cayetano signed a memorandum of understanding on strengthening cooperation.

In that meeting, Wang said that the China-Philippines continuing relations have "dispelled the dark clouds and embraced splendid and bright prospects again under the joint efforts of both sides" since President Rodrigo Duterte has assumed office, with bilateral political mutual trust being constantly enhanced and cooperation in various fields being advanced in an orderly manner.

The Philippines is a close neighbor of China separated by only a narrow strip of water and a regional major country with significant influence.

Wang said that China is willing to see the Philippines achieve national stability and economic development and play a more important role in regional affairs.

"It is hoped that both sides will earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, continue to properly handle sensitive issues, and create a favorable environment for the sustained and stable development of bilateral relations," Wang said. AB

Beijing's foreign minister visiting Manila

By Mario Mallari

Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano will host this week his Chinese counterpart, Foreign Minister Wang Yi, for a three-day official visit to Manila where they are expected to follow up on the initial discussion on possible joint oil and gas exploration in the disputed West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Philippines and China will continue to work together in managing differences.

In a statement, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) yesterday announced that Wang will be in Manila 16 to 18 September upon the invitation of Cayetano.

Wang's visit comes after last month's top-level meeting between Chinese officials and the Philippine economic managers in Beijing.

Cayetano said the upcoming visit affirms the closer bilateral relations between Manila and Beijing since President Duterte assumed office.

"State Councilor Wang's visit is a demonstration that our bilateral ties are becoming solid and steady

as never before," said Cayetano.

"The Philippines and China are both committed to continue on the path of cooperation, all the while ensuring that the Filipino and the Chinese peoples will reap the dividends of our mutual efforts," he added.

Expected to be part of the agenda in the Cayetano-Wang meeting is the continuation of discussions on oil and gas cooperation between Manila and Beijing to come up with a framework of cooperation that conforms to respective laws of both countries and international laws as well.

Cayetano said the visit will likewise provide both sides an opportunity to take stock of infrastructure projects under the Philippine government's flagship "Build, Build, Build" program.

He said that with continued dialogue and consultation anchored on mutual trust and respect as well as the resolute pursuit of mutually beneficial practical cooperation, Philippines and China will continue to work together in managing differences and addressing issues pertaining to the WPS.

ALBAYALDE: WESTMINDANAO DENY LOYALTY CHECKS

Zamboanga City — The military and police here have denied reports that local commanders are conducting loyalty checks among their subordinates following President Duterte's disclosure of a plot to oust him, in an interview on Tuesday night at Camp Abandan in Barangay Mercedes here. Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Albayalde reiterated that the 190,000-strong police force stayed loyal "to the President, to the Constitution and to the Filipino people." There is "no such thing as a loyalty check in the PNP," he said. Army Col. Gerry Kessans, the public affairs chief of the Western Mindanao Command, also said the military was so "focused on our mission to thwart threats from armed groups to entertain thoughts of conducting loyalty checks." — **JULIE ALPALA AND MART SANSALUD**

Duterte: No regrets being president

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – Facing alleged threats of ouster and destabilization plots, President Duterte said he has no regrets being the country's Chief Executive.

In fact, according to Duterte, his remaining three years in office is too short to fulfill his campaign promise to eradicate illegal drugs and corruption.

"Three years left is too short. I like to start again where I left off to finish this job," Duterte said during his televised one-on-one with his chief legal counsel Salvador Panelo on Tuesday.

"And of course, the scourge of drugs – I promised the people that I would finish this. Believe me, I will really put an end to this," he said.

Duterte was a reluctant
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Duterte

From Page 1

candidate in the May 2016 presidential elections. Even without campaign machinery, he won the presidency on his campaign promises of strong leadership to bring peace and order and security for Filipinos.

Duterte stressed he could not renege on his campaign promises.

As much as possible, Duterte said he would do his best for Filipinos for the next three years before stepping down in 2022.

If there were certain things

that the presidency deprived him, Duterte said it is the time that he would have wanted to do things freely on his own.

Duterte said the Presidential Security Group (PSG) has been strict in the security arrangements wherever he is.

He said he could not even do the things he usually did before, like strolling in malls without throngs of people milling around him.

If there is one thing the President also delights in while in office, it's the chance to meet the thousands of Filipino migrant workers on his trips abroad.

Duterte said after more than two years in office he had some misgivings.

He cited in particular the refusal of lawmakers to grant him emergency powers to solve the traffic problem in Metro Manila and other urban areas. – With Jaime Laude, Roel Pareño, Michael Punongbayan, Artemio Dumlaog, AP

Trillanes calls Rody 'obsessed and insecure'

By PAOLO ROMERO and HELEN FLORES

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV described President Duterte yesterday as "obsessed" with him and "insecure" for devoting much of his time hitting him rather than focusing on problems of the country during a one-on-one with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo on Tuesday.

Trillanes also warned Duterte against dragging the senator's ailing mother into their fight.

Vice President Leni Robredo and some senators also said the televised interview was a "lost opportunity" for Duterte and that they were disappointed because it should have been used to address the urgent concerns of the people, including high prices.

Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano, who was also part of the group of soldiers who staged uprisings against the Arroyo government like Trillanes, urged Duterte to put his quarrel with the opposition senator behind him and attend to the nation's problems.

Trillanes called Duterte names after the President called him corrupt and that his mother was a supplier for the Navy, where he used to serve as lieutenant.

The senator noted that during the 90-minute-long interview, Duterte mentioned his name "more than a hundred times."

"Maybe he's obsessed with

me. Maybe he has dreams of me when he sleeps - that's good, I hope you have nightmares because of me because I will not go away," Trillanes told reporters.

He said Duterte always talks like someone who just came from a drinking spree.

Trillanes also thinks Duterte was insecure with him as he appears to be "competing against me" for the loyalty of the Armed Forces (of the Philippines or AFP) and the police when he keeps enumerating his initiatives to modernize the military and help soldiers.

"There should be no competition. He is the commander-in-chief of the AFP, I'm a senator. I help whenever I can - not only soldiers and the police - to everyone. He should be like that too," Trillanes said.

He said he believes members of the AFP and the police remain loyal to the chain of command and the Constitution "so I don't know where this insecurity is coming from."

The senator also denied Duterte's allegations that he and the Magdalo group were plotting with communist rebels to oust him.

He said he and members of the Magdalo became law abiding citizens and upheld the Constitution when he and some of his colleagues were elected to Congress.

Low blow

Trillanes warned Duterte not to drag again his 84-year-old mother, who he said is afflicted with advanced Parkinson's dis-

ease into their fight.

"I think everyone saw how low that blow was. If you have a problem with me, stick with me. I can face that. But dragging my mother, that's personal already. Don't go there. That's not the work of a real man," he said in mixed Filipino and English.

He did not deny that his mother was a private supplier to the Navy while his father and namesake - who retired in 1988 - was naval captain. He was in high school at the time.

"There was no case (against my mother) and there was no impropriety. That's what's important," the senator said.

Waste of time

For her part, Robredo said, "We expect (Duterte) would face the people to say that 'we really have a problem, and here are the solutions of the government.'"

"This is not the time to focus on politics. This is the time to fix the country's economic problem," Robredo said.

Some senators were also not impressed with the tete-a-tete.

Sen. Grace Poe said while it "is also important that we know his (Duterte's) sentiments... we also want to know more about his concrete plans for the problems we are facing - not just the abolition of the NFA (National Food Authority) Council or importing rice - but something more detailed."

"But maybe that will come in the future," Poe said.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros described the event as "a com-

plete disappointment" and a "total waste of time and precious government resources."

She said the measures that Duterte offered to address the country's twin rice and inflation crises "were vague and lost in his stories of destabilization plots."

"President Duterte should snap out of his fantasy with destabilization plots, roll up his sleeves and start working. Strong economic policies, not wild conspiracy theories, will address the country's rice crisis and untamed inflation," she said.

Sereno visits Trillanes

Former chief justice Maria Lourdes Sereno warned that Duterte's move to revoke the amnesty granted to Trillanes without consulting the AFP was "divisive and dangerous."

She said Duterte's televised interview also did not at all help in reducing tensions nor in providing the AFP the opportunity to study the questioned Proclamation No. 572 first before being ordered to arrest Trillanes.

The proclamation revoked Trillanes' amnesty for allegedly being void. Trillanes denied this and went to the Supreme Court, which said the issue should be heard before the lower courts that tried the senator's cases.

"What the President did (issuing proclamation) by not consulting the military is very dangerous, in other words, he put the AFP in jeopardy,"

Sereno told reporters after visiting Trillanes in his office.

She said the proclamation raised the idea that all amnesties granted in the past to all soldiers can be revoked anytime.

She cited the case of Armed

Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez, who was granted amnesty after taking part in the 1989 coup attempt against then president Corazon Aquino, and Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

— With Jess Diaz

Duterte has put military in a predicament - Sereno

By Leila B. Salaverria @LeilasINO

President Duterte created a dangerous precedent and put the military in a predicament when he voided the amnesty given to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV as a military rebel years ago, as his move opened to invalidation the amnesty grants to many active soldiers, former Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno said on Wednesday.

One of those amnestied soldiers is Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Sereno said.

Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security, could also lose his amnesty, she said.

Both Galvez and Honasan were granted amnesty for their roles in past military mutinies, and Sereno said their pardon could be voided by a new administration.

Potential risk

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said it was possible Mr. Duterte's Proclamation No. 572 would affect the other soldiers given amnesty by former President Benigno Aquino III but he did not know if the government had plans to question their pardon.

"They could be potentially affected, but I do not know if the government will question the others similarly situated," Roque told reporters.

Sereno spoke to journalists after visiting Trillanes in his Senate office, where he has dug in for more than a week.

Mr. Duterte, lashing back at Trillanes for his relentless criticism of his administration, last Tuesday ordered his arrest and trial for coup attempts against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 2003, 2006 and 2007.

Mr. Duterte voided Trillanes' amnesty, saying he did not apply for it and did not admit guilt in the uprisings against Arroyo.

Fighting back, Trillanes, 47, took Mr. Duterte's order to the Supreme Court, which on Tues-

day found the senator's plea to block the arrest order moot and ruled that two branches of the Makati Regional Trial Court (RTC) that dismissed the coup d'état and rebellion charges against the former Navy lieutenant should handle the question of the order's legality.

The Makati RTC Branch 148 opens hearings on the controversy on Thursday, and Branch 150 on Friday.

No consultation with military

Sereno did not disclose what she and Trillanes talked about.

She said Mr. Duterte did not consult the military before voiding Trillanes' amnesty.

"I think they have come to the realization now that what President Duterte did by not consulting the military is very dangerous. In other words, President Duterte put the AFP in danger," she said.

"How? Imagine, he opened the idea that the amnesty granted to thousands of soldiers who had a problem with the law, not only during the time of Cory (President Corazon Aquino), but even during the time of our forebears when there was a revolution, all of these could be opened," she added.

The uncertainty could cause divisions in the military, she said. "Its implication goes

very deep and is alarming. It means that instead of the Armed Forces being united, it would be divided and there would always be the concern that what has been closed could still be opened."

Loyalty to Constitution

Sereno also said Mr. Duterte's statements during his televised interview on Tuesday reinforced the sense that the military must do some soul-searching.

"In other words, the Armed Forces of the Philippines must remember to look beyond the term of this President, remember that the Constitution is its north star, that they are, by the terms

Maria Lourdes Sereno

Former Chief Justice

of the Constitution, the protector of the people and that they will do nothing that is violative of that Constitution," she said.

Mr. Duterte uses the possessive pronoun "mine" when describing the military and the police, she noted.

"I hope he does not come to the point where he says the taxpayers' money is his as well," she said.

The military, she said, should remember that the financial benefits that Malacañang claims the soldiers have received come from taxpayers.

Getting these benefits does not mean they have to obey a questionable order, she added.

AFP, PNP statements

Galvez reaffirmed the military's loyalty to the Constitution: "I recommit to the nation the unity and firm resolve of the AFP for an unflinching loyalty to the Constitution and the duly constituted authorities," the AFP chief of staff said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

For its part, the Philippine National Police denied claims that there were officers' groups that backed Trillanes.

PNP Director General Oscar Albayalde, however, said the police were looking into the President's claim that the Magdalo group of pardoned military mutineers was plotting with communist rebels to oust him

by October.

Magdalo had already denied Mr. Duterte's claim, but the President repeated it in a televised interview with his chief legal counsel, Salvador Panelo, on Tuesday.

Mr. Duterte also told the soldiers that they were free to stage a mutiny if they believed in Trillanes, a comment that the senator interpreted as inciting to sedition.

"That is inciting to sedition, an impeachable offense," Trillanes told reporters on Wednesday.

'Go home, Trillanes'

In Malacañang, Roque advised Trillanes to go home, reminding the senator that Mr. Duterte had said he would not be arrested without a warrant.

"Go home, because it's not right that the people [are] paying for your board and lodging there," Roque said.

Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejandro said Mr. Duterte was "insecure" and appeared to be goading the military to take over.

"[He's] upset and reproaching the [military]. In fact, he's challenging them to stage a coup d'état. [That's not good], because he's inciting them to resort to extraconstitutional action," Alejandro said. —WITH REPORTS FROM CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO, JEANNETTE I. ANDRADE, JAYMEE T. GAMIL, MATTHEW REYSIO-CRUZ, JEROME ANING AND AP INQ

IF HIS AMNESTY IS ALSO REVOKED

EX-MUTINEER FAELDON BACKS DUTERTE ARGUMENT, READY TO GO BACK TO JAIL

By Leila B. Salaverria @LeilasINQ

Former mutineer Nicanor Faeldon is willing to go back to jail if his amnesty will also be revoked for failing to go through the proper process.

Faeldon said he agreed with President Duterte that there was a problem with the amnesty that former President Benigno Aquino III granted to soldiers who took part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, 2006 Marines standoff, and 2007

Manila Peninsula hotel siege.

Proclamation No. 572

Mr. Duterte issued Proclamation No. 572 on Tuesday last week that voided the amnesty granted to Faeldon's fellow mutineer Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV on the ground that he did not file an application and admit his guilt.

Mr. Duterte later raised a new argument—not mentioned in his proclamation—saying the pardon granted to Trillanes was not valid because his amnesty

certificate was signed by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and not by Aquino, who should not have delegated the power.

The issuance of the certificate was pursuant to Aquino's Proclamation No. 75 granting amnesty to all mutineers.

Also a beneficiary

Faeldon, who is now a deputy administrator at the Office of Civil Defense, also benefited from this proclamation.

"If we all agree that an act of pardon and amnesty is an act of

the State and can't be delegated to another official, there's really a problem," he told reporters at the Senate.

Trillanes has said he is willing to go back to jail and submit himself to the courts if there is a warrant for his arrest.

Faeldon said he was willing to be detained if the court said so and possibly go through an amnesty process again.

"If it will be revoked, I am very willing to go back to jail so that it will pass through the process," he said. INQ

No order to arrest, silence critics — Duterte

By GENALYN D. KABILING

No order to arrest or silence government critics has been issued by President Duterte.

The President said critics of the government have the "time of their lives" to talk, disputing allegations that he was using his authority to silence dissent.

"I have yet to sign anything ordering the arrest or the silencing of anybody in this government especially the ▶10

No order to arrest, silence critics... ◀1

critics," Duterte said over government television last Tuesday.

"The fact that they are doing it everyday only goes to show that I am giving them the time of their lives to just talk and talk and talk. Wala naman... It's an invented phrase kasi 'yang 'silencing,'" he said.

The President recently voided the amnesty given to Senator Antonio Trillanes IV for two past military uprisings due to his failure to meet its requirements, including admission of guilt.

Vice President Leni Robredo and other opposition groups have slammed the President's amnesty recall as an attempt to silence the critics of the government.

Duterte, however, explained that the amnesty of Trillanes was flawed

since it was signed by former Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, not then President Benigno Aquino III.

He maintained that only the President has the power to grant amnesty and could not delegate such power to his alter ego. He said his predecessor made a "glaring mistake" when he let Gazmin approve such amnesty to Trillanes.

"I would rise and fall on the proposition that only the President himself physically doing the pardoning and granting the amnesty," Duterte said.

"An act of pardon, an act of amnesty is always an act of state which cannot be done by a mere Cabinet member, especially if that Cabinet member was the one or was one of those who investigated and made the recommendation and approved the recommendation

himself," he added.

The President said the amnesty procedure was "totally wrong" since former President Benigno Aquino III issued a "motherhood" amnesty proclamation. The proclamation did not contain the names of the grantees, he added.

He said the problem arose when Gazmin recommended and approved the amnesty papers himself. He noted that Gazmin was "actually protecting Aquino" when he signed the document.

"He recommended to the President in a cover letter and then he signed," he said.

"He was actually protecting Aquino. And there are — all the time sa lahat ng ano, they were protecting Aquino," he added.

PNP will not support Trillanes – Albayalde

By MARTIN A. SAGONGONG

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, Director General Oscar Albayalde announced on Wednesday that the 190,000-strong police force is united and will not express support for embattled Senator Antonio Trillanes IV amid the revocation of his amnesty.

The bold statement was issued by Albayalde in a press briefing at Camp Crame after President Duterte's statement during a television interview that there is a faction in the military expressing support for Trillanes, a former Navy officer.

"Wala. I have repeatedly said that zero sa amin yan sa PNP. Wala tayong naman-monitor kahit na little support,

in any way, dito kay Senator Trillanes (None. I have repeatedly said that he gets zero [support] from the PNP. We have not monitored even little support, in any way, for Senator Trillanes)," Albayalde said.

In a televised meeting with Chief Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday afternoon, Duterte turned to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and "encouraged" them to unseat him if they see him no longer fit to be the President of the Philippines.

"If the AFP thinks I am not competent, that I am not qualified to be sitting here, I discussed this with them in a command conference – bahala kayo (do whatever you want)," he said.

The President claimed that Trillanes "did not do anything" for the military but if they still want to take Trillanes' side, he said they should go to him and stage a mutiny or revolution.

As for the PNP, Albayalde assured that there is no need to conduct a loyalty check within their ranks as they remain loyal to three things: the Constitution, the Filipino people, and the Duterte administration.

"Hindi na namin sila kailangan i-remind (We don't need to remind them). We don't even need to have a loyalty check in our ranks," he said.

While the PNP, in nature, are mandated by its Ethical Doctrine to remain apolitical, non-partisan and professional, Albayalde has repeatedly said in the past that he sees nothing wrong in expressing support for the Duterte administration since they also are being backed by the President.

"We pledge support to the present administration. Wala naman tayong nakikitang masamang ginagawa, na labag sa konstitusyon. So bakit tayo kokontra? (We have not seen the administration doing something bad, they don't violate the Constitution. So why should we oppose them?)," Albayalde said.

The AFP, for its part, earlier belied speculations that there are factions within the organization, adding that they remain united and loyal to the Constitution and to the Filipino people.

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana Wednesday reiterated that no arrest will be conducted on Senator Antonio Trillanes IV in the absence of a warrant of arrest to be issued by the court.

This despite the Supreme Court decision which turned down the preliminary injunction and temporary restraining order (TRO) sought by Senator Trillanes against the presidential proclamation that voided his amnesty.

"No warrant, no arrest," Lorenzana reiterated.

On Tuesday, Armed Forces

of the Philippines (AFP) Spokesman Col. Edgard Arevalo said that they will refrain from making any comment whether or not the military will already arrest Trillanes following the SC's

decision.

Arevalo said they will immediately issue an appropriate statement once they get a copy of the SC decision. (With a report from Francis Wakefield)

Defense chief: No warrant, no arrest for Trillanes

WITH the Supreme Court (SC) denying his petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO), Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th will remain free until a warrant of arrest is issued against him, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Wednesday.

➤ Warrant A2

WARRANT FROM A1

Defense chief

"No warrant, no arrest," Lorenzana told reporters in a text message when asked for actions from the military against Trillanes after the rejection of the senator's petition by the high court.

The embattled senator failed to secure relief from the tribunal in his petition seeking to avoid arrest and prosecution after President Rodrigo Duterte issued Proclamation 572, voiding an amnesty granted to him by the Aquino administration.

Former Defense secretary Voltaire Gazmin approved the amnesty application of Trillanes and the Magdalo group in January 2011.

Malacañang had said Gazmin may be jailed for usurpation of authority for issuing an amnesty to Trillanes and his Magdalo comrades without consent from Aquino.

Also on Wednesday, Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Oscar Albayalde said members of the police force have not thrown their support behind Trillanes.

"We have not monitored anyone in the PNP giving support in any way to Sen. Trillanes," Albayalde said.

"We need not conduct loyalty checks in our ranks. We will remain loyal to the Constitution, to the administration, and to the Filipino people.

He allayed speculations that some PNP personnel are supporting the ouster plot against President Rodrigo Duterte.

"We [have] not receive[d] any information

whatsoever because it will easily leak. Maybe there are some but it is their personal opinion," he said.

Albayalde expressed doubts that the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1995, Trillanes' hatch, will explicitly show support to their mistah.

"They are not even solid, you could just imagine. I don't know but they are our underclass and not all of them support him because they have their own conviction and beliefs," he said.

If any member of the PNP wants to show his support to Trillanes or any politician, Albayalde added, they would have to resign from the police force.

"If you want to take sides, you resign from the service. You can resign anytime," he said.

The PNP, he added, would verify Duterte's claims that there are certain groups conniving to oust him from office.

Duterte said in his Tuesday tete-a-tete with his top legal counsel and Secretary Salvador Panelo that communists, opposition politicians and the Magdalo group are planning his ouster.

Trillanes is part of the Magdalo group.

"These [pieces of] information we get from the Commander-in-Chief are very serious allegations that need to be seriously verified... [They have] to be validated and taken seriously," Albayalde said.

Duterte said he would soon disclose pieces of evidence in proving his claims.

Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano already denied that their group is involved in any ouster plot.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. also

on Wednesday reaffirmed the military's loyalty to the Constitution and elected authorities.

"I recommit to the nation the unity and firm resolve of the Armed Forces of the Philippines [AFP] for unflinching loyalty to the Constitution and the duly-constituted authorities," Galvez said in a statement.

Galvez said the 145,000-strong soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines of the Philippine military would besolidly behind the Commander-in-Chief.

"I am confident that the men and women of the AFP will decline firmly any and all attempts to create a wedge in the AFP," he added.

Meanwhile, exiled Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria "Toma" Sison denied the claims of Duterte that he was in connivance with the Magdalo group and the President's political rivals.

"There has never been any discussion between me or the CPP with Trillanes or the Liberal Party about ousting Duterte from power," Sison said in a statement late Tuesday.

But the communist leader, who is on self-exile in The Netherlands, admitted it was no secret for the CPP to "promote a broad united front of patriotic forces and encourage the broad masses" to rise up and remove Duterte from power.

"The moment of ouster will occur when Duterte's own military and police forces withdraw support from Duterte upon the sight and inspiration of the rising people in their millions throughout the archipelago," Sison pointed out.

"Duterte is now worried to death and so desperate as to imagine that he would be ousted this coming October," he said.

DEMPSEY REYES AND ROY NARRA

Trillanes' surprise visitor: Ousted chief justice

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte put the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in a "dangerous" situation when he did not consult the military leadership in revoking the amnesty given to Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th in 2011.

This was pointed out by former chief justice Maria Lourdes Sereno on Wednesday as she slammed the President's issuance of Proclamation 572 canceling an amnesty given to Trillanes by then-President Benigno Aquino 3rd.

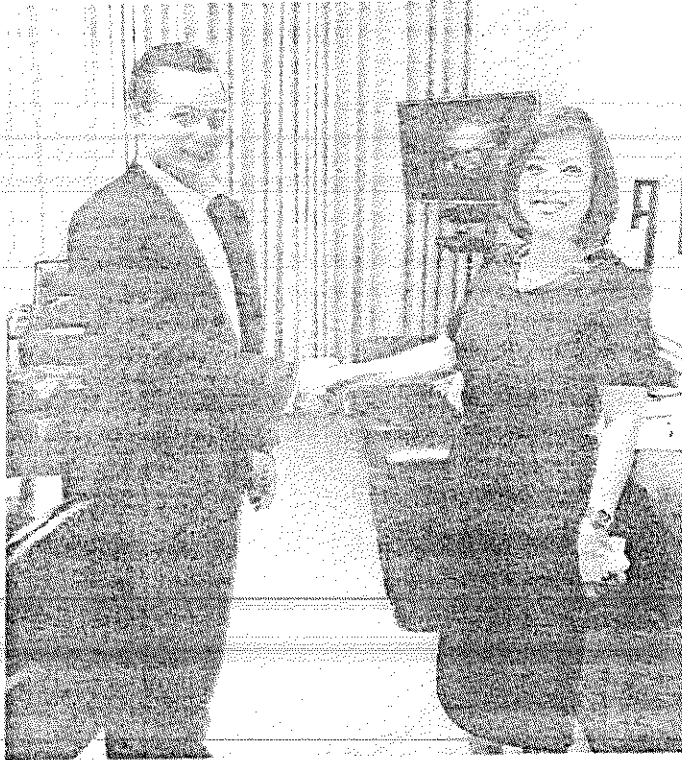
Aquino issued Proclamation 75 in November 2010 granting amnesty to AFP officers and enlisted men as well as police personnel who were involved in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, 2006 Marines standoff and 2007 Manila Peninsula hotel siege.

Trillanes applied for amnesty in January 2011.

"The nature of an amnesty is it puts an end to the story," Sereno said in a briefing after she visited Trillanes, who remained holed up at the Senate building despite the President's pronouncement that he will not be arrested pending issuance of warrant of arrest by the Makati Regional Trial Court.

"In other words, when the President and much of his security officials were in Israel when this was started by the publication of the amnesty proclamation, I kept quiet because I thought the AFP being there and apparently been surprised itself by the proclamation, needed time to recalibrate its position and understand what was happening," she added.

"True enough, the following days, fingers were being pointed at different officials as to who originated the idea. There was



SERENO MEETS TRILLANES Former chief justice Maria Lourdes Sereno meets with Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th, at his office at the Senate on Wednesday. PHOTO BY DJ DIOSINA

really confusion. And so they had to take a time to breath and assess the situation," Sereno said.

She added, "I think they have come to realization now that what Presidente Duterte did by not consulting even the military is very dangerous. In other words, *pinahamak ni Presidente Duterte ang AFP* (The President put the AFP in a tight spot)."

"*Paano? Biruin mo naman buksan ang idea na lahat ng mga amnestiya na naibigay na sa libo-libong sundalo na nagkaroon ng problema sa batas hindi lang sa time ni Cory* (late former President Corazon Aquino) *ngunit sa kanunonunuan pa natin na nagka-*

roon ng mga aklasan sa Hukbong Sandatahan et lahat pala yan ay maaaring buksan (How? Imagine broaching the idea that all amnesties, given to thousands of soldiers who had some problems with the law, not only in the time of former President Corazon Aquino, but also during our forefathers who also got involved in mutiny in our Armed Forces, can be reopened for review)," Sereno said.

"*Ibig sabihin, yung amnestiya na nakuha ni Gen. Carlito Galvez pag nagbago na po ang administrasyon ay p'wede na po rin buksan gayundin din po ang amnestiya ni Gringo Honasan, at marami pang iba* (This means that the amnesty

that AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Carlito Galvez obtained, when there will be a new administration, can also be reopened for review as well as the amnesty of Sen. Gregorio Honasan and many others)," she added.

Galvez and Army Chief Maj. Gen. Rolando Bautista, both graduates of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1985, were both granted amnesty in 1989 after joining the coup d'etat against then-President Corazon Aquino. Honasan, who played a key role in the ouster of then-President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., was also involved in several attempts to overthrow Cory.

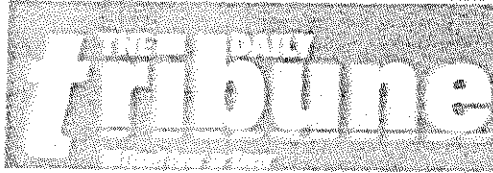
Then-President Fidel Ramos granted Honasan amnesty in 1992.

"*Ang implication ay napakalalim at nakakabahala. Imbes na buo ang Sandatahang Lakas ay magkakawatak-watak sila at laging may agam-agam na ang nasarhan na ay maaari pang buksan. Alalagim po ang maaaring mangrari* (The implication is quite disturbing. Instead of having a united Armed Forces, they will disintegrate and there will be always concern that what has been closed or terminated can be reopened. It might lead to a grim scenario)," Sereno said.

When asked whether the AFP would take the risk of arresting Trillanes even without a warrant of arrest, she replied, "The AFP, I guess is going through some internal processing." *fr*

"They should not allow those who have the bent to serve political interests win the debate internally. Those loyal to the Constitution must stand their ground. And they must prevail," Sereno said.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO



Guts still short to leave Senate

By Mario J. Mallari

Not even an assurance from Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana that there will be no warrantless arrest against him can persuade Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV to halt his Senate campout and end the media attention he and his allies have been getting.

Yesterday, Lorenzana said the military would not act against Trillanes unless the courts issued an arrest warrant.

"No warrant, no arrest," Lorenzana said.

Contrary to his initial pronouncement on Tuesday that he intended to go home,

Trillanes yesterday said he will keep himself holed up inside the Senate building "for fear of being arrested."

Trillanes is demanding an official order to be issued to units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) which are tasked to arrest him.

Until yesterday, Trillanes claimed that no such order had been issued to the military.

"We tried to validate that (Lorenzana's) pronouncement on the ground but the concerned AFP units are still maintaining that they will still arrest me because that is the order," Trillanes said.

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Trillanes said he will keep himself holed up inside the Senate building

From page 1

"Without such an order revoking the arrest order, I was advised by my lawyers not to go out just yet," he added.

For more than a week now, Trillanes has taken refuge inside the Senate building where Senate President Vicente Sotto III has declared that as a matter of policy and to preserve the dignity of the chamber there will be no arrest to be made without proper warrant.

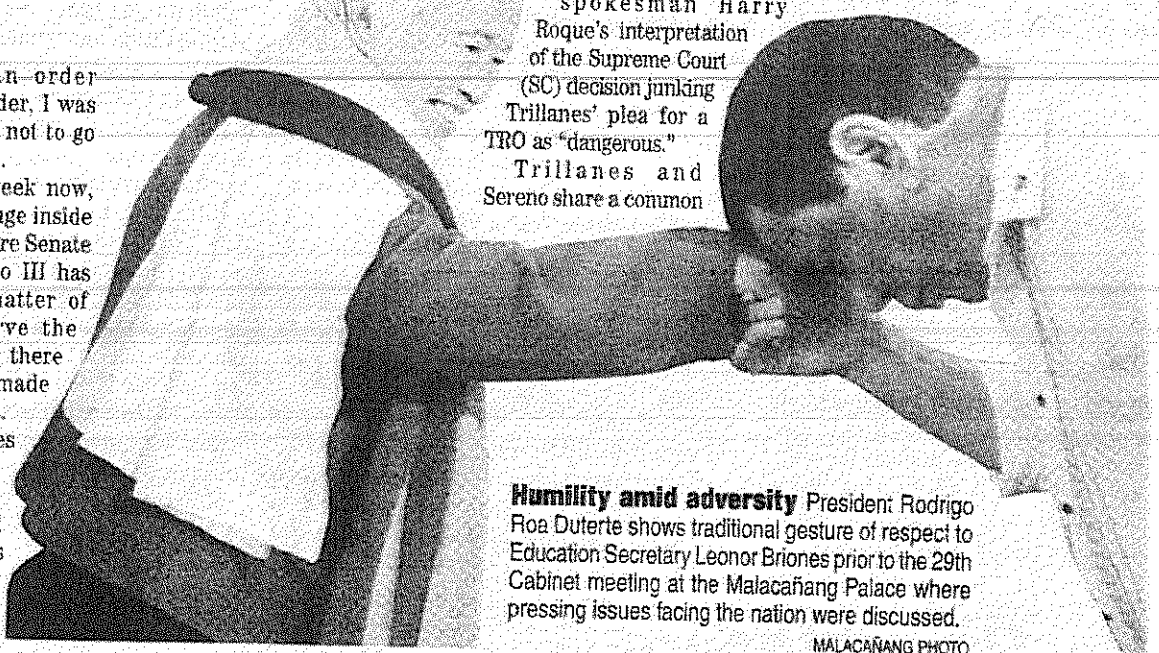
On Tuesday, Trillanes publicly announced he intended to go home after the SC released a decision denying his petition for a temporary restraining order (TRO) against Proclamation 572.

legal consequences of all his actions and actuations."

(revocation of amnesty) are deep and alarming," Sereno said.

At the same time, Sereno branded presidential spokesman Harry Roque's interpretation of the Supreme Court (SC) decision junking Trillanes' plea for a TRO as "dangerous." Trillanes and Sereno share a common

It also stressed that it is up to the trial courts to determine the facts of the cases against Trillanes. "Hence, it is appropriate that



Humility amid adversity President Rodrigo Roa Duterte shows traditional gesture of respect to Education Secretary Leonor Briones prior to the 29th Cabinet meeting at the Malacañang Palace where pressing issues facing the nation were discussed.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Face raps

Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) director Sandra Cam, a staunch critic of Trillanes, said the likely reopening of court martial proceedings against Trillanes "is a product of his political and legal actuations for insulting" Mr. Duterte.

"Every citizen has the right to criticize the presidency but when it crosses the borderline, he must accept the corresponding consequence," she said.

The continuing verbal assaults of Trillanes on Mr. Duterte are "not only a personal attack on the presidency but also undermine our very own institutions by capitalizing on his Senate position," she said.

Cam said Trillanes "should not hide in the Senate but instead should be man enough to face the

Sereno drops by

Ousted Supreme Court Chief

Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno visited Trillanes in his office, claiming she just fulfilled a promise to the senator for a talk.

"I had promised Senator Trillanes this conversation a long time ago so I came here to fulfill my promise," said Sereno before delivering her statement.

Sereno warned of the implications of Proclamation 572 to previous beneficiaries of amnesty, naming Sen. Gregorio Honasan and incumbent AFP chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez.

The proclamation declared the amnesty granted to Trillanes as void *ab initio*.

Both Honasan and Galvez were implicated in the *coup d'etat* against the late President Cory Aquino in the late 1980s.

"The implications of this

adversary in Solicitor General Jose Calida.

Calida was the brains behind the petition for *quo warranto* that questioned the appointment of Sereno as chief justice. The Supreme Court sided with Calida which resulted in Sereno's ouster.

The Solgen was also responsible for initiating a review on Trillanes' amnesty by asking the AFP for a copy of records related to the latter's application.

Ball is with courts

The SC denied Trillanes' petition seeking the issuance of a TRO against Proclamation 572 on 11 September.

"Thus, there is no extreme and urgent necessity for the Court to issue an injunctive relief, considering that the respondents have acknowledged Senator Trillanes' right to due process," the SC said.

the Makati RTC (Regional Trial Court) should be given leeway in exercising their concurrent jurisdiction to hear and resolve the pleadings/motions filed by the parties as regards the legality of Proclamation 572," it added.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) has filed separate motions before Makati RTC Branches 148 and 150, asking that arrest warrants and hold departure orders be issued against Trillanes.

Branch 148 is handling the *coup d'etat* case against Trillanes concerning the Oakwood mutiny, while Branch 150 is handling the rebellion case against the senator over the Manila Peninsula siege.

Branch 148 Judge Andres Soriano and Branch 150 Judge Elmo Alameda have set separate hearings on the DoJ's motion on Thursday and Friday, respectively.

Treason raps vs Trillanes ruled out

By Nat Mariano, Macon Ramos-Araneta
and Maricel V. Cruz

DESPITE saying it had evidence of a plot to oust the President, the Palace said Wednesday it saw no need to charge Senator Antonio Trillanes IV—one of the alleged plotters—with treason.

"There's no need [to file charges]. He already faces too many cases because of three counts of coup d'état [and] that's too much life imprisonment," Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque told Manila Standard in an interview.

Roque made the remark when asked about the President's statement Tuesday afternoon that he has a record of conversations proving a loose conspiracy

Next page

Treason...

From A1

involving Trillanes, communist rebels, and the opposition Liberal Party to remove him from office.

"We are not hiding any information about Trillanes as everyone knows all the crimes he committed even during the Oakwood mutiny," Roque said.

While Duterte said the conversations were provided by a foreign government, Roque said he had no information about the President's source.

"I don't know if it's a regular thing. But what I do know is that it's the nature of an intel. Intel, precisely, is intended to provide you information to avoid eventualities," Roque said.

"The gathering of intel has always been recognized as a function of diplomatic missions... We also get intel information, that's the nature of diplomatic relations nowadays," Roque said when asked if the intel provided counted as foreign interference.

Roque also said that the President's incitement to the military to oust him was just an expression of confidence.

"The President is confident there will be no support to oust him. His excitement is an expression of confidence that no one will follow Senator Trillanes or his companions," Roque said.

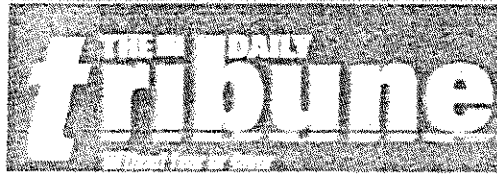
On Tuesday, Duterte said he has evidence, provided by a foreign country, to prove there is a plot to oust him. He also warned the Armed Forces of the Philippines against siding with his enemies.

"I asked that it be declassified, and we will show it [to the public]," Duterte said as he addressed the nation with his live dialogue with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday afternoon.

"This is my message to the Armed Forces: Just be careful. Just be careful of your connivance with the Magdalo [group of Trillanes]. Because Magdalo is not all in agreement to destabilize or overthrow the government," he warned.

"To those who see that Trillanes made a difference for your well-being, go to them and stage a mutiny or revolution. You are free to do that. As a matter of fact, I am encouraging you, so we could end this," Duterte said. "I am challenging Magdalo to start now. If you think the soldiers are yours, it's fine. If the generals [think the same], so be it. Let's show the Filipino people what you really want."

With Rey E. Requejo, PNA



Faeldon: Amnesty flawed

Ex-rebel ready to return to jail

By Mario J. Mallari

More importantly, there are certain executive powers that by their very nature cannot be delegated

Office of Civil Defense (OCD) deputy administrator Nicanor Faeldon, a former rebel officer and co-leader of the Magdalo mutineers, admitted yesterday the amnesty certificates given

him and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV by former President Benigno Aquino were flawed.

At a chance interview after taking his oath as member of the ruling Partido Demokratiko Pilipino (PDP) at the Senate, Faeldon said he is willing to

go back to jail if that is the consequence of the defective amnesty.

"I believe so," Faeldon replied when asked by reporters if there is something wrong with the amnesty granted to them during the Aquino administration,

adding "after seeing the cards of both parties, it became clear to me that I think there is really a problem."

Faeldon said he is willing to go back to jail anytime if the amnesty granted to them is really flawed.

"If the process we have gone through is not in accordance with the Constitution...I am very much willing to go back to jail so that I can go through the process," Faeldon said.

"If we all agree that the act

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We all came up with our application forms but I do not know how many submitted that affidavit of admission of guilt

From page 1

of pardon and amnesty is the act of the state, it cannot be delegated to another position other than the President," he added.

No less than President Rodrigo Duterte questioned the authority of former Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin for recommending and approving the amnesty to Magdalo members that included Trillanes.

The President issued Proclamation 572 specifically ordering the revocation of the amnesty granted to Trillanes.

Apart from the delegation of authority by Aquino, Faeldon also said that an affidavit of admission of guilt was required of them when they applied for amnesty.

Affidavit needed

"One of the requirements there is that you have to attach an affidavit admitting specifically identified offenses. So the affidavit of admission of guilt is an attachment," Faeldon said.

Trillanes, who is still taking refuge at the Senate to prevent arrest, has repeatedly stated that the application form already stated his guilt and has not presented any affidavit of admission of guilt which was among the issues raised in the proclamation.

"We all came up with our application forms but I do not know how many submitted that affidavit of admission of guilt and how many did not submit, I can only speak for myself," Faeldon stressed.

I am very much willing to go back to jail so that I can go through the process.

Faeldon and Trillanes are among the core leaders of the botched coup on 27 July 2003 at the posh Oakwood Apartments in Makati City.

Gazmin error as evidence

Gazmin having usurped the authority to grant amnesty, even if this was not included in the proclamation, can be used as evidence on the factual issues, according to a ranking justice department official.

On 31 August, President Rodrigo Duterte issued the proclamation that voided the

amnesty of Trillanes which was given by former President Benigno Aquino.

Faeldon and Trillanes are among the core leaders of the botched Oakwood Mutiny.

The proclamation stated that Trillanes did not comply with the minimum requirement for the granting of the amnesty and it was not signed by Aquino but by former Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin.

"Cabinet secretaries are alter egos of the President and their acts are deemed legal and valid, unless countermanded by the President," the official said.

"More importantly, there are certain executive powers that by their very nature cannot be delegated and because the Constitution mandates that the President himself act in person, such as the grant of executive clemency," he added.

"In pardons, the President himself signs the grant of pardon. In other jurisdictions, it's the king or the emperor. More so in the case of amnesty, which is so important that the concurrence of Congress is required. You cannot trivialize this process by delegating its approval to a mere alter ego," the official said.

Bato on board PDP

Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) Chief Ronald "Bato" de la Rosa, meanwhile, formally took his oath along with Faeldon as PDP member and confirmed he will seek a Senate seat in the next year's mid-term polls.

PDP president Sen. Aquilino Pimentel III administered the oath to De la Rosa, Office of Civil Defense (OCD) deputy administrator Nicanor Faeldon and actor Philip Salvador.

Also present was PDP vice chairman Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi.

De la Rosa confirmed he will seek a Senate seat during next year's national and local elections.

On the other hand, Salvador did not specifically say what elective post he would seek while Faeldon said he wanted to join PDP to help promote Federalism.

If elected, De la Rosa said he would focus on legislating measures concerning law enforcement, particularly in connection with illegal drugs and security.

He also vowed not to "embarrass" resource persons invited to the Senate similar to what he experienced when he was subjected to grilling at the Senate.

Prior to his stint as BuCor

chief, De la Rosa also served as chief of the Philippine National Police and led the government's all-out war against illegal drugs.

The Senate conducted several hearings on the government's war against illegal drugs which is being blamed for thousands of extra judicial killings.

With Alvin Murcia

Trillanes hogged media attention, Duterte laments

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte held a tete-a-tete with presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday afternoon to explain his side on the voiding of the amnesty granted to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, who has since been hogging media attention, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said yesterday.

Roque said the President felt that Trillanes has been giving his

side left and right while his voice has not been sufficiently heard by the public, especially since he was still abroad when the issue came up.

"I think the motivation is obvious. All the media mileage went to Trillanes because we were still working in Israel and Jordan," he said.

Duterte was originally set to deliver a nationwide address, but it was changed to a press conference and later a tete-a-tete format

with Panelo.

The President signed Proclamation Order 572 on Aug. 31, voiding Trillanes' amnesty which was given by former president Benigno Aquino III. The proclamation was published last Sept. 3, and Duterte returned to Manila on Sept. 8.

Proclamation Order 572 revoked the Department of National Defense Ad Hoc Committee resolution No 2 (#1) that was issued in January 31, 2011 and granted

which amnesty to then Lt. Senior Grade Trillanes who had been facing coup d'etat charges.

Panelo said the important thing is the President was able to explain his side on different issues, especially on Trillanes.

Asked if there would be a similar event, Roque said it would depend on the President.

During the tete-a-tete, Duterte

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TRILLANES

explained that the grant of amnesty to Trillanes is void because the power to grant amnesty lies solely on the President, and cannot be delegated to a Cabinet secretary or an alter ego.

Panelo, in a statement, said if the amnesty was legitimate, Trillanes is bound to follow certain conditions.

He said Trillanes' actuations and pronouncements against the President violate his amnesty.

repeated pronouncements against opposition figures, in particular Trillanes, "is not helping and takes away focus from addressing the country's pressing problems."

"It does not help when he is focused on his rift with Senator Trillanes. I think their feud should not be happening at the time when we are supposed to be united as we endure great sufferings," she said.

In separate statements, the Associated Labor Unions-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) and the Partido Manggagawa (PM) said it would be wrong for Duterte to accuse workers organizations of being the reasons job-creating investments are hard to come in the country.

"Blaming strikes for lack of foreign investors is a lame excuse. A strike though a guaranteed workers' right under the constitution is highly regulated by the government, thus will not be a major factor that would affect the country's stability and employers' profitability," said PM chairman Renato Magtubo. - *With Angela Lopez de Leon, Gerard Naval and Raymond Africa*

WASTED

Vice President Leni Robredo said Duterte lost the opportunity to address the people's urgent concerns.

"Sadly, it's a wasted opportunity. It should have been a great opportunity for him to directly tell the people how he plans to address the country's economic problems," Robredo told reporters in Filipino during her visit to Victoria, Tarlac.

She said she was hoping Duterte would clarify the government's plans on the rising prices of goods and the rice crisis.

Robredo said the President's

Sereno: Voiding of amnesty 'very dangerous'

BY JP LOPEZ

OUSTED Chief Justice Maria Lourdes Sereno yesterday said President Duterte has put the Armed Forces in danger when he issued Proclamation 572 without consulting the military.

The proclamation, signed by Duterte on August 31, nullified the amnesty granted in 2011 to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy lieutenant, by then President Benigno Aquino III.

Aquino's amnesty proclamation covered at least a hundred soldiers involved in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny staged by the Magdalo group, of which Trillanes was one of the leaders.

"I think they (military) have come to the realization now that what President Duterte did by not consulting even the military is very dangerous. In other words, kung baga pinahamak ni Presidente Duterte ang AFP (In other words, Duterte put the AFP in danger)," Sereno told reporters at the Senate after a visit to Trillanes.

Trillanes has been holed up at the Senate since September 4 when the proclamation, which also ordered the senator's arrest, was made public by Malacañang.



SERENO

Sereno said Duterte opened the "idea" that thousands of soldiers who have been given amnesty might face the same situation as Trillanes, including those involved in coups during the time of President Corazon Aquino in the 80s.

Even the amnesties granted to now AFP chief Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. and Sen. Gregorio Honasan for their role in the 1989 coup attempt against the Corazon Aquino government could be nullified, she said.

Galvez, of the Philippine

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SERENO

Military Academy Class of 1985, was a lieutenant during the 1899 coup. He and some classmates were among those granted amnesty by President Fidel Ramos in 1996.

An amnesty grantee said current Army chief Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista, also of Class 1985, was also granted amnesty.

"We were involved in the 89 coup, along with Rolly Bautista," the source said.

The source also said that unlike the amnesty process that covered Trillanes, they were not required to admit guilt when they applied for amnesty for the coup attempts.

"In the old amnesty, there was no precondition of admitting guilt. The latest one, there was one, there was an admission of guilt. It was incorporated in the application form. They (those involved in plots against Gloria Arroyo) wanted amnesty, so they bit the bullet," he said.

He also said the voiding of Trillanes' amnesty has negatively affected the credibility of the Duterte administration. "What are they going to do with the other grantees?" he said.

Sereno said President's statements on Tuesday when he dared soldiers to side with Trillanes "only reinforce the sense that the AFP must do independent soul searching."

"In other words, the AFP must remember to look beyond the term of this President, remember the Constitution, its norms. That they are the protector of the people and that they do nothing violative of this Constitution and the applicable laws of the people," she added. — *With Victor Reyes*

Amnesty granted to Trillanes faulty -- solon

By ALFRED DALIZON

THE House minority bloc said yesterday now is the ripe time to make Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV accountable for his alleged crimes, backing the Palace position that the amnesty granted to him by the previous administration was allegedly defective.

During yesterday's weekly minority press conference, House Senior Deputy Minority Leader and Buhay Hayaang Yumabong (Buhay) party-list Lito Atienza shared President Rodrigo

"Rody" Duterte's position that the amnesty given to Trillanes was purportedly faulty.

"The amnesty given to him is defective. Only the President can grant the amnesty and not the secretary of national defense," Atienza told reporters.

Atienza insinuated that Trillanes had received funding from many donors during his failed coup attempt.

"Mukhang napakadami niyang pinagkukuhanan ng logistics. It's about time he answers for his crimes. Whoever is involved here should be punished. Our

economy was held back several times under his engineering. No more rebellious military men should be elected," Atienza added.

In the same press conference, House Minority Leader and Quezon Rep. Danilo "Danny" Suarez accused Trillanes as mercenary, reiterating his call for the senator to name his donors.

"He (Trillanes) is like a mercenary. Just like in the movie, they were paid for a purpose. He had funds for that purpose," Suarez said. "Again, I will reiterate the question: Where did he get or who gave him the funds?"

Trillanes has no support from PNP – Albayalde

By MARTIN A. SADONGDONG

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde announced yesterday that the 190,000-strong police force is united in its stand not to support embattled Senator Antonio Trillanes IV amid the revocation of his amnesty.

The statement was issued by Albayalde in a press briefing at Camp Crame amid President Duterte's outbursts regarding the supposed faction in the military, where some soldiers are allegedly expressing support to Trillanes, a former Navy officer.

"Wala. I have repeatedly said that zero sa amin 'yan sa PNP. Wala tayong namo-monitor kahit na little support, in any way, dito kay Senator Trillanes from the PNP," Albayalde said.

In a televised meeting with Chief Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday afternoon, Duterte

surprisingly turned to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and "encouraged" them to unseat him if they see him no longer fit to be the President of the Philippines.

"If the AFP thinks I am not competent, that I am not qualified to be sitting here, I discussed this with them in a command conference -- bahala kayo," he said.

The President claimed that Trillanes "did not do anything" for the military but if they still want to take Trillanes' side, he said they should go to him and stage a mutiny or revolution.

"You are free to do that. As a matter of fact, I am encouraging you to do that para tapos na" Duterte added.

As for the PNP, Albayalde assured that there is no need to conduct a loyalty check within their ranks as they remain loyal to three things: the Constitution, the Filipino people, and

the Duterte administration.

"Hindi na namin sila kailangan I-remind. We don't even need to have a loyalty check in our ranks," he said.

While the PNP, in nature, are mandated by its Ethical Doctrine to remain apolitical, non-partisan and professional, Albayalde has repeatedly said in the past that he sees nothing wrong in expressing support to the Duterte administration since they also are being backed by the President.

"We pledge support to the present administration. Wala naman tayong nakikitang masamang ginagawa, na labag sa konstitusyon. So bakit tayo kokontra?" Albayalde said.

The AFP, for its part, earlier belied speculations that there are factions within the organization, adding that they remain united and loyal to the Constitution and to the Filipino people.

Walang nagpakalbo – Albayaalde PNP zero ang suporta kay Trillanes

Walang nagpakalbo sa Philippine National Police (PNP) bilang pagpapakita ng suporta kay Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV kaugnay ng umiinit na isyu sa amnestiya nito na binawi ni Pangulong Duterte.

Inihayag ito kahapon ni PNP Chief P/Director General Oscar Albayaalde kaugnay ng ibinunyag ng Pangulo sa umano'y isyu ng paksyon sa hanay ng PNP at AFP sa pagsuporta kay Trillanes.

Ayon sa Pangulo, nagpakalbo ang mga sundalong kumontra laban sa kaniya na hinamon nitong gawin na ang pag-aaklas.

Sinabi ni Albayaalde na zero o walang makukuhang suporta si Trillanes sa hanay ng mga opisyal at tinatayang nasa 190,000 puwersa ng PNP.

"Wala. I have repeatedly said that zero sa amin 'yan sa PNP. Wala tayong namo-monitor kahit na little support, in any way, dito kay Senator Trillanes," sabi ni Albayaalde.

Sa halip, pabiro pang sinabi ni Albayaalde na kung meron mang opisyal ng PNP na nagpakalbo, ang ibig lang sabihin nito ay gusto ng opisyal na maging PNP Chief, katulad niya at maging ni dating PNP chief ret. P/Director General Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa na

walang buhok.

Nilinaw ni Albayaalde na walang kahit na anong reklamo laban sa administrasyon ni Pangulong Duterte sa hanay ng mga aktibong pulis at maging sa mga retiradong opisyal.

Muli rin nitong iginilit na hindi kailangang mag-sagawa ng loyalty check sa hanay ng PNP dahil ang kanilang buong puwersa ay nananatiling tapat sa Saligang Batas at poprotektahan ang interes ng bayan. (Joy Santos)

Trillanes ginagamit ang Senado

Naniniwala ang Malacañang na ginagamit lang ni Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV ang pananatili sa Senado para makakuha ng simpatiya sa publiko. Sinabi ni Chief Presidential Legal Counsel



...an ng Police Regional Office ay sa heightened alert status dahil sa super typhoon na northern Luzon.

(CPLC) Salvador Panelo, gusto lamang palabas in ni Trillanes na aping-api siya at ginigipit ng gobyerno matapos bawiin ang amnestiyang ibinigay sa kanya.

Ayon kay Sec. Panelo, kung tutuusin ay wala ng rason para manatili sa loob ng kanyang opisina si Trillanes dahil hindi naman ito aarestuhin hangga't walang lumalabas na arrest warrant.

Mismong si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na umano ang nagsabing hahayaan niyang resolbahan muna ng korte ang naturang usapin.

Nagpasya ang senador na huwag umalis ng Senado matapos malaman sa ilang military sources na aarestuhin pa rin siya kapag lumabas ng Senado sa kabila ng kautusan ng Korte Suprema. (Rudy Andal)

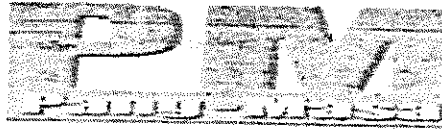


WALANG MAGPAPAKALBO NA MGA PULIS PARA KAY TRILLANES - PNP CHIEF

Hindi maakakataha ng suporta si Senador Antonio Trillanes IV sa kapulisan at walang nagpakalbo sa Philippine National Police (PNP) bilang pagpapakita ng suporta kaugnay ng umimit na isyu sa amnestiya nito na binawi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte matapos masangkoi sa dalawang bigong coup de

etat noong Hulyo 2013 at Nobyembre 2017. Ito ang inihayag ka-hapon ni PNP Chief P/ Director General Oscar Albayalde kaugnay ng ibi-nuriyag ng Pangulo na sa umario'y isyu ng paksyon sa hanay ng PNP at AFP sa pagsuporta kay Trillanes. Ayon kay Pangulong Duterte nagpakalbo ang

mga sundalong kumo- kontra laban sa kanya na lunamon nitong gawin na ang pag-aaklas. Sinabi ni Albayalde na zero o walang makuku- hang suporta si Trillanes sa hanay ng mga opti- yal at tinatayang nasa 190,000 malakas na puwersa ng PNP. - Joy Cantos-



Ginagamit ang pagtira sa Senado...

TRILLANES KUMUKUHA NG SIMPATIYA

Naniniwala ang Malacañang na ginagamit lang ni Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV ang pananatili sa Senado para makakuha ng simpatiya sa publiko.

Ito ang sinabi ni Chief Presidential Legal Counsel (CPLC) Salvador Panelo, at gusto lamang palabas ni Trillanes na aping-
api siya at ginigipit ng gobyerno matapos bawin ang amnestiyang ibinigay sa kanya.

Anyang kung tutuusin ay wala ng rason para manatili sa loob ng kanyang

opisina si Trillanes dahil hindi naman ito aarestuhin hangga't walang lumalabas na arrest warrant.

Mismong si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na umano ang nagsabing hahayaan niyang resol-bahin muna ng korte ang naturang usapin.

Mag-uugnaita na sa unang presscon ni Trillanes kahapon ay nagsabi ito na uuwi na siya ng bahay matapos maglabas ng desisyon ang Korte Suprema na nagba-basura sa hinihingi nitong

TRO sa Proclamation 572 ni Pangulong Duterte.

Subalit, ilang oras ang nakalipas ay muli itong nagpa-presscon at sinabi na hindi na niya itutuloy na umuwi sa kanyang bahay bagkus ay mananatili na lamang muna sa Senado nang payuhan ng kanyang mga abogado.

Ito ay dahil nakakuha sila umano ng "categorical" na pahayag mula sa AFP na aarestuhin pa rin siya kapag lumabas ng Senado. **-Rudy Andal, Malou Escudero-**

14 dead as overloaded jeep plunges into Kalinga ravine

By ZALDY COMANDA

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet – Fourteen passengers, including 13 senior

citizens, perished when their hired overloaded jeepney plunged into a ravine in Balbalan, Kalinga, Tuesday afternoon.

►10

14 dead as overloaded jeep plunges...

◀1

Twenty five other passengers were injured.

The senior citizens, who were among the estimated 50 passengers of the ill-fated jeepney, were returning home to Barangay Dao-angan after claiming their pension at the Balbalan municipal hall when tragedy struck.

Chief Inspector Richard Gadingan, information officer, of the Kalinga Provincial Police Office, said that the passenger jeepney (WRR-535) owned and driven by Francisco Gumaad Jr. was negotiating a curved, a descending portion of the road.

Gumaad asked the passengers on the roof of the jeep to disembark to make it easier for him to maneuver.

After making it past the curved

portion, however, survivors said the driver lost control of the jeepney after its engine conked out.

The vehicle then hurtled down a ravine around 100 meters deep.

The fatalities were identified as Victorino Banglagan, 67; Soledad Dammay, 70; Eliza Amoga, 70; Rosario Badong, 65; Isabel Bagni, 67; Agida Palangdao, 62; Lolita Latawan, 68; William Gamongan, 65; Leota Maday, 72; Angelina Benito, 62; Benjamin Badong, 68; Terresa Dulansi, 70; Martin Canao, 67; and Annie Baluga, 45.

Rescuers from the Balbalan local government unit, Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection and the Army's 50th Infantry Battalion, 5th Infantry Division, helped extricate

and transport the injured passengers to the Kalinga Western District Hospital.

The injured passengers are Arnel Banglagan, 45; Anna Bagwingan, 75; Laika Barbosa, 4; Imelda Cuzon, 52; Manuel Banguingan, 70; Caridad Palicas, 72; Jennier Esteban, 40; Irene Dammay, 60; Pedro Maday, 82; Agida Palangdao, 42; Lolita Gullipis, 77; Mercedes Lingbao, 62; Joselyn Gannisi, 64; Conchita Canao, 61; Socorro Naganag, 56; Sonia Barbosa, 44; Necita Daggay, 61; Concordia Manadao, 61; Bartolome Balcanao, 85; Patricio Maday, 66; Edmund Duguit, 45; Mariano Palicas, 70; Nanette Gamongan, 61; Leonarda Dumaguing, 69; and Francisco Gumaad Jr., 36.

Luzon bracing for 'Ompong'; classes suspended in Cagayan, Ilocos Norte

By NIÑO N. LUCES,
LIEZLE BASA INIGO,
FREDDIE G. LAZARO and PNA

TUGUEGARAO CITY – Provincial, city and municipal officials and residents in many parts of Luzon, particularly in the Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley and Bicol region, are bracing for the impact of potential super typhoon Ompong (international name: Mangkhut) which was expected to breach the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) yesterday afternoon.

Classes in all levels and work today and tomorrow have been suspended in Cagayan province and Ilocos Norte yesterday.

Cagayan classes suspended

Classes on Thursday and Friday in all levels in Cagayan have been sus-

pending in anticipation of the onslaught of typhoon Ompong, which is expected to bring heavy rains in most parts of the country.

Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba has ordered the suspension of classes, which include graduate school studies, after a meeting with disaster risk-reduction officials at the provincial capitol on Tuesday afternoon.

"The governor's action is necessary to ensure safety to villagers especially those staying near flood-prone and landslide-prone areas," Provincial Information Officer Rogelio Sending Jr. said.

Sending said Mamba also ordered the suspension of government and private work, except those at the frontline services like hospitals, law enforcement agencies and emergency response teams who will be on standby at the sub-capitol command post in Lal-lo and

other designated areas.

No classes, work in Ilocos Norte

Ilocos Norte Governor Imee Marcos has suspended classes in all levels in public and private schools in the province on September 13 and 14 as typhoon Ompong lurks.

Marcos also suspended works in both public and private sectors in the province, except those involved in vital frontline services, including personnel from the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) and city/municipal DRRMCs.

Marcos appealed to the public to take appropriate safety measures to minimize loss of life and limb and damage to properties. She asked barangay chairpersons, barangay health workers (BHWs) and other local officials to be alert and vigilant.

Farmers were likewise advised to harvest crops before the typhoon hits.

'Ompong's' power

In its 11 a.m. tropical cyclone advisory, the weather bureau said the eye of "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) was spotted 1,190 kilometers east northeast of Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

It packs maximum sustained winds of 205 kms per hour and gustiness of 255 kph.

Liquor ban

A liquor ban will also be imposed on Friday and Saturday.

Cagayan Valley

The Department of Tourism in Cagayan Valley recommended the postponement of trips to the northern parts of Cagayan province, and the northern parts of Batanes, island municipalities of Calayan, including Palau Island of Sta. Ana, and Fuga Island starting September 14.

In its social media account, DOT-Cagayan Valley cited that Typhoon Mangkhut, (local name Typhoon Ompong), is expected to cut across north-eastern Luzon by Saturday.

Adverse weather conditions, however, are expected to prevail by September 14.

The regional DOT office likewise advised the public to be cautious when travelling to other parts of the region and elsewhere in Luzon.

Bicol region

Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (APSEMO) chief Dr. Cedric Daep told the Manila Bulletin that he is now drafting an advisory suspending classes from pre-school to high school in anticipation of the raising of public storm warning signals.

"Inabisuhan na ako ni Governor Al (Francis) Bichara na pag-aralan yung sitwasyon. So baka itaas ng PAGASA ang signal number 1 mamayang gabi, bukas suspended na yung klase sa pre-school hanggang high school," he said.

The draft advisory has been sent to the office of the governor as the head of Albay Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) and expected to be released on Wednesday afternoon.

Lahar alert

Daep also said that they (APSEMO) will also issue a separate advisory for possible lahar / mud flows.

"Yung sa lahar, pag-uusapan pa

namin yan ng Phivolcs at saka PAGASA, kasi depende pa rin yan sa lakas ng ulan," he said.

According to Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) resident volcanologist Dr. Ed Laguerta, about 23 million cubic meters of new volcanic debris may threaten villages around Mayon Volcano.

"Yung 23 million cubic meters na loose materials ay yung bago yun ng mag-erupt si Mayon noong Pebrero saka Marso. Meron pang luma, mas madami ito kaysa sa bago na hindi pa natin alam yung eksaktong dami nito, dagdag pa dito yung pinag-quarry. Titingnan pa natin, kasama yung PAGASA at saka APSEMO kung kaya bang ibaba ito o magkaroon ng lahar flow sa dalang ulan ng bagyo," he said.

Rough seas

Along with the suspension of classes, operators and crewmen of small vessels are advised not to set sail due rough sea conditions.

He added that the APSEMO is studying all the scenarios of the possible impact of the typhoon.

"Meron tayong tinitingnan na apat na scenarios. Una yung posibleng direktang pagtama ng bagyo sa Albay, pangalawa ay sa gilid lang, pangatlo ay sa pinaka gilid ng bagyo at pang-apat ay hindi tatamaan pero huhugutin ang habagat na posibleng magdala ng pag-uulan sa Albay at maging kawsa ng pagbabaha at landslide. Sa apat na yan, yung pang-apat ang pinakamataas na probability na mangyari," he explained.

Ilocos region

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council - Region 1 (RDRRMC1) started mobilizing assets in preparation for potential super typhoon Ompong.

Director Melchito M. Castro, RDRRMC1 chairperson, on Wednesday said the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) started the deployment of trucks, boats and choppers complete radio communications equipment.

The Ilocos region police, headed by Chief Superintendent Romulo E. Sapitula, formed an emergency operations center in all provincial police headquarters to house all their assets and radio communications equipment.

Castro convened on Wednesday an emergency response preparedness meeting of the RDRRMC1 member-agencies, the Regional Incident Management Team (RITM) and the Rapid Emergency Telecommunications Team (RETT) to finalize the contingency plans for 'Ompong'.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Castro said that Ilocos region is under "red alert" status.

Flood, landslide threats

Based on risk assessments on the effect of southwest monsoon to be enhanced by the typhoon in the Ilocos region, Castro said the weather disturbance may cause flooding in low lying areas, landslide in the mountainous areas and storm surge near the coastlines of the initially identified areas to be affected.

"I am appealing all the local DRRMCs to closely monitor the situations in their respective local government units (LGUs) to anticipate the effect of the typhoon," he said.

Ondoy-level rain feared

*Pagasa warns of Ompong's fury,
extensive damage to rice, corn crops*

By Rio N. Araja, Julito G.
Rada and Nat Mariano

TYPHOON "Ompong" (international name: Mangkhut) barreled into the Philippine Area of Responsibility Wednesday, bringing with it the threat of torrential rain that could exceed the levels experienced during Tropical Storm "Ondoy," which inundated Metro Manila in 2009, the weather bureau said.

Forecast to be the strongest typhoon to hit the country this year, "Ompong" is expected to make landfall in the northern tip of Cagayan on Saturday, bringing very strong winds and six-meter-high storm surges in coastal areas along the path of the typhoon, weather forecaster Chris Perez said.

Agriculture officials said the typhoon could damage more than P11 billion worth of rice and corn crops if it hits northern Luzon, further aggravating food supply problems. *Next page*

Ondoy-level...

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"The typhoon may reach a peak intensity of 220 to 270 kilometers per hour," the weather bureau said.

Tropical cyclone warning signal no. 1 could be raised in Cagayan, Isabela, Aurora, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur.

"Ompong" intensified, packing maximum sustained winds of 205 kph near the center, and gustiness of up to 255 kph. It was moving west at 20 kph.

Heavy rains due to the enhanced monsoon are expected in Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Siquijor, Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Norte, Dinagat Island and Lanao del Sur.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol on Tuesday warned that "Ompong" may damage more than P11 billion worth of rice and corn crops if it hits northern Luzon.

"In the worst-case scenario... if it hits northern Luzon, rice alone will lose about P7 billion, and corn around P4 billion," Piñol told lawmakers during budget hearings.

He said this is because some rice and corn crops in the region are still in the vegetative state, even while the harvest season has already begun.

"So I am praying that it won't hit extreme northern Luzon because it could be devastating and could change the figures altogether," Piñol said.

Weather forecasters said the typhoon threatens northern Luzon and may traverse the Cagayan-Batanes area on Saturday.

A report from ING Bank warned that "Ompong" could drive food prices higher if it does widespread damage to crops in northern Luzon.

"This could exacerbate price pressures in the Philippines as the harvest season is just about to begin," the bank said.

Reports early this week said farmers in Cagayan and Isabela, two of the country's top rice and corn-producing provinces, were rushing to reap their harvests as the typhoon approached.

Cagayan has harvested less than 10 percent of its produce from 130,000 hectares of rice fields, Gov. Manuel Mamba said in a statement.

High food prices drove the inflation rate to 6.4 percent in August, a nine-year high.

The Palace on Wednesday reminded the public to be alert and ready as "Ompong" approached the country's area of responsibility.

"We remind the public to be alert and safe because of the approaching storm," said Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque in a Palace press briefing.

Roque said the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council and the Department of Social Welfare and Development have already prepared standby funds, food packs, and other

relief assistance.

Roque said several government agencies involved in disaster preparedness are now in contact with each other to facilitate quick emergency response to those who will be gravely affected by the coming storm.

He urged the public to take precautionary measures by knowing the evacuation plan, and preparing flashlights, radio, battery, sufficient amount of food, water supply, and first-aid kits.

"Please stay inside your houses and refrain from going outside if not necessary for your safety," said Roque. "Let us pray for the safety of all."

The Manila International Airport Authority on Wednesday announced it will close airport terminals and aerodromes if "Ompong" hits the country with maximum sustained winds of 35 knots crosswind.

MIAA officials led by its general manager Eddie Monreal met with members of Airline Operators Council to discuss contingency plans and possible measures in anticipation of the bad weather.

"We need your advance advisories regarding your planned cancellation or delay flight so we can disseminate the information to all passengers and employees who will be affected by the typhoon," Monreal told AOC officials during the meeting.

"The Passengers Bill of Rights will be strictly implemented during the closure of the airport," Monreal said.

On Wednesday, Senator Grace Poe urged MIAA and airlines officials to prioritize passenger welfare with the looming cancellation of flights as a result of "Ompong."

"A typhoon is approaching the country. Please call up passengers if their flights are canceled or prepare food at the airport," said Poe over radio dzMM.

She also noted that the Ninoy Aquino International Airport has standby funds of some P200 million that can be used for emergency response.

Trade and Industry Undersecretary for Consumer Protection Ruth Castelo assured the public that there is an ample supply of rice in case the typhoon damages crops.

"Yes, we have 5 million bags coming in October. And then, the DTI has already initiated importing rice also as assistance to the NFA [National Food Authority]," Castelo said. "We are on standby because we also need to seek the approval of the NFA Council before we can do this."

Public Works Secretary Mark Villar said his department's Regional and District Disaster Response Teams nationwide will deploy heavy equipment to high-risk areas to ensure structural integrity of vital roads, bridges, and high-rise public buildings.

The department, he added, is coordinating with the weather bureau, the Office of Civil Defense, the Army, the police, and local government units to monitor and submit timely situational reports of national roads and bridges every six hours and provide

prompt assistance during the onset of typhoon.

Villar said all teams are likewise responsible for the initial assessment of damage as well as the submission of detailed information on damaged structures with cost estimates for the restoration of calamity-hit structures.

Motorists are advised that a section of the Basco-Mahatao-Ivana-Uyugan-Imnaju Road is temporarily closed to traffic due to a landslide. Clearing operations are ongoing, and motorists may take Uyugan-Mahatao Interior Road as an alternative route.

The Metro Manila Development Authority announced it was preparing for "Ompong."

MMDA chairman Danilo Lim tapped heads of the agency's quick response units to ensure readiness of all assets and personnel to respond during emergencies.

The agency's assets and emergency equipment on standby include seven ambulances, two tow trucks, two military trucks, two fire trucks, a boom truck, seven chainsaws, man-lift, rubber boats and extrication equipment.

Personnel of the agency's emergency stations in the area of Epifanio de los Santos Avenue in Roxas Boulevard, Orense Street, Ortigas Avenue, and Timog Avenue; Circumferential Road-5 in Libis, Commonwealth Avenue, Tandang Sora Avenue and Nagtahan were also placed on blue alert.

With about 20 tropical cyclones entering the country every year, the MMDA reminded the public to heed warnings and take all precautions to protect health and ensure safety.

The NDRRMC has also called on people living in flood and landslide-prone areas to undertake necessary preparations as early as possible and heed calls by authorities for pre-emptive evacuation.

The initial effects of "Ompong" will be felt in Catanduanes during its approach and Signal No. 1 has been hoisted over the province.

The NDRRMC said heavy rains and strong winds may be experienced over northern Luzon and parts of Central and Southern Luzon and surrounding seas are expected to be rough to very rough.

Metro Manila is likely to be placed on Signal No. 1.

The Philippine National Police and the military have alerted their personnel in the provinces along Ompong's path to mobilize all search and rescue units to respond to emergencies.

The NDRRMC Operations Center is currently on red alert and the Response Cluster has been activated.

The local government unit of Maasin City in Southern Leyte has declared the suspension of classes in all levels both private and public in the city on Sept. 13 to 14. With Joel E. Zurbano, Francisco Tuyay, Vito Barcelo and PNA

Preemptive evac set for 'Ompong'

BY VICTOR REYES
AND ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON

TYPHOON Ompong entered the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) yesterday, and disaster officials are preparing for preemptive evacuation starting today as Ompong gains strength while heading for Cagayan province.

The weather bureau expects landfall in the northern tip of Cagayan on Saturday and exit on Sunday.

Ricardo Jalad, executive director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), said in a press conference in Camp Aguinaldo that gov-

ernment is preparing for a storm surge scenario, with high possibilities of floods and landslides.

Jalad, concurrent administrator of the Office of Civil Defense, said the possibility of Ompong becoming a super typhoon seems high, based on the weather bureau's data.

"As of now, its (wind strength is) 205 kph. The upper limit of a typhoon is 220 kph. Above that is super typhoon. It is still 1,190 kms from our land mass...It's that far so it's possible that it will be-

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PREEMPTIVE

come stronger, so the scenario of a storm surge is possible," he said. Jalad said government is aiming for zero casualty.

Jalad said the interior department has alerted local government units for preemptive evacuation in areas that are likely to be hit by the typhoon.

"I think we should start by Friday or even later part of Thursday because as it approaches, we are going to experience rains already," he said.

PNP chief Oscar Albayalde placed all Luzon-based police units on full alert status effective 6 a.m. Thursday to ensure the availability of resources and men for disaster response in anticipation of the destructive effects of Ompong.

Albayalde said he has activated the national headquarters "1st level battle staff" to make sure that command and control of all

police disaster response operations are effective.

He said relief goods are on standby in Camp Crame, ready for distribution to areas to be affected by the weather disturbance.

The NDRRMC earlier said it is making Yolanda-level preparations with a budget of P1.7 billion.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the eye of typhoon Ompong was estimated to be some 1,145 kilometers east of Virac, Catanduanes.

It packed maximum sustained winds of 205 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gusts of up to 225 kph. It was moving west at 20 kph.

Tropical cyclone warning signal number 1 was raised over Catanduanes.

Based on its track, Ompong's 850-kilometer diameter eats up Luzon's northern half plus the Babuyan Group of Islands.

Weather forecaster Meno Mendoza said Ompong is expected to

traverse the Cagayan-Batanes area on Saturday with winds around 205 kph and gusts of up to 255 kph.

Mendoza said there could be heavy to intense rain, very strong winds, and storm surges in coastal areas in Cagayan and Isabela on Friday and in northern Luzon on Saturday.

He said the storm surges could be up to six meters high, which is dangerous and potentially damaging.

Due to Ompong's size, Mendoza said its outer cloud bands will also affect parts of Central Luzon when its eye passes through the northern tip of Cagayan.

He said the typhoon's trough will bring cloudy skies with light to moderate rains over the Bicol region, Eastern Visayas, and eastern portion of Mindanao today.

He said Ompong has started enhancing the southwest monsoon yesterday.

Because of this, he said parts of Palawan, Western Visayas and

the western side of Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with light to moderate rains today.

Provinces in northern and Central Luzon and some cities in Metro Manila have suspended classes in all levels, both public and private, from Thursday to Friday as a preemptive public safety measure.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said it is ready to deploy at least 60 emergency personnel to provide assistance to the public "at any given time."

It said at least seven ambulances, two trucks, two fire trucks, two military trucks, and one boom truck are also on standby.

According to Caritas Philippines Executive Secretary Ft. Edu Gariguez, they have convened their "Surge Team" to monitor the typhoon and provide updates to the dioceses that would be affected.

— With Raymond Africa, Jocelyn Montemayor and Gerard Naval

Go pushes faster infra rehab in Surigao

SPECIAL Assistant to the President (SAP) Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go on Wednesday assured the people of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, that the Duterte administration is always at the service of Filipinos during the 34th Bonok-Bonok Maradjaw Karadjaw Festival in the city.

In a chance interview, Go vowed to help fast-track release of funds for repair and rehabilitation of the Surigao City airport runway damaged by the February 2017 earthquake that struck the city.

"I will talk right away to Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade to address this issue and to hasten the repair. I personally saw that

the runway was being repaired," he said.

Funding for the repair was released in April 2018 and 1,060 meters of the 1,600 meter runway have been restored.

Go said he would also talk to Public Works Secretary Mark Villar to raise the concern of Surigao City residents regarding the Dinagat-Surigao Bridge Link project.

"We will be having our Cabinet meeting this Tuesday. I will talk to Secretary Villar to raise your concern with the bridge, and to also fast-track everything. I promise to provide immediate action, that's why I'll be talking to the department heads," he added.

In his speech, Go highlighted the rich culture and tradition of the people and lauded efforts of the police, the military and the local government of Surigao City in keeping their communities safe, orderly and secure.

He said he is planning to put up a Malasakit Center in Surigao City to follow the launch of such centers in Palawan and Bacolod.

Go added that the Duterte administration would coordinate with the local government of Surigao del Norte to establish a Malasakit Center in the area that would cater and make a priority senior citizens and persons with disabilities or PWDs. *AT*

Cops, soldiers shun destabil moves

By Kathleen Mae Bulquerin

Top police and military officials yesterday reiterated their loyalty to the Constitution and the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte.

Earlier, Duterte had bared that Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, along with members of the Liberal Party and the communists, is plotting to topple him. Duterte dared soldiers to side with Trillanes if they are dissatisfied with his leadership.

Yesterday, Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Director General Oscar Albayalde categorically said the PNP will not take part in any bid to oust Duterte.

"Over and over and over, (I will say) that's zero for us in PNP. In our monitoring, we have no indication whatsoever of (PNP officials) giving support to Sen. Trillanes," Albayalde said.

We will always be loyal to the Constitution, to his (Duterte) administration and to the Filipino people.

Albayalde and Trillanes are both graduates of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). However, Albayalde is a member of the PMA Class of 1986 while Trillanes belongs to PMA Class of 1995.

The PNP chief said he was in Zamboanga the other day, particularly with the Special Action Force and from what he observed there is no need to conduct loyalty check within the ranks of the police.

"We will always be loyal to the Constitution, to his (Duterte) administration and to the Filipino people. The President has our trust and confidence and we have his

trust and confidence," Albayalde added.

In a radio interview, Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Martin Andanar expressed confidence in the professionalism of the military and the police.

"Our AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the PNP are very professional. Their loyalty is with the people and the flag. And that is exactly what President Duterte meant when he said: I don't need your loyalty; you need to be loyal to the people," Andanar said.

Talks of destabilization plot came after Duterte issued Proclamation 572 last week. It voided the grant of amnesty to Trillanes on the ground he failed to comply with the requirements to apply for the amnesty and express remorse for his crimes against the people.

Trillanes led the mutiny against former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo twice, in the 2003 Oakwood Mutiny and in the 2007 Manila Peninsula siege.

Officers of the Eastern Mindanao command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines also gave assurance yesterday that they are united in support of the administration.

"We shall remain loyal to the Constitution and to the chain of command amid the political turmoil," the Eastern Mindanao

Command said in a statement sent to the media.

The statement added that while some sectors are trying to drag the military into the political fray, they remain "committed and focused in our task to secure our communities from terrorists and other lawless elements."

They vowed not to allow anyone to take advantage of the situation "to carry out their ill-intentions."

AFP chief of staff Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr. earlier had reminded the soldiers to be loyal to the Constitution and shun any involvement in partisan politics. 3

Galvez warned groups who may try to divide the AFP that they will not succeed.

Daring Du30 trusts military—Palace

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte's dare to the military to mutiny and support his critic Senator Antonio Trillanes IV was an expression of his confidence in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Malacañang said Wednesday.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said Duterte trusted that the military would not support any ouster efforts against him.

"It just means that the President is confident that there will be no support coming from the military to remove him from his post," Roque told reporters.

"His seeming incitement is actually also an expression of confidence that no one will follow Senator Trillanes."

Duterte on Tuesday dared the military to
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Daring...

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stage a coup and oust him if they no longer found him effective as a leader, echoing what he had been repeatedly saying in previous speeches.

"If you want another President, fine," Duterte said.

Duterte's tirades prompted his critics to suspect that the chief executive had started feeling "insecure" about the military's loyalty.

In other developments:

- Police Chief Oscar Albayalde said Wednesday they will not be persuaded to join any move by would-be coup plotters in ousting Duterte.

"We will always be loyal to the Constitution, to his administration and to the Filipino people. The President has our trust and confidence," Albayalde said.

- Magdalo Party-list Rep. Gary Alejano on Wednesday urged Duterte to send a message of unity instead of challenging the military to oust him.

Alejano, a former officer of the Philippine Navy, lamented Duterte's statements during his tête-à-tête with Chief Presidential Legal Adviser Salvador Panelo on Tuesday.

- Both Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Maria Sison and the Magdalo group on Tuesday denied they were in cahoots to oust Duterte.

- Duterte's one-on-one interview with Panelo was "a lost opportunity," Vice President Leni Robredo said Wednesday.

She told the Duterte administration to focus on inflation the rice crisis and how to address them, instead of repeatedly criticizing the opposition.

She said the President could have discussed and addressed the people's immediate and urgent concerns rather than waste time coming out in a televised "tete-a-tete" with Panelo.

- Duterte's widely anticipated public address was a complete disappointment and a total waste of time and precious government resources, Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros said Wednesday.

Francisco Turyay, Rio N. Araja and
Macon Ramos-Araneta

AFP chief: No reason to doubt military's loyalty

BY VICTOR REYES

ARMED Forces chief Gen. Carlito Galvez yesterday affirmed the military's loyalty to the Constitution and to the chain of command, amid talks of a plot to oust President Duterte, the military's commander-in-chief.

"I recommit to the nation the unity and firm resolve of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for an unflinching loyalty to the Constitution and the duly-constituted authorities," he said.

Galvez issued the statement a day after President Duterte told soldiers sympathetic to his predecessor, Benigno Aquino III, and to opposition Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV that they are free to stage a mutiny, a destabilization move, or any

plot to remove him from office.

Over the weekend, Duterte accused Trillanes and the political opposition, particularly the Aquino's Liberal Party, of conniving with the communist movement to oust him. He said the plot would be carried out next month. He made the disclosure after Trillanes, who was involved in plots to oust former President now Speaker Gloria Arroyo, criticized him for issuing Proclamation 572 which voided the amnesty granted to the senator by Aquino in 2011.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana later said the only ones plotting to remove Duterte are the communists.

"I assure our people, and there is no reason to doubt, that the 145,000-strong soldiers, airmen,

sailors and marines of the AFP are solidly behind the chain of command," said Galvez.

Galvez also said he is confident that military personnel "will decline firmly any and all attempts to create a wedge in the AFP."

"And they will do so more for the reason of their oath than it is for fear of severe consequences of relief from post, investigation, and steep penalties under the military justice system," said Galvez.

Galvez was among soldiers who staged coups against the Corazon Aquino administration in the late 80s. He has also been granted amnesty, together

with the current Army chief, Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista, for the 1989 coup. Galvez and Bautista belong to the Philippine Military

Academy Class of 1985.

"We were also given amnesty before. We were involved in the 89 coup. They (Galvez and Bautista) are Scout Rangers (an elite unit of the Army)," said a source.

The AFP's Eastern Mindanao Command based in Davao City, the hometown of the President, said it is "solid and undivided as an organization."

"We shall remain loyal to the Constitution and chain of command amidst the political turmoil," said Eastmincom spokesman Lt. Col. Ezra Balagtey.

While its men have their own views and opinions on certain issues, Balagtey said Eastmincom "remains solid, professional, and

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AFP

focused on our mission to secure our communities, facilitate the delivery of services to our people, and address threats to our peace and security."

Maj. Gen. Perfecto Rimando Jr., commander of the Army's 5th Infantry Division based in Isabela, told his men to focus on their job, including the fight against communist New People's Army rebels.

"Don't be influenced by any individual or political group into getting involved in any attempt to destabilize our government. As individuals, we have different political views, and we understand that, but we must always put in our mind our constitutional duty to this country and to the people,"

said Rimando.

Echoing an earlier warning of Galvez, Rimando said soldiers who will be involved in partisan politics will be relieved from their posts and investigated.

"We have a lot of work to do. The enemies of the people, the communist NPA, terrorists are there, waiting for an opportune time to strike and add havoc, with the ongoing political activities in our country," said Rimando.

"We will not allow them to pursue their plans against us... So, I urge everybody to focus only on their job," he added.

CLARIFICATION

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said President Duterte was not goading anyone from the

military to revolt against him or join any ouster plot.

He said the President made the statement because he believes that the military is loyal to the flag and the country, and no soldier will join Trillanes and his group.

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo said the President does not believe that any soldier would join Trillanes despite the senator's claimed of support from soldiers.

PNP chief Oscar Albayalde said information on any movement in the PNP to destabilize the government will easily leak, out no matter how discreet, because it will involve recruitment of policemen.

"I have repeatedly said that over and over, actually it is zero here in the PNP. We have not monitored any group whatsoever

or any group which is giving support to Trillanes... We need not conduct loyalty checks... we will always remain loyal to the Constitution, to the administration, and to the Filipino people," Albayalde said.

He said there may be a few disgruntled policemen but "that is probably their own personal opinion but that does not include anybody else or influence anybody inside the PNP."

"If you want to take sides you resign from the service. You can always resign anytime and go there if you want. Maybe that's the message the President wants to convey because if not all and you will do that (take sides) for sure you will face sanctions," he said. — *With Jocelyn Montemayor and Raymond Africa*

SA GITNA NG BANTANG KUDETA

EastMinCom, solid pa rin —AFP

Nananatili pa ring solido at hindi nagkawatak-watak bilang isang organisasyon ang mga tauhan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines-Eastern Mindanao Command (AFP-EastMinCom).

Ito ang tinuyak kahapon ni EastMinCom spokesman, Lt. Col. Ezra Balagtey sa publiko sa gitna ng bantang magkakaroon umano ng pagtatangkang mapatalsik sa posisyon si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Depensa ni Balagtey, hindi pa rin nagbabago ang posisyon ng militar na maging matapat sa Konstitusyon at sa chain of command sa gitna ng nararanasang bangayan sa pulitika.

"While there are prevailing issues which some sectors are trying to drag the military into the fray, Eastern Mindanao Command, together with its

subordinate units, remains committed and focused in our task to secure our communities from terrorist and other lawless elements, and allow no one to take advantage of the situation to carry out their ill-intentions," aniya.

"While we recognize that our officers and soldiers have their own view and opinion on any issues, rest assured that the Eastern Mindanao Command, and the whole AFP for that matter, remains solid, professional, and focused on our mission to secure our communities, facilitate the delivery of services to our people, and address threats to our peace and security," patuloy na ni Balagtey.

Nauna nang binalaan ni AFP Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez, Jr. ang kanyang mga tauhan na huwag sumali o

magpaapekto sa nararanasang sitwasyon ng pulitika sa bansa at dapat ay isaalang-alang pa rin ng mga ito ang organisasyon at ang kapakanan ng bansa. Pinasinungalingan din niya ang balitang nagkawat-watak na ang hanay ng militar at nakahanda itong mag-alsa laban sa pamahalaan.

"Let me belie claims by some quarters of divisiveness or rumblings in the AFP. I assure our people that, as in many times in the past, the AFP will be united and strong as an organization. Let me then, as the AFP Chief of Staff, take this occasion to warn persons who or groups that attempt to divide the AFP by sowing intrigues and discord among its Officers and Enlisted personnel. You will not succeed," pahayag pa ni Galvez.

Francis T. Wakefield

PNP, AFP solid for DU30

By ALFRED DALIZON

PHILIPPINE National Police chief, Director General Oscar D. Albayalde and AFP Chief of Staff General Carlito Galvez Jr. yesterday assured that the police and military fully support President Rodrigo Duterte and will defend his presidency from saboteurs and destabilizers.

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PNP...

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"We are loyal to the Constitution, the institution and the Filipino people," the PNP chief said as he rejected anew suggestions to conduct a loyalty check on the police. "I have said it again and again, zero, nil. We have not monitored anybody in the police force who is reportedly undermining the government, thus there is really no need to conduct a loyalty check," he said.

Gen. Albayalde stressed that they have no information about any rumblings in the 190,000-strong police force. If there is discontentment against the government among police officers, for sure it would leak.

He said however that there could be some policemen who may have their 'personal opinions' on the present situation but are keeping it to themselves and some of their colleagues. "But personal discussions does not involve everybody in the PNP," he added.

As a general rule, members of the uniformed service are mandated to always respect.

Gen. Albayalde also said the PNP is very thankful to President Duterte for he is the first Philippine leader who made true his campaign promise to dou-

ble the salary of the police. He said many Philippine presidents since the 80s have made the same vow but all promises did not materialize until the former Davao City mayor won the presidency.

"This is the reason why President Duterte enjoys the full trust and confidence of the police force," he said.

Meanwhile, General Galvez said "I recommit to the nation the unity and firm resolve of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for an unflinching loyalty to the Constitution and the duly constituted authorities."

He said there is no reason to doubt that the 145,000-strong soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines of the AFP are solidly behind the Chain of Command.

"I am confident that the men and women of the AFP will decline firmly any and all attempts to create a wedge in the AFP," Galvez said.

He stressed that soldiers will do so more for the reason of their oath than it is for fear of severe consequences of relief from post, investigation, and steep penalties under the Military Justice system.

On the issue regarding Senator Antonio Trillanes IV, Galvez said he will defer comments on the matter.

The PNP chief also said

they will just wait for the Makati City court decision on the case of Senator Antonio Trillanes IV before making their move in accordance with the law.

He explained the President had made it clear when he said that the 'rule of law will prevail' on Trillanes' case. "That's following the law clearly. We will respect what the court will say, klarong-klaro ang sinabi ng Presidente," he said.

Gen. Albayalde also called on other officials and the media not to speculate on the matter so as not to confuse the people. As of yesterday, he said the PNP Legal Service is preparing its reply on the High Tribunal's resolution regarding the presidential declaration that voided the amnesty given to Trillanes by former President Benigno Aquino III.

He also called on classmates of Trillanes from Philippine Military Academy Class 1995 to respect the law and remember what they have been taught in Fort del Pilar.

Albayalde said he is of the belief that even PMA Class 1995 is not all solid behind Trillanes. "Since we all came from the same institution, I hope they (PMA Class 1995) will never forget the ideals they learned from the four portals of the Academy kasi kung hindi, parang binenta mo na din

pati yung institution mo," he said.

Gen. Albayalde said they are checking all information regarding plots to undermine the Duterte government including one that involves a conspiracy between the communist movement and the Magdalo Group of Trillanes.

"It's very possible when they are desperate," he said. Albayalde said the pieces of information spilled by President Duterte are also 'serious information' which they need to fully verify because the President has so many sources.

He said they are even verifying information regarding supposed terrorist plans to bomb some targets in the country this coming September 21. "But I would tell you na hindi na bago ang mga information na yan. Some are even rehashed, raw and unvalidated information but we have to react, we have to verify those pieces of information and possibly preempt them," the PNP chief said.

Gen. Albayalde earlier maintained that police will always follow the rule of law in the case of embattled Senator Trillanes even as he assured that there are no rumblings in the 190,000-strong police force in the aftermath of President Duterte's decision to revoke the amnesty granted to his staunch critic.

COA: P10B AFP-PNP housing project went to questionable contractors

BY PETER J. G. TABINGO

THE Commission on Audit has found anomalous circumstances in the award of 28 housing projects worth P10.62 billion under the AFP/PNP Housing Program.

In its 2017 audit, the COA said the NHA did not observe the

required evaluation process and the contracts were awarded to construction companies with doubtful capacity to handle multi-billion government projects.

"Verification of the documents... showed that the developers are not technically and financially capable to undertake the housing

projects. These are manifested by the deficiencies in the documents submitted and non-compliance to some requirements by the developers on the evaluation of financial capacity," the COA said.

The report did not disclose the

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COA

identity of the questioned contractors, merely designating them as Developers A, B, and C. However, it said some of the projects are located in the municipalities of Bocaue and Pandi, Bulacan.

The audit team said Developer A did not disclose the contract cost as well as the clients/owners of on-going projects.

In the case of Developer B, technical and financial documents concerning all five AFP/PNP housing projects awarded to it were not submitted for evaluation.

Auditors said Developer C's license under the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) gave it a limit of only P100 million but it still landed a P726.4 million project in Bocaue, contrary to the provisions of PCAB Circular No. 001 (S. 2009).

Three shelter projects for infor-

mal settler families (ISFs) with a combined value of P2.141 billion also went to Developer C. These were Pandi Residence 1 consisting of four contracts with a total cost of P864 million; Pandi Residence 2 with two contracts worth P561.6 million combined; and Pandi Residence 3 with four contracts totaling P716 million.

"The contractor's license was not required in the provisions of the MC (Memorandum Circular) No. 2518-A for ISFs living in danger areas," the audit team found.

Additional deficiencies found included failure to conduct a complete evaluation of the developers' financial capacity; non-submission of the lists of manpower and equipment; and the Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) was not included in the terms of reference (TOR) for the contracts.

Without these, the audit team noted that there was no way to

tell if the chosen contractors had the means to complete the multi-million pesos projects in the specifications and in the timetable required.

It recommended that the NHA review and strengthen the Terms of Reference as well as the Memorandum Circulars governing the AFP/PNP Housing Program along with other existing shelter programs of the agency.

The COA said there should be guidelines for a comprehensive evaluation of project proposals and better controls over the implementation.

It also insisted that the submission of the List of Manpower, the List of Equipment for each individual contract be made mandatory in the technical evaluation process.

In its comment on the audit observations, the NHA claimed the PCAB licenses of the developers were not considered for the

Bocuar Housing projects as well as the Pandi Residences 1, 2, and 3.

It said the primary consideration in the selection process is that the developer should be the real owner of the site offered for the projects.

It said the Net Financial Contracting Capacity is "no longer necessary;" the list of equipment is not considered a mandatory requirement and the PCAB license is only a "secondary reference" since not all developers are registered with the accreditation board.

The COA said as of December 31, 2017, the total loan receivables of NHA have reached P4.612 billion.

The amount represents payments to developers for 20 housing projects under the AFP/PNP Housing Program and another one for Informal Settler Families Living in Danger Areas.

However, upon review of the

supporting documents, the audit team discovered that 51 percent or P2.358 billion of the payments were not supported by individual loan agreements (ILAs).

This means the developers constructed housing units and charged the cost against the NHA programs even if the supposed beneficiaries were not known.

It also meant the NHA does not have any idea who is holding the loan and who will pay it back.

"The ILA serves as the commitment of the identified beneficiaries to pay NHA in return for financing the acquisition of the house and lot packages," the COA pointed out.

So who is responsible?

The audit team said the process requires the Finance Unit of the concerned NHA Project Office (PO) or NHA Area Management Office (AMO) to conduct an initial checking of the documentary requirements which include the ILA.

This is done to verify if the payment due a developer is in order.

"The completeness and authenticity of relevant documents were further verified by the Pre-Audit Unit now under the Accounting Department before paying the developer. However, verification of the payments revealed that the PAU did not require the complete submission of the ILA from the concerned AMO," the auditors said.

The NHA did not contest the finding. Instead, it informed the COA that the AFP/PNP Housing Board was given until June 30, 2017 to submit the "revised/sanitized list of the names of beneficiaries/awardee" for all AFP/PNP project sites.

Eight months after the deadline, the said job has not been completed.

Another twist is likely to make the records murkier.

No alliance with Trillanes, LP for Rody ouster - Joma

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Ma. Sison yesterday belied allegations of a tactical alliance among the CPP, the Liberal

Party (LP) and Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV to oust President Duterte.

Sison said Duterte is again lying for claiming the rebels have forged an alliance with the LP and Trillanes to remove a common enemy.

Sison said there is no need for such an alliance, saying Duterte would be lucky to stay in power beyond 2019.

"There has never been any discussion between me or the CPP with Trillanes or the Liberal Party about

ousting Duterte from power," he said.

Sison, however, admitted it is no secret that the CPP wishes to promote "a broad united front" to oust Duterte from office.

Turn to Page 2

No alliance From Page 1

"The broad united front promoted by the CPP against the Duterte tyranny is open to all patriotic forces. But as far as I know, there are yet no talks between the CPP and Trillanes' group or the Liberal Party. Duterte is lying and bluffing by claiming that there are recorded conversations provided by a foreign government," Sison said.

Sison challenged Duterte to present evidence on his claims.

"I challenge him to present publicly what he claims as recorded conversations. The experts will easily expose the fakery if he dares to present anything. This

could be something like his invented foreign bank accounts of Trillanes," Sison said.

Sison said the moment of ouster of Duterte will occur when the military and police forces withdraw their support.

"Duterte is now worried to death and so desperate as to imagine that he would be ousted this coming October," Sison said.

"At any rate, Duterte will be lucky if he survives 2018 and even luckier if he survives middle of 2019," he added.

Duterte linked the LP and the Magdalo group of former rebel

military officers in talks with the communist rebels in a plot to oust him from office.

Duterte claimed a "friendly" foreign government provided the intelligence on the supposed plot.

He said Sison should face trial for terrorism.

"Sison should face a trial ... Sison is a terrorist and as a terrorist, I do not see any leeway or enough elbow room for him to move around," he said.

Duterte and Sison, his former professor at university, have been at odds as they exchanged barbs over their health conditions following the failure of peace talks between the government and communist rebels.

- With Christina Mendez

PEACE INITIATIVE IN BANGSAMORO REGION

THOUSANDS SHOW UP FOR VOTERS' LISTING INSIDE MILF CAMP IN MAGUINDANAO

CAMP DARAPANAN, MAGUINDANAO—Thousands of Moro rebels have registered with the Commission on Elections (Comelec) for the plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) scheduled on Jan. 21 next year.

One of them, Basir Amilo, a combatant in the last 20 years, registered as voter for the first time on the first day of the three-day satellite registration.

Satellite center

"[It is] my first time and I am excited to exercise my right of suffrage," said Amilo, who registered with his wife and three

children of voting age. "Before, we did not participate in electoral process of the government."

This Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) camp hosted one of the 15 satellite centers put up by the Comelec for the special registration in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and the provinces of Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato.

The MILF, chaired by Al Haj Murad Ebrahim, has been actively campaigning for the ratification of the BOL, which is anchored on the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro,

the final peace agreement signed by the government and the MILF in 2014.

Once ratified during the Jan. 21, 2019, plebiscite, the BOL will replace the ARMM with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), which has wider political power than the present ARMM.

Registration documents

Lawyer Udtog Tago, Maguindanao election supervisor, said the three-day registration of voters had been part of Comelec's support for the government peace initiatives in Mindanao.

Tago said most of the registrants failed to present valid registration requirements, like their birth certificates, but this was "understandable."

Many of the MILF combatants had not been registered with the local civil registry office for fear of getting arrested by government security forces.

An MILF-issued identification card had been recognized as a requirement for registration, Tago said.

Mohaqher Iqbal, a member of the MILF peace negotiation panel, also registered on Tuesday.

Uztadz Salahuddin Salabi, an MILF field commander, said

it was important for them to register so they could participate in the plebiscite. *Al* the MILF was given the opportunity to participate, adding, "As if this is the last part of our battle for self-governance." Sammy Al-Mansoor, MILF chief of staff, said he was glad

—EDWIN FERNANDEZ INQ

Roque says there's nothing wrong with foreigners listening to Pinoy conversations here

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

Malacañang said that foreign governments listening to conversations of Filipinos in the Philippines is not necessarily a bad thing, claiming that the country has benefited from such sharing of information.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque made the statement after President Duterte said that he has been receiving information from "sympathetic" foreign countries about plots to oust him.

In a press briefing, Roque said that while he has no idea on how often it is being done, "spying" on the government's perceived enemies is part of the nature of the intelligence community.

"I do not know if it is a regular thing. What I do know is that's the nature of intel. Intel, precisely, is intended to provide you information to avoid eventualities," he said Wednesday.

"You know, even as early as the time we developed inter-state relations, the gathering of intel has always been recognized as a function of diplomatic missions, he added.

"We have regular reports from our own embassies, we also get intel information, that's the nature of diplomatic relations nowadays," he continued.

The Palace official also said that there's nothing wrong with foreign governments listening in on local conversations, especially if the general population will benefit from it.

"Well we have been beneficiaries of shared information from the United States about terrorist groups, nothing wrong with that," he added.

In his tête-à-tête with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday, Duterte claimed that an intel

report from foreign countries said that the Magdalo soldiers are working with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on his ouster.

"We have the evidence and we have the conversation provided by a foreign country sympathetic to us," he said.

"The connection will be shown maybe any day now. I asked that it be declassified at ipalita nila sa lahat (and show it to everybody)," he added.

Meanwhile, Roque said that only the Congress can determine if President Duterte allowing foreign interception is a culpable violation of the Constitution and is an impeachable offense.

Roque made the comment after constitutional law professor Tony La Viña said that the act is a violation of public trust and compromises the country's security.

"That's his personal opinion. Ultimately, whether or not it is impeachable is it will be a decision of the House of Representatives," he said.

"That's just an expression of a personal opinion which should not carry much weight," he added.

Roque, meanwhile, advised the public to take extra measure to protect their security, even advising everyone to not use their cellphones if they fear of other countries listening in on their conversations.

"I'm sure everyone is listening to everyone else. And that is why the rule now is don't use your telephone," he said.

"Well, at this time and age, you need to know that oftentimes, privacy of communication is seriously challenged not just by intel individuals, but because of the nature of the technology," he added.

"So take extraordinary precautions in protecting the privacy of your communication," he continued.

Two NPAs killed in CamSur clash

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Two New People's Army (NPA) terrorists were killed in an encounter with government troops in Brgy. Malabog, Caramoan, Camarines Sur, Tuesday afternoon.

Troops of the Army's 83rd Infantry Battalion and 97 Military Intelligence Company (MICO) under the 902nd Infantry Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, encountered at about 12:40 p.m. Tuesday 10 NPAs resulting in a firefight that led to the death of the two unidentified communist rebels. 311

Troops recovered from the encounter site one carbine, one improvised explosive device (IED), personal belongings, and subversive documents.

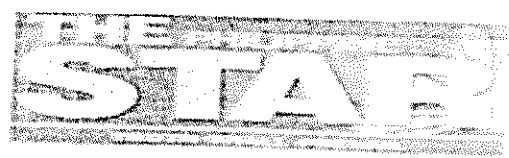
Lieutenant General Danilo Pamonag, the Commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Southern Luzon Command (AFP-SoLCom), expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased and encouraged other rebels to allow the government to help them rebuild their lives.

He further commended the troops for their bravery and diligence in the performance of their duties.

He said operations in the area are ongoing, in coordination with the local Philippine National Police, communities and local government unit.

Militar vs NPA: 2 rebelde todas

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay - Dalawang hinihinalang rebeldeng New People's Army ang bumulagta habang isang sundalo ang sugatan matapos magkaengkwentro sa bulubunduking lugar ng Sitio Labog, Brgy. Malabog, Caramoan, Camarines Sur noong Martes ng tanghali. Inaalam pa ang pagkakakilanlan ng dalawang rebelde habang ginagamot sa Caramoan Municipal Hospital ang sundalo na kinilala lamang na si Pfc. Nobleza. Sa ulat ni Capt. Joash Pramis, tagapagsalita ng 9th Infantry Division ng Philippine Army, alas-12:40 ng tanghali habang nagsasagawa ng strike operation ang mga sundalo mula sa 83rd IB, 97 Military Intelligence Company, 9th Military Intelligence Branch at 22nd IB nang masalubong nila ang 10 rebelde. Agad silang nagbakbakan sanhi upang mapatay ang dalawang rebelde at umatras ang kanilang mga kasamahan. Nasugatan naman sa kaliwang braso si Nobleza. *(Jorge Hallare)*



2 Indonesian fishermen snatched off Sabah

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY - The military has alerted government troopers in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu over the reported kidnapping of two Indonesian fishermen in the waters off Sabah on Tuesday.

"We have alerted our forces at the border," Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Com-

mand, said yesterday.

Besana said they received reports on the kidnapping from their Malaysian counterparts.

Malaysian authorities said the kidnappers, who were on a speedboat, took the Indonesians from a fishing boat off Sempornah near the border of the Philippines. Two other fishermen managed to escape.

Besana said the Malaysian

police could not confirm if the Abu Sayyaf was behind the kidnapping.

Besana said reports that the kidnappers were speaking in a Philippine dialect have yet to be verified, adding that it was unclear where the gunmen brought their captives.

The Abu Sayyaf has carried out kidnappings in the waters between Sabah and Mindanao.

Besana gave assurance that there is no letup in military operations to rescue the remaining hostages of the Abu Sayyaf.

The bandits are still holding a Dutch man, a Vietnamese, three Indonesians and five Filipinos. The Indonesians were taken in the waters off Merabong near Kunak district in Sabah in November 2016. ||

2 Indonesian fishers abducted off Sabah

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Two masked gunmen abducted two Indonesian fishermen off Semporna town in Sabah despite a strict security and sea curfew imposed by Malaysian authorities over persistent threats posed by Abu Sayyaf Group terrorists.

Malaysia's Star Online reported on Wednesday that two other fishermen managed to hide in a compartment of their boat.

It said police were investigating whether the gunmen have links with the Abu Sayyaf or criminal groups from Tawi-Tawi province in southern Philippines that have carried out ransom kidnappings in the past in Sabah.

The attackers, armed with automatic rifles, were speaking in Tausug, a dialect commonly used in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu, according to the two fishermen, who identified their abducted companions as Usman Yunus, 35, and Samsul Sagunim, 40.

"Based on the account of the two fishermen who managed to flee, Omar said they heard the sound of a pump boat approaching their vessel as it was docking at the jetty. The two men went to hide themselves. And from a hole in the compartment, they saw two armed men in dark clothing boarding their boat."

"When they got out of their hiding place, they discovered that their crew mates and the boat's radio were missing. The armed men were said to have spoken in the Suluk dialect," the report said.

Police said all four Indonesians had gone fishing with 11 other fishermen near Pulau Gaya in the past three days.

The 11 fishermen then headed to shore to deliver their catch.

The abduction occurred just a day before an extended sea curfew is to end September 13 after four years.

Sabah extended its curfew covering three nautical miles off Tawau, Semporna, Kunak, Lahad Datu, Kinabatangan, Sandakan and Beluran — all near the border of Tawi-Tawi's chain of islands.

Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Ramli Din said the decision to extend the curfew was made

based on continuous threats from cross-border criminals, including from kidnap-for-ransom groups and the Abu Sayyaf.

Ramli said police intelligence indicated that kidnap-for-ransom groups and Abu Sayyaf bandits were still trying to commit cross-border crimes.

The curfew was implemented on July 19, 2014 after a series of kidnappings, which saw the beheading of Sarawakian Bernard Then Ted Fed and the killing of several others, including a policeman and tourists.

In August, a group of gunmen also attempted to abduct the crew of a tugboat in Sabah.

At least 10 armed men were involved in the failed abduction near Lahad Datu's Tambisan area after the crew locked themselves in a room.

The armed men managed to sneak into Sabah and boarded a tug boat on the evening of August 9.

The crew quickly radioed for help and patrolling members of the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) responded immediately, forcing the gunmen to escape.

Esscom commander Datuk Hazani Ghazali said the crew were ferrying palm oil from Felda Sabahat in Tengku and on their way to Kuantan when the gunmen on a motorboat came alongside their boat in Tambisan waters near the Tawi-Tawi chain of islands.

Malaysia and Indonesia have a border patrol agreement with the Philippines and share regular intelligence and conduct trilateral maritime patrols to prevent piracy and terrorism, including ransom kidnappings of sailors in the maritime borders.

The military previously said security is tight in the border to prevent Abu Sayyaf kidnappings inside Sabah or in the waters of Tawi-Tawi, which is frequented by cargo boats.

The Abu Sayyaf is still holding several foreign hostages in the restive southern region of Mindanao.

AL JACINTO



2 Indonesian dinukot ng Abu Sayyaf

Dinukot ng grupong Abu Sayyaf ang dalawang Indonesian na sakay ng isang fishing vessel sa karagatan ng Sabah, Malaysia at dinala sa Sulu.

Sinabi ni AFP Spokesman Lt. Col. Gerry Berana, Spokesman ng AFP-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-Westmincom), kusa-

lukuyan pa silang nagsasagawa ng beripikasyon sa napaulat na pagkidnap sa dalawang Indonesian na sketchy pa ang impormasyon ukol dito.

Sa inisyal na utat ang mga armadong suspek ay tulon ng pump boat nang harangin ang isang fishing vessel at isagawa ang

pagdukot sa dalawang Indonesian.

Kasalukuyan ay naghihintay pa ng update mula sa Task Force INDOMAL-Phi (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) sa Tawi-Tawi at Naval Forces Western Mindanao (NAVFORWest) upang alamín ang napaulat na kidnapping. *Joy Cantos*

2 Indonesian dinukot sa Sabah, dinala sa Sulu? 3

Sinabi kahapon ng spokesman ng Armed Forces of the Philippines-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) na bineberepika pa rin nila ang ulat ng pandudukot sa dalawang Indonesian na sakay ng isang bangkang pangisda sa Sabah, Malaysia.

Iniulat na ang mga biktim ay tinangay ng mga hindi pa rin nakikilalang kidnappers patungong Sulu ngunit ayon kay Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, magulo pa ang impormasyon at kailangan pa nilang makasiguro.

Batay sa mga ulat, dalawang hindi nakilalang armadong lalaki na sakay ng isang maliit na pump boat ang umakyat sa fishing vessel at nagsagawa ng pagdukot.

"May information kami kaya lang sketchy hindi na validate nasa labas kasi natin hindi naman natin area," ani Besana.

Aniya hinuhintay pa nila ang update mula sa Task Force IndoMalPhi (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) sa Tawi-Tawi at sa Naval Forces Western Mindanao (NavForWest) kung totoo nga

ang kidnapping.

"(Tayo ay) on alert. Hindi pa validated 'yung report (at) itinawag lang eh," aniya.

Hindi naniniwala si Besana na Abu Sayyaf Group ang may kagagawan nito.

"Hindi lang naman ang ASG puwede mangidnap, may mga pirata saka...na hindi Pilipino 'di ba?" ani Besana. "So we are waiting for validation and more detailed information on what really happened," aniya pa.

Francis T. Wakefield

2 Indonesian kinidnap ng Saryaf

Dalawang Indonesian ang umano'y kinidnap ng mga hinihinalang teronistang Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sa Malaysia na tumahak patungo sa direksyon ng karagatan ng Pilipinas sa Sulu kamakalawa.

Ayon kay AFP Spokesman Lt. Col. Gerry Besana, spokesman ng AF-Western Mindanao Command (AFP-Westmincom), kasalukuyan pa nilang beneberipika ang ulat na kidnapping sa dalawang Indonesian.

Sa ulat, ang dalawang Indonesian na inaalam pa ang pagkakakilanlan ay kasalukuyang sakay ng isang fishing vessel sa Sabah, Malaysia nang harangin at dukutin ng mga armadong kalalakihan sakay ng isang pump boat.

Ayon kay Besana, ang dalawang dayuhari ay tinangay ng mga armadong kidnappers sa Sulu pero sketchy pa ang impormasyon

ukol dito. Naghihintay pa umano sila ng update mula sa Task Force INDOMALPHI (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines) sa Tawi-Tawi at Naval Forces Western Mindanao (NAVFORWest) sa napaulal na kidnapping.

Inalerto na ang AFP Joint Task Force Sulu para sa posibleng pagpasok ng mga kidnappers sa lalawigan tangay ang panibagong mga bihag (Joy Cantos, trainee Hermie Rivera) (U)

25 suspek sa Isulan bombing kinasuhan na

Sinampahan na ng mga kasong multiple murder at frustrated murder sa Sultan Kudarat Provincial Prosecutor's Office ang nasa 25 katao na sinasabing responsable sa August 28 Isulan bombing.

Kinilalan ni PNP Region-12 Information Officer Superintendent Aldrin Gonzales ang pangunahing suspect na si Aladin Mohammed Kikay kasama ang 24 na iba pang mga miyembro ng Islamic State Inspired-Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters o BIFF. Si Kikay ay pinsan ni Abu Toraito o Abdulmalik Esmael, lider ng isa sa tatlong faction ng BIFF.

Ang grupo nitc kasama ang iba pa ang itinuturong nasa likod ng unang insidente ng pambobomba sa Isulan, ayon sa community elders ng Shariff Saidona, Maguindanao. Matatandaang, nasawi ang tatlo katao habang mahigit 30 ang nasugatan sa August 28 bombing. Sinundan ito noong Setyembre 2, na nagresulta sa pagkamatay ng dalawang mga kabataan at pagkasugat ng 14 na iba pa. (Rhoderick Beñez)

MILF lauds Duterte for commitment to campaign for BOL ratification

By **ALI G. MACABALANG**

COTABATO CITY - The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) lauded, Wednesday, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte for the assurance he gave that he would personally campaign for the ratification of Republic Act 11054 or the Organic Law of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (OLBARRM), describing the process as its "last battle" for self-determination in the south.

"This inspires us more to reciprocate his administration's commitment for a peaceful end in the so-called Mindanao conflict," MILF Vice Chairman Ghazali Jaafar told The Manila Bulletin.

The plebiscite has been set on January 2019.

In his meeting with the Filipino community in Jordan on Sept. 7, the President was quoted as assuring: "I will campaign for 'yes' vote (in the referendum)."

It was the first time since his signing of RA 11054 into law on July 27 that the Chief Executive categorically declared he would

lead campaign for "yes" vote. In previous pronouncements, he merely cited the essence of the new law in the charting of lasting peace in Mindanao.

The MILF leadership was elated by Duterte's assurance because some elected officials in the proposed BARMM territory had earlier aired concern that the President might adopt a "hands off" stance in the campaign for BOL ratification.

Jaafar, who is also chair of the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) that crafted the original draft of the new law, likewise cited the Commission on Election (Comelec) for providing some leeway in the massive registration of new voters, who are eager to participate in the referendum and in subsequent elections in BARMM areas.

"We earlier asked Comelec to accommodate new registrants as much as possible. We are glad that Comelec heeded our appeal," Jaafar said, citing the turnout of thousands of mostly MILF members and sympathizers at the opening of three-day special list-up on September 11.

Special registrations start for Bangsamoro plebiscite

COTABATO CITY: The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has conducted its three-day satellite voter registrations in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) on September 11, 12 and 13 as part of its preparations for the plebiscite on the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) on January 21, 2019.

Director James Jimenez, Comelec spokesman, said the special satellite registrations were held simultaneously in the provinces of Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Norte and North Cotabato and in the cities of Cotabato and Isabela.

The first day of registration on Tuesday inside the Shariff Kabunsuan Cultural Complex at the Office of the Regional Governor (ORG) Compound at the ARMM in this city coincided

with the Muslims' celebration of Amun Jadid or New Year.

Jimenez said at least nine teams from the Comelec main office in Intramuros, Manila, were deployed to augment workforces in local election offices in the plebiscite areas.

The special registration covered applications for voter's registration, transfer of registration, reactivation, change/correction of entries and inclusion/reinstatement of records, he added.

Jimenez said those who already registered for the *barangay* (village) and Sangguniang Kabataan elections did not need to register again during the special registrations. **AT**

The satellite registrations started at 8 a.m. and ended at 5 p.m. on the dates mentioned.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

POSTSCRIPT

FEDERICO D. PASCUAL Jr.

Who warned Du30 of plot against him?

LIKE the *New York Times* being forced by President Trump to reveal who wrote its hot op-ed item on White House intrigues, President Duterte may find himself pressed to disclose which foreign power gave information on a destabilization plot against him in October.

And just as NYT refuses to identify the author, described as a White House official, Duterte is not expected to name the "ally" that shared intelligence about the plot that was hatched, he said, by the Liberal Party, Sen. Antonio Trillanes (Magdalo Party-list) and the Communist Party.

This is a serious accusation against the opposition. With no less than the President fanning speculation by withholding the source and other details, a free-wheeling discussion has ensued.

The usual suspected source is the United States, which knows everything that happens or will happen in its former colony. This may be a slippery assumption, especially with Duterte saying that the US Central Intelligence Agency is out to assassinate him.

(But then, the CIA is known to move at times without explicit instructions from official Washington. If the CIA wanted to kill Duterte, as he claims, why would it expose a plot to get rid of him? To shunt blame if anything untoward happens?)

Or did Duterte pick up the destabilization rumor during his sometimes awkward meetings last week with officials of Israel and Jordan? But note that both countries look too distant to bother eavesdropping on Manila.

Closer to home, another possible source of reports of a conspiracy – assuming it is true – is China, which like the US knows everything about Filipinos who matter. Having forged mutually beneficial ties with Duterte, Beijing is interested in helping him consolidate power.

There is also Malaysia. Although neighbors and co-founders of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Manila and Kuala Lumpur have had uneasy relations on account of the unresolved Philippine claim on the Malaysian state of Sabah.

Even as it played as third-party facilitator in talks between Philippine government panels and Moro rebel groups, Malaysia has not been able to put to rest suspicion that it was stirring up secessionist sentiments in Muslim Mindanao and sowing intrigue.

On Tuesday, Duterte again mentioned the three-party plot in a two-hour TV dialogue with his legal adviser Salvador Panelo. He first disclosed the plan to topple him upon arriving Saturday from Israel and Jordan.

Duterte's Q&A-like exchange with his lawyer, billed



as a tête-à-tête, replaced the "President's Address" that was announced but scuttled later for still unknown reasons. The duo did not take media questions after the show, an unusual conclusion for the event.

We were expecting these items to be the likely subjects of the aborted "address": more details of the LP-Magdalo-CPP conspiracy set to explode in October, the declaration of nationwide martial law, a multi-pronged attack on rising prices, and escalated action against Trillanes.

• Duterte 'nakoryente' on October plot?

DESTABILIZATION could be among the weapons of a political opposition. But we think it most unlikely that the three parties tagged by Duterte – the LP, Magdalo, and the CPP – could quickly lay aside their differences and act together to oust him next month.

If some foreign power told this supposed plot to Duterte and he believed it, we think he was fed a bum steer. In local press parlance, *nakoryente siya!*

Starting to explain our skepticism last Tuesday, we noted that Duterte's conspiracy theory merely improved on the tale told by then President Marcos in 1972 to justify his declaring martial law so he could stay beyond the two-term limit and segue on to autocratic rule.

While Marcos talked of only two forces – the elitist Right and the radical Left – conspiring to grab state powers, Duterte lumped together the three parties, and left out the CIA that he had accused of planning to assassinate him.

We find it improbable that the three disparate parties named by Duterte could mount a serious destabilization as early as next month. They could, probably if they exploited the deterioration of the economy, over time – but not next month.

The remnants of the Liberal Party are in disarray and in bad need of leadership and funds. Trillanes' camp has some firepower but not enough to scare Duterte. The Communist seniors lolling in Holland have been reduced to a maudlin "*Maalala Mo Kayin?*" club.

With these anti-administration forces not primed for an October strike, what plot is Duterte warning against? Could a crisis develop from extreme economic woes and trigger widespread violence and lawlessness to justify martial law or a revolutionary government?

Would the armed forces, assigned by the Constitution as the "protector of the people and the State," be able to handle a fake crisis if one were to be mounted? Would the Supreme Court hear the people's cries and defend their rights when threatened?

As a crisis – real or contrived – builds up, we expect an escalation in the communications cyberwar. The objective is to gain the upper hand in manipulating the public mind in relation to situations that may arise in October and on to the May 2019 midterm election.

With some 90 percent of the thinking population having access to cellphones and such devices, social media – not the traditional mainstream news and entertainment platforms – will be the crucial fronts in that war.

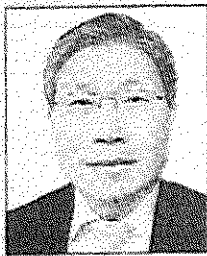
Duterte has had the communications advantage since the 2016 election, but that has not saved him from fumbling planners and operators – as has happened a number of times recently.

Such gut issues as rising prices of essential goods are distracting the target public. The economic stress makes people vulnerable to propaganda for or against the administration. The distraction is reinforced when such calamities as typhoons and floods hit populated areas.

DIPLOMATIC POUCH

HAN DONG-MAN

Steady on ... honoring a Filipino hero of the Korean War



"Steady on."
According to Filipino war correspondent Juan Villasanta, these were the dying words uttered by one of the heroes of the Korean War, words that echoed his team's motto. His name was Captain Conrado Yap, of the 10th Battalion Combat Team's Tank (later, Heavy Weapons) Company.

After surviving the Bataan Death March and serving as operations chief in the Filipino guerilla army, the young Conrado Yap married Aurora de la Llana in 1944. When the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, the Philippines was the first Asian country to join a United Nations coalition to support South Korea's efforts to repel the northern invaders, and Capt. Yap was one of the first officers deployed to Korea. As a soldier dedicated to duty, he did not hesitate to fight another nation's war for freedom and democracy, even it meant leaving Aurora and their three young daughters.

On April 23, 1951, at the famous Battle of Yuldong, Capt. Yap was shot by enemy fire while attempting

to recover and rescue his fallen comrades, after he and his men had secured a strategic location that restored the Filipino front line and saved the lives of hundreds of UN Command soldiers. For his heroism, Capt. Yap has been honored by at least two countries, and recently, by another most grateful nation.

Shortly after his death, Capt. Yap was accorded the highest military honors by the Philippines (the *Armed Forces of the Philippines Medal for Valor*) and by the United States (the *Distinguished Service Cross*).

On July 27, 2018, the 65th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement, the Republic of Korea fittingly honored Capt. Yap by awarding him the *First Class Taegeuk Cordon of the Order of Military Merit*. This is the highest recognition given by the Korean government for military bravery and valor.

The award was presented to his daughter Isabelita Yap-Aganon by no less than Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon in Seoul as part of the annual Visit Korea Program, where Korea shows its gratitude to the veterans of the Korean War.

On August 22, I received a heartfelt letter of appreciation from Isabelita, who said she was grateful for the warm welcome in Korea, and more importantly, for having been able to go to Korea as part of Revisit Korea 2018 and receive the rare honor for her father. She also expressed gratitude for the lunch I hosted

for her family last month.

I am humbled by her kindness, which only shows how well she was raised by her parents, even if her father had to leave his family when she was still a small girl.

Last Friday, I joined the veterans of PEFTOK (Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea) and their descendants for the celebration of the 19th Korean War Veterans of the Philippine Memorial Day. Capt. Yap was one of those fallen heroes whom we honored that day.

Moreover, since Koreans, just like Filipinos, place enormous value on education, our government also regularly awards educational scholarship to descendants of PEFTOK veterans. It is one of the means by which the Korean people recognize the noble sacrifice of the veterans. Without a doubt, Korea would not be the nation that it is today – progressive, motivated, with a strong economy and stable democracy – without the blood sacrifice of valiant soldiers like the PEFTOK veterans, heroes like Capt. Conrado Yap.

We hope that we bring honor to Capt. Yap and his comrades by continuing to remember their bravery and selflessness during one of the darkest hours in Korean history.

(Han Dong-man is the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Philippines).

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SHOOTING STRAIGHT

BOBIT S. AVILA

Now the judiciary can return to normalcy

Last Aug. 28 we entitled our column "An impeachment impossible" because I personally believed that newly appointed Chief Justice Teresita de Castro and Justices Diosdado Peralta, Lucas Bersamin, Andres Reyes Jr., Francis Jardeleza, Noel Tijam and Alexander Gesmundo would never be impeached for allowing the Quo Warranto decision that removed Ma. Lourdes Sereno. We columnists have already been warned not to make prophecies in our columns. However I felt that in this particular case, I never entertained any thoughts that Congress would be so stupid to allow this thing to happen to the Judiciary. True enough my prophecies came through!



I was watching ANCTV when Mindoro Oriental Rep. Salvador Leachon, committee chairman, announced "The complaints are hereby declared by this committee to be insufficient in substance and dismissed."

Opposition Reps. Edcel Lagman of Albay, Teodoro Baguilat Jr. of Ifugao and Gary Alejano of Magdalo who filed the impeachment complaints meekly requested for a case of reconsideration.

But Rep. Leachon was just being polite to them when he asked them to file that case for reconsideration, but my bets are... this case is over, finished or done! The committee declared the evidence presented to them as insufficient in substance and therefore considered dismissed! At this point, we can finally say that the Judiciary can now return to some kind of normalcy after the ugly removal of the late SC Chief Justice Renato Corona and the removal by Quo Warranto of Ma. Lourdes Sereno. Let's hope and pray that this will be the end of top political leaders using the Legislative branch to remove Supreme Court Justices that they dislike.

This week was quite unnerving in the sense that certain legal issues remain unanswered with regards to Proclamation No. 572 signed by Pres. Rodrigo Duterte because the yellow fanged opposition went out of its way to use this issue at a time when prices of basic goods were rising and the political situation was supposed to be collapsing. Worse was when Pres. Duterte wanted to talk to the nation, which we later found out was a one-on-one interview with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo Tuesday afternoon.

The rumor mills were churning so fast that the social media networks predicted that the end of Duterte was near and he was out to declare Martial Law in order to keep himself in power! So despite my busy schedule, I had to tune in to my TV set to hear what Pres. Duterte had to say. What we saw was a Pres. Duterte who was obviously in control of the situation and talked about issues from the high prices of basic commodities to the amnesty granted to Trillanes by the previous administration, and the supposed plot to oust him and the country's rice crisis.

In the end, the President relieved National Food Authority chief Jason Aquino and asked Congress to abolish the NFA Council. Now I guess it's up to Congress to keep or abolish the NFA Council and whether by doing so, it would resolve the rice crisis. One solution we've always looked at is for the Philippines to support our rice farmers through some kind of subsidy. Come now, we taught the Thais how to plant rice, but now we import rice from them. There is something wrong with this equation and various groups have offered solutions, but proper solutions are needed here.

On the issue of the amnesty given to Sen. Antonio Trillanes the President stated that his predecessor former Pres. Benigno "P-Noy" Aquino, apparently did not sign the amnesty for Trillanes because he believed that then Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin's

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giving this Amnesty to Trillanes was sufficient. But apparently, the grant of amnesty is a presidential power that cannot be delegated to presidential appointees. Pres. Duterte also claimed that former Defense chief Voltaire Gazmin committed "usurpation of authority" when he signed the certificate of amnesty issued to Trillanes. This is a serious accusation done by the President.

Opposition stalwart Sen. Risa Hontiveros called the tête-à-tête a "complete disappointment" and "a total waste of time and precious government resources." I have no doubt that Sen. Hontiveros expected much more from Pres. Duterte or for him to do even worse like declaring Martial Law. But her disappointment is not shared by many people who believed that the President did the right thing in having what I would call a "fireside" chat with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel

Salvador Panelo. On the contrary the President talked a lot with Panelo, which gives us an idea that Pres. Duterte is truly in control of the situation. Let me suggest to Sec. Panelo (I first met him during Mother Lily's birthday bash a few weeks ago) that they should have a fireside chat at least once a month. It's good for the nation.

* * *
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Bangsamoro substate, not federalism

COMMENTARY

JUDE JOSUE L. SABIO

As envisioned, the proposed shift to "federalism" will divide the country into several "states" comprising more or less the existing geographical regions. Some political pundits have pompously claimed that federalism will arise from a proposed "federal" constitution.

But that is not federalism in its truest sense. Federalism did not arise that way in the United States or Germany, which represent the political model for federalism. In the American and German models of federalism, there were previously long-standing existing states with their own separate state "constitutions," and these states eventually grouped together in a federated union that was then characterized as federalism.

In fact, in the US, the Constitution never mentions anything about federalism, even if it is of common political knowledge that the US is a federal state. The US Constitution does not create "states," but merely allocates governmental power between the federal government and the already long extant state governments.

In the case of Germany, the German Basic Law expressly states that it is a federal republic. But it is merely descriptive, because, the fact is, there have long been existing states, called "Länder" in German, with their own state constitutions. These Länder grouped together after World War II to form the Federal Republic of Germany.

In political science, the true characteristic of federalism is the existence of independent states—with their own state constitutions—that form together into what

is known as federalism. In other words, federalism is not formed by carving up regions to constitute the states. The lack of a separate constitution for each state in such an artificial setup even detracts from the true nature of federalism.

In modern times, what comes to mind as another model of federalism is the European Union, with different full-blooded European nation-states coming together in a union along federal lines.

It is the function of the federal constitution to allocate governmental powers between the states, on one hand, and the federal government, on the other. It is in this context that a federal constitution can truly be considered as such. A constitution, like the one being foisted by the Duterte administration, is not federal in nature when it purports to carve out regions into states. It is more in the nature, rather, of a glorified local government code masquerading as a federal constitution. The only difference is in its name and its object, because it is called a constitution meant to create states out of groups of provinces and cities.

In our history and political culture, it is ineluctable that there have been no independent, existing states at all. There is no public desire for regional states, as

evidenced by the low public awareness and support for federalism. Even the Cordillera Administrative Region rejected the concept of autonomy in a plebiscite.

Only our Muslim brothers in Mindanao have consistently demanded self-government, from the time of the Moro National Liberation Front to the Bangsamoro Liberation Front. It is only this distinct minority that has consistently evinced, through decades of wars of liberation, a long-standing desire for a "substate," as expressed in the recently passed Bangsamoro law.

If federalism is meant to provide a substate not only to the Bangsamoro but also to the other regional states for the sake of political equality, why create other regional states just to create a substate for the Bangsamoro?

As a matter of practical politics, the most viable solution to the problem of the Bangsamoro is to push through with its clamor for a substate. This solution should be threshed out in the Supreme Court, where the government and the Bangsamoro should be able to ardently defend the constitutionality of the project.

And if there is a need to amend the 1987 Constitution to forestall any constitutional challenge, then the proper constitutional amendment should be done to accommodate a Bangsamoro substate. This political nonsense about federalism should be stopped as an exercise in political witchcraft. *JS*

Jude Josue L. Sabio is a lawyer.

EDITORIAL

Farce in progress

Buried in the Sept. 4 issue of the Manila Times is a copy of Proclamation No. 572 that ordered the unprecedented revocation of the amnesty granted to Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, and his apprehension by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

The proclamation, signed by President Duterte on Aug. 31 before he left on an official trip to Israel and Jordan, cited as its basis the supposed failure of the failed mutineer to "file an official amnesty application form." There is no available copy of his application for amnesty, the Palace said, and Trillanes also "never expressed his guilt for the crimes that were committed on occasion of the Oakwood mutiny and Peninsula Manila hotel siege."

For those reasons, declared Mr. Duterte, the grant of amnesty to Trillanes was "void ab initio," or void from the beginning, because he did not comply with the minimum requirements to qualify for amnesty under Proclamation No. 75 signed on Nov. 24, 2010, by President Benigno S. Aquino III, and later concurred in by both Houses of Congress.

That original reasoning barely lasted a day. Legal experts and other observers immediately weighed in to declare that the proclamation had no basis in fact and law. Relevant audio, video and photo evidence soon came up showing that Trillanes indeed applied for amnesty and admitted guilt in 2011. Moreover, it was pointed out, the President cannot order anyone's arrest, no matter his pique; only the courts can. The rush by government forces to arrest Trillanes in the Senate premises on Tuesday was checked forthwith when the chamber provided sanctuary to one of its own, and declared that Trillanes could not be arrested without a valid warrant.

The Integrated Bar of the Philippines, expressing alarm at the development, said that amnesty, once granted, "cannot be simply dissolved by the invocation of the words 'void ab initio' as though it were some magical incantation that can nullify vested rights."

The courts themselves seemed in no mood to indulge the Palace. The Department of Justice filed "very urgent" petitions to arrest Trillanes in not just one but two Makati City Regional Trial Courts, triggering charges of forum shopping. Both, however, refused to issue any warrant and preferred to give Trillanes time to comment on the cases. The Supreme Court itself, while declining to issue a temporary restraining order on the President's proclamation as requested by Trillanes, remanded the matter to the lower courts, effectively further stalling any move to arrest the senator.

Bested on all fronts, its immediate plans to have a fierce critic of the President triumphantly locked up in jail upon Mr. Duterte's return now in shambles, the Palace was forced to retreat. It would respect the rule of law, it announced, and let the courts decide on the arrest.

But it was not about to back down so easily. Next came a new justification: Former defense secretary Voltaire Gazmin had supposedly "usurped" the authority of the President to declare amnesty, because only the President can grant amnesty, and Gazmin's signature on Trillanes et al.'s applications was not enough to make the amnesty official. But Gazmin's actions, everyone else pointed out, were in fact all in accordance with Aquino's Proclamation No. 75. Moreover, this belated resort to blaming Gazmin was obviously meant to shore up the battered Palace position; nowhere was any "usurpation" mentioned in the original reasons cited for the amnesty revocation.

Perhaps the more authentic reason was let out in Mr. Duterte's unusual televised "rêve-à-tête" with presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo on Tuesday. "Ang problema kay Trillanes ay (the problem with Trillanes is) he's crucifying Bong Go for entering into business with the government," said the President, referring to his long-time special assistant. The implication seemed to be, if only Trillanes had played nice with the administration, he wouldn't be hounded this way.

Certainly, that all-too-revealing pretext wouldn't make it to the official Palace arguments once its case against Trillanes is heard in court. But in this farce in progress with Malacañang moving its arguments and goalposts every time, the bet is high that yet another, more cockeyed rationale would soon roll out from the Palace story factory—any excuse, really, to cut down the prickliest thorn in the President's side.

Still 'very good' but drop in rating must be stopped

PHILIPPINE presidents have all historically begun their administrations with high expectations and support from the people, then gradually tapering down as problems arose. Days before his inauguration in June, 2016, President Duterte received a personal record high of plus-79 as his trust rating in the Social Weather Stations survey for the second quarter of that year. The SWS deemed this score "excellent."

The President continued to score "excellent" in the next four quarterly surveys. Then in the sixth survey in the quarter ending December, 2017, his trust rating fell to plus-75. It dropped to plus-65 in March, 2018. Last Sunday, in the latest survey of June, 2018, the trust rating fell further to plus-57.

Despite these three successive quarterly drops, the President's rating is "very good," in the assessment of SWS. This is so much better than the ratings of some previous presidents, which fell to as low as plus-6 at one time during the Arroyo administration and plus-5 during the Estrada administration.

Nevertheless, administration leaders should make an effort to determine what may have caused this steady drop in the President's trust rating for three quarters now - nine months since December, 2017. Before the drop, the administration engaged in an all-out campaign against the drug menace, with thousands reported killed in the course of the drive led by the Philippine National Police, until it was replaced by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Administration. But during all that time, the presidential trust rating remained "excellent," so the

drug campaign was apparently was not a factor in the survey.

Very likely, the critical factor was rising prices - inflation to economists - which started around January this year. There were many other issues in the following months, among them the smuggling of drugs worth billions of pesos, efforts to cancel the 2019 midterm elections in the effort to draft a new constitution for federalism, killing of several priests at one time, a police campaign that rounded up thousands of "tambays." But the rise in prices dominated the public's attention. In one survey, the people listed as their foremost concerns the prices of goods, low salaries, and unemployment -- all economic issues.

The administration has a host of concerns that it needs to attend to - our claims in the South China Sea, our need to strengthen our military forces, our relations with the United States, Russia, China, and other nations, the break in peace talks with the New People's Army, new reports of violence in Mindanao, etc. We have also been hit by a series of floods from the "habagat" monsoon rains intensified by one Pacific storm after another.

On all these issues, the President and his men have done very well. But the latest SWS survey shows a continuing drop in the President's trust rating. We can only surmise that people are feeling -- more than the effects of these many other issues -- the economic problems that have been worsened by the record inflation, the market prices that continue to rise, affecting the daily lives of their families.

Bangsamoro Organic Law



By ERIC ESPINA

ONE question that maintains currency in the scheduled January 21, 2019, plebiscite for the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) under Republic Act 11054, was an answer made by former Assemblyman Homobono Adaza in my TV interview with him: "The threat of spiraling of Mindanao declaring independence or a portion separating from the Republic in the future, is a serious concern which must be prevented and addressed not by

Mindanaoans alone, but the entire country," he said.

The BOL hopes to be the final solution to decades-old war and "historical gripes" cited by liberation fronts as the premediated cause of their secession. While I hold deep reservations regarding BOL as "silver bullet" to gain peace, let this be the last attempt at catering to a misdiagnosis of the real cause of hostilities. Nobody notices the elephant in the room. A liberation war funded by Malaysia to keep Sabah secure. A reversal of the Macapagal and Marcos resolution (diplomatic/strategic) to

get back Philippine territory.

This is exacerbated when we are misled affirming the founding of a fabricated political identity, "Moros," other ethnic Muslims detest as pejorative. I am worried, this may be the lighted match as propellant for the country's balkanization. Creating a "Moro-landia" is by itself synthetic accommodation unreflective of the tribal diversities, conflicts, "Rido wars" among 18 tribes, plus feudal families, among them. The process of homogenizing such subsisting cleavages by a formulary of religion (Islam) as the glue for their

unity is unlearning Islamic history. The deep divide since 632 between Sunni and Shia, the recent rise and fall of governments in Middle Eastern countries based on the politics of both factions is a testament - e.g., Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, etc. There is the new phenomenon of extremism jockeying for failed states - Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Isis in Afghanistan etc. Palestine facing a common enemy has Hamas, Fatah, six political parties. The Bangsam-

oro Organic Law is constitutionally infirm based on Article X, Section 19, the first Congress mandated to create ARMM, and other provisions. The BOL favors MILF rise to power, discarding the MNLF of Misuari (recognized by Organization of Islamic Conference), the royal houses, and other Filipino lumads. As predicted, the Sulu Archipelago people resist joining Bangsa Moro, and is united to form a Bangsa Sug. Conflict in the horizon. ☺

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September 21, 2018

The Manila Times

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OBSERVER

**YEN
MAKABENTA**

'Destabilization' is a CIA euphemism for 'overthrow'

First word

THE situation has suddenly gotten more complex and menacing, not because President Duterte says so, but

► Makabenta **A4**

because our political vocabulary has suddenly morphed from "amnesty" to "destabilization."

In a wink, we have been transported to the world of the spooks, the intelligence community. The language or lingo here is "CIA-ese," says William Safire, the language maven. (See list of CIA-ese below.)

If you know a fraction of what I have learned (from books, reports, DVDS, etc.) about the world of intelligence and the games that spooks play, you will sit up straight when you hear President Duterte declare that there is a destabilization plot against his government that is targeted to unfold on September 21, 2018, the anniversary of Martial Law.

You will listen and you will study the mountain of information before you. Then you will watch the calendar and become enraged.

Destabilization a CIA coinage

Consider first this discovery that I found during my research:

The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) coined the term "destabilization" or "destabilize," as a euphemism for "overthrow." A euphemism, as my Collins English dictionary defines it, is "an inoffensive word or phrase substituted for one considered offensive or hurtful."

My authority on this is William Safire, lexicographer, author, presidential adviser and erstwhile *New York Times* columnist, and his indispensable lexicon, *Political Dictionary* (Random House, New York, 1978).

Safire shares plenty of information and inside knowledge — much of which is hair-raising but which nobody bothers to dispute.

Safire reports that the Director of Central Intelligence William Colby disclosed to a congressional committee in April 1974 that the CIA had spent \$8 million in Chile between 1970 and 1973 in an effort to make it difficult for Marxist Salvador Allende Gossens to govern.

"The goal of the clandestine CIA activities," wrote Seymour Mersh in the *New York Times* on September 8, 1974, "was to destabilize the Marxist government...."

Since the word was a freshly coined euphemism, and since it appeared to conflict with sworn testimony by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger that "the CIA had nothing to do with the coup" that overthrew Allende, the term was used with savagery and glee by critics of covert US activities.

Thereafter, the word was

used in a positive sense early in the Carter administration. US ambassador to the UN Andrew Young discussed Cuban intervention in Africa as possibly proving to be a "stabilizing force." As Cuban troop strength grew in Africa in 1978, critics of the Carter foreign policy used "stabilizing force" against Carter's men, much as critics of Kissinger had used "destabilization" against him.

Over the years, the CIA coinage has found acceptance in the language.

Oxford now includes "destabilization, destabilize" (British, "destabilisation, destabilise") in its dictionaries.

It considers "destabilization" a mass noun, and defines it as "the process of upsetting the stability of a region or system, especially of government."

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, the foremost American English dictionary, lists and defines "destabilize" as

1. To upset the stability or smooth functioning of a policy;
 2. To undermine the power of a government or leader by subversive or terrorist acts.
- "Destabilization" has become an obsessive part of Philippine political culture. Leaders and plotters, citizens and soldiery, even religious, talk freely of destabilization here.

From media meeting to dialogue

This brings us to the question then: Is there really a destabilization plot against the government of President Duterte?

I was not disappointed to see President Duterte's meeting with the media shift to a dialogue between DU30 and his legal counsel, Salvador Panelo. They conversed about the reality of the threats of destabilization against the Duterte government.

Serendipitously, presidential communication could take place without the usual questioning by Palace journalists, who ask DU30 endlessly to comment on something Trillanes said or so-and-so has said. I was more interested in getting to the truth or falsity of the alleged destabilization plot against the government.

Duterte claimed that he had received validated information from a foreign intelligence group that confirms threats to destabilize the government or launch a coup.

Malacañang has named the Magdalo group led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th as among those that have connived to

oust the President from power.

Duterte accused Trillanes and his Magdalo party of coalescing with the "yellows" and the Liberal Party and the communist rebels (CPP-NPA) to remove him from the presidency by October.

He attested to the veracity of the intelligence information. He said he has asked the military to declassify the information given by the unnamed foreign power on the plot and the principal plotters, so that the Filipino people can become fully aware of the threat to their government.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said that the president had basis for the claim because he has access to privileged information, which may have led him to conclude that his enemies were out to overthrow him.

Roque took a shot at members of the LP who cannot "move on" and accept Duterte as president.

Duterte rounded it up by saying that the public should be wary that Trillanes, the LP and the communist rebels have combined in planning to remove him from office.

Proof from foreign intelligence

He suggested that there is incontrovertible proof on the plot from the intelligence report given him by "a foreign power."

Was the foreign power China, the US or Russia? Was it Israel, from where he had just rushed home to explode the news about destabilization. Anyone of these four countries, with their intelligence agencies, have the capability to secure the information. If they disclose what they know, it will be incontrovertible and actionable.

There may be no hole for the plotters to hide in.

The named groups now see what they are up against. They are scampering for cover and denials.

All have denied complicity in a destabilization plot. But all have persisted in their declared desire to remove Duterte from office.

Do they want to overthrow Duterte as president? They look ready to shut up on this.

Trillanes has finally left the Senate, resigned to the certainty that he must face trial in civil court, and face renewed court martial proceedings against him.

The LP senators talked at first about conducting a Senate inquiry into the revocation of the Trillanes amnesty. But now that the specter of a coup plot

is leveled at them, they will quickly forget about it. The LP must choose whether to declare support for Trillanes, or declare support for the duly elected government.

The CPP-NPA has not made known its response. The front groups in Congress are especially apprehensive, because a misguided statement could cut them off from their lifeline to the public treasury.

The media will also be reassessing the situation, and review how they have reported this political crisis. They will see that the situation is more serious and complex than they at first believed. They themselves will wonder why Trillanes and the opposition and even Leila de Lima have such easy access to their front pages and channels with self-serving statements.

A member of the Catholic clergy has resorted to prayer, supplicating Providence that Duterte will get sick and die. Even the CBCP will cringe from this.

CIA glossary

This makes "CIA-ese" sound noble.

"CIA-ese," says Safire, is spook speak, the language of the intelligence community. In 1976, a Senate select committee to study governmental operations with respect to intelligent activities compiled a glossary of CIA-ese.

Surprisingly, the committee did not include the word "destabilization" or "destabilize" in the glossary, probably because they are too close to home. They look like "a skeleton in the CIA closet."

Included in the glossary are:

1. *Executive action* - a euphemism for assassination, used by the CIA to describe a program aimed at overthrowing foreign leaders.

2. *Plausible denial* - a cover story to disclaim knowledge of an intelligence activity.

3. *Plumbing* - clandestine sting operations of CIA field stations, such as safehouses, unaccountable funds, investigative persons, surveillance teams.

4. *Covert action* - a clandestine activity to influence foreign governments.

5. *Blowback* - lies circulated by the CIA that are picked up by US correspondents abroad and sent back to the US as the truth.

There is more on the list.

I think the local Catholic Church should submit "assassination by prayer" for inclusion in the CIA glossary. Maybe by this, the CIA could be induced to take local priests seriously.

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Out of the EDSA hamster wheel

It's an all too familiar story. Seek the impeachment of the president you want to remove (and replace). If it doesn't work, prod people to flock to EDSA. Then wait for the military to defect. Thus, EDSA is a people-supported coup d'etat. It's a formula used and abused over and over again in our politics. A formula the opposition wanted to use again to overthrow and grab power from President Rodrigo Duterte.

A trigger activates the formula. In EDSA 1986, it was the assassination of Ninoy Aquino three years before. In EDSA 2001 (A), it was the refusal of 11 senators to open a second envelope during the impeachment trial of deposed president Joseph Estrada. And in EDSA 2001 (B), it was the arrest of Estrada.

Among three presidents who faced an EDSA uprising, it was only Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who survived one. Well, two, if we count the planned EDSA in February 2006, which fizzled out after Arroyo nipped it in the bud by declaring a state of national emergency.

In Proclamation 1017, Arroyo identified the strange bedfellows conspiring to bring down the presidency — "elements in the political opposition have conspired with authoritarians of the extreme Left represented by the NDF-CPP-NPA and the extreme Right, represented by military adventurists." The media was also implicated: "The claims of these elements have been recklessly magnified by certain segments of the national media."

Arroyo put a stop to the EDSA madness. And what was then called "people power fatigue" staled the magic of EDSA.

In *Democracy and its Discontents*, investigative journalist Sheila Coronel limns that phenomenon as the "weariness and disillusionment about the prospects of democracy." A malaise precipitated by "skepticism about the desirability — and long-term viability — of the elite democracy established after [Ferdinand Marcos] fall."

I don't think people are disillusioned with democracy. What people are tired of and disgusted with is the EDSA wolf in sheep's clothing. People have realized that those who sell another EDSA to them are akin to the con men who wove the emperor a robe of the finest fabric. EDSA lost its magic the moment they realized that the fabric of revolt is made not of threads of yearning for deeper transformation but of skillfully crafted PR of power-hungry political swindlers who speak decently, dress dandily, and act godly.

The opposition to Duterte is trying to sell another EDSA to us. Their first major attempt was in February 2017, after Sen. Leila de Lima was arrested for her alleged involvement in the illegal drug trade. No EDSA. Now, the opposition might be thinking that the impending arrest of Sen. Antonio Trillanes 4th after his amnesty was voided could be the trigger. That lacks historical perspective.



FOR THE
MOTHERLAND
SASS
ROGANDO
SASOT

Trillanes is not Erap Estrada who commands a cult-like following. During EDSA 2001 (B), Estrada's supporters massed and rioted outside Malacañang.

At the time, we were living near Malacañang. We could smell the scent of the car burnt by the rioters for Erap. And we couldn't go out of our house without feeling the sting of tear gas. The rioters were willing to die for Erap. It almost overthrew GMA's months-old government. The poor folks chanting "Dugo ng Masa" while pointing at the fresh blood on concrete was very haunting.

None of that happened for any of the *cause célèbre* of the Liberal Party of the Philippines. For the masses, Erap was worth dying for. Will the so-called "woke" and "hashtag" generation die for Trillanes or any of the celebrated cases the Liberal Party might be able to supply them? I don't think so.

After Marcos was buried in the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* in November 2016, the Liberal Party drummed up another EDSA in February 2017. The moment came, we saw it, nothing was conquered. EDSA is done. It has outlived its purpose. The more we step out of the EDSA hamster wheel, the more we will be able to muster the political maturity needed so we can really improve on the shortcomings of our political community.

Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Jose Vitug eloquently expressed the essence of that political maturity in the last paragraph of his concurring opinion on *Estrada v. Desierto* (2001):

"A reminder of an elder to the youth. After two non-violent civilian uprisings within just a short span of years between them, it might be said that popular mass action is fast becoming an institutionalized enterprise. Should the streets now be the venue for the exercise of popular democracy? Where does one draw the line between the rule of law and the rule of the mob, or between "People Power" and "Anarchy?" If, as the sole justification for its being, the basis of the Arroyo presidency lies alone on those who were at EDSA, then it does rest on loose and shifting sands and might tragically open a Pandora's box more potent than the malaise it seeks to address. Conventional wisdom dictates the indispensable need for great sobriety and extreme circumspection on our part. In this kind of arena, let us be assured that we are not overcome by senseless adventurism and opportunism. The country must not grow oblivious to the innate perils of people power for no bond can be stretched far too much to its breaking point. To abuse is to destroy that which we may hold dear." *AS*

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The ouster plot



IS THERE really a plot to oust President Duterte? If there is, where is it coming from and who are behind it?

Basing from the two models wherein the country ousted two of its presidents, the report, to be credible, could only come from two fronts. The tactical alliance of our uniformed services and the political opposition is materially supported in part by vested interest groups from the business community. But there is no credible and verifiable intelligence coming from these groups.

In the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada, left-leaning organizations participated by providing warm bodies to help the demonstrations going for days. The civilian plotters worked on the military and police to turn them around. They eventually succeeded in removing President Estrada.

In the current situation, it is hard to see where the threat is coming from. Other than the communists who are bent on ousting the President, the report of a plot is only a rumor according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, a staunch but level-headed supporter of President Duterte. It is possible that it is just a product of the insecurities of the President.

If it is, he should not be alarmed. His trust and approval ratings remain high, midway through his term. He among many Presidents have shown partiality to our uniformed services showering them with better pay and appointment to positions in government. In fact, one criticism of the President is that there are too many retired uniformed people occupying senior positions in government. He has indeed pampered the Police and Military to the envy of other government employees. In his recent trip to Israel and Jordan, he brought with him retiring military and police personnel as a parting gift which

swelled the number of the delegation. I realize of course, that these are not iron-clad guarantees that some disgruntled elements from the police and military will not join other factions for a plot to oust the President but right now, there are no indications at all.

As they say, where there is smoke, there is fire and those of us even in the retired list are not hearing anything. If there is, we would have heard it in the grapevine because it is something that cannot be hidden for long. If it is the

“It is better to leave Senator Trillanes alone so that we can say to the world that there is dissent in this country.”

Liberal Party that is leading the plot, it is hard to see how it will succeed considering that its ranks have been decimated and whose members are now mostly with the majority party. Vice President Leni Robredo, the head of the party, is not exactly the type that can spearhead a plot to oust a President. The President himself already questioned the competence of his Vice President. If it is a project of the Liberal Party and the reds, this would automatically exclude the uniformed personnel because they could never go to bed with the Reds. Perhaps what is in the mind of the President that he cannot say in public is the unseen hand of a puppeteer directing or encouraging disgruntled elements in the country to oust him. If so, he is probably referring to the CIA which has occupied his mind ever since he took office. He seems to believe that the United States, represented by the CIA, has a plan to get him. During his trip to Israel, he alluded to some unseen forces who are spying on him and monitoring all his

activities.

Since he is the repository of all intelligence reports, we do not know if he has some basis in believing so. Senator Antonio Trillanes has also been mentioned as one of the leaders of the ouster plot. But if we ask anybody in the police or military, it is doubtful if the good Senator can recruit a platoon much less a company of soldiers to follow him. Besides, his record of leading coups has not been very good. He was of course able to parlay his involvement in coup plots to become a senator of the realm but most of his comrades were not as successful as him. We have seen this in the two coup attempts that the good Senator has participated. The Oakwood and Peninsula Hotel capers ended in total failures and destroyed many careers.

It is true that Senator Trillanes is a big thorn on the side of the President but to make a martyr out of him will just be igniting a fire that has the potential of developing into a bigger problem. If indeed we have a democratic system of government, it is better to leave Senator Trillanes alone so that we can say to the world that there is dissent in this country. If dissent is stifled then our reputation as a country ruled by a strongman will cause our democratic credentials to deteriorate further.

The midterm elections is just around the corner and politicians from all parties are already lining up for the coming political battle which is one good reason why the story of an ouster plot is not credible. What the administration should perhaps be doing instead of being so fixated on the ouster plot is to try to do something about the economy which is floundering. The peso is depreciating, the inflation is at record levels, our international reserves have gone down not to mention the scarcity of rice which the government continue to describe as artificial. If all these are left unattended, these will be the spark that will ignite bigger problems for this government in the long run and not the report of an ouster plot.

Hiding in Senate's plain sight

66
Isn't it as clear as day that the order to employ "all legal means" translates to a court order?

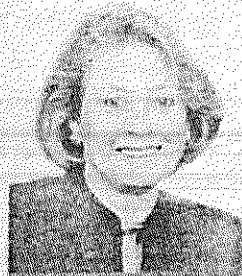
Both parties welcomed the decision of the Supreme Court (SC) not to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) which was sought by Sen. Antonio Trillanes through his lawyer.

The SC turned down the plea of Trillanes for a TRO as it said the court found "no extreme and urgent necessity" to grant the opposition senator's request for injunctive relief as it took judicial notice of President Duterte's "categorical pronouncement" that Trillanes "will not be apprehended, detained or taken into custody" without a court-issued arrest warrant.

The High Court's non-issuance of a TRO on the Trillanes plea is a big legal loss to Trillanes but he and his lawyer are trying so hard to make it appear that they had won and that it is Duterte who lost.

As Solicitor General Jose Calida stated, "Clearly, the baseless and inflammatory statements of Mr. Trillanes are mere delusions of a grandiose man."

But if the senator believes that the SC ruling favored him, why then has he refused to leave the



FRONTLINE
 Ninez Cacho-Olivares

Senate grounds, which he has been using as his safehouse, hiding in plain sight, evidently in fear of an arrest, despite Duterte already having given the order to both the police and the military not to arrest Trillanes without a court order?

His continued hiding in his Senate office merely generates

the perception that while he portrays himself as a courageous man taking on the President of the Republic, he instead shows himself to be a coward.

Calida welcomed the SC's ruling, saying: "The OSG (Office of the Solicitor General) welcomes the development that no temporary restraining order was issued and we nurture the hope that Mr. Trillanes, no matter how remote the possibility, will finally man up and face the charges against him for the unlawful actions he committed against the Filipino people."

The way it looks, given Trillanes' history of evading arrests, should the Makati court issue a warrant of arrest for Trillanes, one can bet his bottom peso that Trillanes will immediately go into hiding, just as he made sure that the two paid witnesses he presented before the Senate against Duterte in the senator's bid to portray the President as having ordered the murders of extra-judicial victims.

Still, not to worry since the arm of the law will get to Trillanes,

sooner or later.

Trillanes' lawyer, Rex Robles, tried to make it look as if they won, saying "we were hoping for an issuance of TRO but despite the fact that the Supreme Court did not issue a TRO, we are gratified that SC has taken official judicial notice of the commitment of the President not to order his arrest and commitment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) not to arrest Senator Trillanes without a valid warrant."

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If the senator believes that the SC ruling favored him, why then has he refused to leave the Senate grounds.

What is he talking about? Has Robles not even read Duterte's proclamation? Clearly stated in black and white in the President's Proclamation 572 is it contains a directive for the AFP and the Philippine National Police to "employ all lawful means" to arrest and jail Trillanes so he could be tried for cases over

the 2003 Oakwood mutiny and the 2007 Manila Peninsula siege.

Isn't it as clear as day that the order to employ "all legal means" translates to a court order? However, as the Trillanes ploy is to make Duterte appear as a fascist, a dictator and a jailer and silencer of his critics, this specific order was ignored by Trillanes and his lawyer.

It may prove difficult for the lower courts to ignore the fact that, indeed, the President's 572 Proclamation voiding the amnesty granted under the yellow regime may just be legal and constitutional since this proviso of the President's



executive and exclusive power to grant amnesties exists in the Constitution, apart from the fact that even as Congress sees its claimed concurrence as a shared power, the truth is, concurrence is not a shared power and never can be unless the Constitution strips a President of exercising this power exclusively.

The real problem is the fact that when the yellow President and his yellow administration were in power, the same yellow congressmen never questioned the many unconstitutional acts of then President Noynoy Aquino. But now that they are in the opposition and certainly want Duterte ousted, that which they never questioned during the yellow regime, are now being questioned under the Duterte regime. 4

This merely represents proof that today's political opposition members are bereft of principles and convictions and out to regain power.

The superhero of the opposition

“The absurdity is where Trillanes, totally unrepentant, justifies armed violence in a working democracy, invokes a moral cause and then simply admits to ‘breaking rules.’”

In recent months a motley of discontents have walked up to the batting plate variously claiming either renewed and vigorous opposition to the current administration or have unilaterally draped upon themselves the mantle of leadership against the duly elected and still substantially popular presidency of Rodrigo R. Duterte.

These are acts of defiance. But not against Duterte as they might want us to believe. Where the approval numbers of credible polling agencies remain in favor of Duterte, their defiance tactfully places them against both the President and the general public.

Note the profound nature of their opposition. None has declared critical collaboration with the administration as decent statesmen might do. None has specifically mentioned checks and balances or the critical role of a minority as might a mature democratic constituency declare. Instead, they were clear in their message — a fight was in the offing, lines have been drawn and they choose to stand defiantly opposite the people.

Their timing is suspect however. One was being confronted by the growing diminution of her gossamer-thin lead versus a more experienced pedigreed candidate in the 2016 polls who might have won had not massive cheating denied him the vice presidency.

Not only would she stand to lose her seat but also, charges of electoral fraud would be validated and fall upon her and her political party — the ruling



BYSTANDER
Dean de la Paz

party in 2016.

The other is an ousted Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The opposition had briefly rallied to her plight. Until perhaps there was this creeping realization that she was so uninspiring it was better to seek other people could rally around.

To the misfortune of the opposition, its bench remains short and populated by either old time traditional *politicos* long tarnished by their complicity in impeaching a former Chief Justice where bribes were involved, or they had undistinguished records in both the legislature and as government factotums.

Given the foregoing, by design Antonio Trillanes walks into the circus ring and positions himself under the klieg lights. The opposition has been a comedy of errors since. One verging on complete absurdity.

Scot-free on the basis of a bogus grant of amnesty by a mere factotum going solo and rogue on his assumption of “delegated” authority where the alter ego paradigm is inapplicable, here is how Trillanes defends himself.

In a video broadcasted on 5 January 2011, Trillanes is shown saying: “*Ang nakalagay kasi sa application form is a general admission of guilt, ano,*

na may labag na kahit among batas, whether sa Armed Forces or sa Revised Penal Code and kuuwan po iyan, ever since hindi po naman kami nagpanggap na yung ginawa po namin na pagpunta sa Oakwood and sa Manila Pen na natural na ginagawa ng sundalo, uhm, we are man enough to admit we have broken rules in the pursuit of our ah, moral cause, and uhm, we faced it like men, nakulong po kami and the others were separated from the service, so it’s very easy for us to admit to that... Wala po tayong regret dun sa ginawa po natin, nangyari na po iyan, yan po ang igmamuhit ng tadhana so to speak, kaya tinanggap po natin iyan.”

Translating and paraphrasing for clarity, “...the application form (for amnesty) refers to a general admission of guilt for any offense whether covered under the Armed Forces or the Revised Penal Code. We make no pretense, what we did in Oakwood or the Manila Pen are natural acts of a soldier...we were detained (for it)...We have no regrets for what we did. It happened and that is whatever fate had written...so we accept it.”

The absurdity is where Trillanes, totally unrepentant, justifies armed violence in a working democracy, invokes a moral cause and then simply admits to “breaking rules” and not the charge of armed rebellion. The difference is critical. More so had his deadly betrayal succeeded in overthrowing the government and installing a junta in its stead.

If these characters are what comprise the opposition’s heroes, it is no wonder they’re in the doghouse.

“None has declared critical collaboration with the administration as decent statesmen might do.”

82

Rody and Sal show

“ Economists point to many developing economies, including China, as experiencing a currency depreciation.

President Rody Duterte had his opponents taken for a ride in their anticipation on Tuesday of a major announcement such as the declaration of a revolutionary government but instead got to watch on television a legal discourse between him and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sal Panelo.

When his political enemies were entertaining the thought that Rody had finally caved in and had fallen for their trap of baring his most ruthless side, the President gave the nation a clarification of the legally complex issues on the invalidation of the amnesty of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

Between lawyers, Rody and Sal effectively explained the problems confronting the nation and how these tie up with the intensified destabilization efforts.

Rody was a prosecutor in Davao City before becoming its mayor.

The key agenda of the tete-a-tete was the invalid amnesty given to Trillanes and other Magdalo mutineers by yellow President Noynoy Aquino.

Explaining the legal requirements for the grant of the privilege to rebels, Rody said he will not back down from enforcing what was mandated under the law.

Through the dialogue, Rody and Sal showed how the amnesty process for Trillanes was apparently rushed and went through shortcuts that ultimately made it illegal.

He insisted that since former Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin signed the original amnesty documents for Trillanes and not Noynoy, they are invalid as only the President can sign such an order.

WILSON
DAILY TR

Rody compared the presidential prerogative to grant amnesty to that of declaring martial law. Such matters were not for Congress, the courts or the Cabinet but for the President alone to decide on, he said.

Aside from the legal explanations, the dignified dialogue between two lawyers was also an assurance to Filipinos that Rody is in full control of the situation which is underlined by his dare to his opponents to face the people and offer a solution to the nation's problems and if these are accepted, he would gladly step down.

He addressed soldiers and said if they think Trillanes cares about them "go ahead and kill me."

For Rody, he remains on track in his commitments to policies based on promises to voters who elected him.

The foes of Rody have clearly tried to bait him to fight fire with fire and thus heighten the conflict that would have been exploited to further increase the international pressure on him.

The clarity of the contrast between the lust for power of his critics and his unwavering commitment and sense of duty to protect the government and the nation became more striking after Rody's explanations.

The dialogue also touched on the high inflation rate and the weak peso which are both reactions to external forces rather than policy reforms that his administration had taken. 4

Economists point to many developing economies, including China, as experiencing a currency depreciation that also causes consumer prices to rise. India, Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, Iran, Indonesia and Argentina are also reeling from weak currencies.

Global markets are feeling the effects of US tariffs and sanctions on developing economies, a strong US dollar amid recovery of the American economy, high US interest rates that siphon funds from emerging markets, high oil prices as a backlash of new US sanctions on Iran and the generally unstable political situation in parts of the Middle East.

Also, economists indicated that the fast developing economy increases consumer demand that leads to inflation pressures.

In criticizing oligarchs who he said hoard rice and other commodities resulting in higher prices, he indicated that more actions will be taken to lower prices of essential commodities.

He indicated plans to seek Congress' move to abolish the National Food Authority (NFA) Council and to replace NFA head Jason Aquino since the agency failed in its duty to control the prices of the staple grain.

The main message of the Rody and Sal show was that the government is in control and a new power grab will not prosper.

EDITORIAL

Nananatiling 'very good', ngunit kailangang mahinto ang pagbagsak ng rating

MAKASAYSAYANG nagsistimula ang administrasyon ng lahat ng naging pangulo ng Pilipinas kasama ng mataas na ekspektasyon at suporta mula sa mga mamamayan, hanggang unti-unting bumababa sa pag-usbong ng mga problema. Ilang araw bago ang kanyang inagurasyon noong Hunyo 2016, nakapagtala si Pangulong Duterte ng personal record high na plus-79 bilang trust rating sa survey ng Social Weather Stations (SWS) para sa ikalawang bahagi ng nasabing taon. Ang puntos na ito ay "excellent" sa pagtataya ng SWS.

Nagpatuloy ang pagtanggap ng Pangulo ng "excellent" sa sumunod na apat na survey. Sa pagpatak ng ikaanim na survey sa huling bahagi ng Disyembre, 2017, bumaba sa +75 ang kanyang trust rating. Muli itong nabawasan sa +65 nitong Marso 2018. At nitong Linggo, sa pinakabagong tala ng survey para sa Hunyo 2018, lalo pa itong bumagsak sa +57.

Sa kabila ng tatlong sunod na pagbaba ay nanatiling "very good" ang rating ng Pangulo, ayon sa SWS. Higit na mas maayos ito kumpara sa mga naging puntos ng ilang nakalipas na pangulo, na bumaba pa sa higit +6 isang beses sa panahon ng administrasyong Arroyo at +5 sa panahon ng administrasyong Estrada.

Gayundin, kailangang magsikap ng mga lider ng administrasyon upang matukoy ang dahilan ng patuloy na pagbagsak ng trust rating ng Pangulo sa loob ng tatlong bahagi — siyam na buwan simula noong Disyembre, 2017. Bago ang pagbaba, pumasok ang administrasyon sa malawakang kampanya laban sa ilegal na droga, na nagtala ng libu-libong ulat ng pagpatay sa proseso ng kampanya na pinangunahan ng Philippine National Police, hanggang sa palitan ito ng Philippine Drug Enforcement Administration. Ngunit sa mga panahong ito, nanatiling "excellent" ang trust rating ng Pangulo, kung gayo'y hindi salik ang kampanya sa ilegal na droga sa survey.

Marahil, ang kritikal na salik ay ang pagtaas ng mga presyo — inflation kung tawagin ng mga ekonomista — na nagsimula bandang Enero nitong taon. Marami pang suliranin ang umusbong sa mga sumunod na buwan, kabilang dito ang bilyong pisong halaga ng naipuslit na droga, ang hakbang na kanselahin ang nakatakdang 2019 midterm election upang magbigay daan sa pagbuo ng bagong konstitusyon para sa pederalismo, ang mga kaso ng pagpatay sa ilang pari, ang malawakang kampanya ng pulisya na nagresulta sa pagkakahuli ng libu-libong tambay. Ngunit sa lahat, ang pagsirit ng presyo ang nakaagaw ng atensiyon ng publiko. Sa isang pag-aaral, itinala ng mga tao bilang kanilang pangunahing pangamba ang presyo ng mga pangunahing produkto, mababang sahod, at kawalan ng trabaho — lahat ay suliraning pang-ekonomiya.

Mayroong mahahalagang suliranin ang kailangan pang tugunan mismo ng administrasyon — ang ating karapatan sa South China Sea, ang ating pangangailangan na mapalakas ang puwersa ng militar, ang ating pakikipag-ugnayan sa Estados Unidos, Russia, China at iba pang mga bansa, ang paghinto ng usapang-pangkapayapaan kasama ng mga New People's Army, ang mga bagong ulat ng karahasan sa Mindanao at marami pang iba. Sinalanta rin tayo ng ilang sarve ng mga pagbaha mula sa habagat na pinalalakas ng mga bagyong nagmumula sa Pasipiko.

Sa lahat ng mga suliraning ito, naging mahusay sa pagtugon ang Pangulo at ang kanyang mga kasamahan. Ngunit ipinapakita sa pinakabagong tala ng survey ang patuloy na pagbaba ng trust rating ng Pangulo. Maipapalagay lamang natin na nararamdaman ng mga tao — higit sa epekto ng maraming isyung ito — ang mga problema sa ekonomiya na pinalala ng naitalang inflation, ang patuloy na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga biihin sa merkado, na nakaapekto sa araw-araw na pamumuhay ng kanilang mga panulva.



SEÑOR SENADOR
Erik Espina

Bangsamoro Organic Law

NAGUGUNITA ko si dating Assemblyman Homobono Adaza. Siya ang matining na boses ng oposisyon noong 'martial law', na kasapi ng UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic

Organization) sa pangunguna ni Salvador "Doy" Laurel.

Nagtagay si Manong Bono ng regional party, ang Mindanao Alliance. Naging titik sa tagiliran ng Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) noon si Adaza. Ilang beses ko siyang nakapanayam sa telebisyon, (Republika, Martes 8pin sa Channel 8 Destiny at Ch. 213 Sky Cable) at kahit mahigit isang dekada na ang nakalipas ay hindi ko makaligtan ang isang tanong ko sa kanya. "Manong Bono, ano ang tumpak na paninindigan sa isyu ng Mindanao kung ang magiging banta o resulta ng Moro-landia, ay pag-aklas nito

sa teritoryo ng Pilipinas?" Ang sagot niya - "Sa ganoong mga kagariapan, hindi lang ang Mindanao ang dapat makialam, bagkus buong republika ang kailangan manghimasok upang pigilan ang pagdausdos sa pagkakawatak-watak ng ating teritoryo".

Kasalukuyang itinakda ng Comelec ang plebisito para sa BOL (Bangsamoro Organic Law) sa Enero 21, 2019 alinsunod sa Republic Act 11054. Layunin ng BOL ang tuldukan (sana) ang ilang henerasyon ng sigalot sa Katimugang Mindanao, nang ibasura ang ARMM ng Bangsamoro

Government. Batid ng mga giliv kong tagasunod, ang batas sa BOL ay maaaring sampahan ng kaso sa Supreme Court dahil nilabag ng kasalukuyang Kongreso ang pag-aalis ng ARMM.

Dati ko pa ibinulgar na ayon sa Artikulo X Seksyon 19, tanging ang "Unang Kongreso" lamang sa loob ng labing-walong buwan simula ng pagkakatatag... sa mga rehiyong autonomus sa Muslim Mindanao ang maaaring magpasa nito. Puwedeng amyendahan ang batas ng ARMM subalit hindi puwedeng gawing Bangsamoro Government. May iba pang dagdag na paglabag

ang BOL. Dito ay ginawang Prime Minister imbes na gobernador ang pinuno, parliamentary ang porma ng pamhalaan, at iba pa. Tiyak at sigurado akon na hindi matutuldukan ang gulo sa Katimugang Mindanao dahil mali ang pagkakaunawa sa totoong problema doon. Malaysia at Sabah ang puno't dulo sa giyera. Tanging Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) lang ang kasama sa minadaling proseso at nabiyayaan. Iniwan sa kangkungan ang Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) ni Misuari na kinikilala ng Organization of Islamic Conference ng mundo.

Handwritten mark

HALA BIRA!



NI ALLAN ENCARNACION

UMUGONG na naman ang expertise ng mga dilaw, ang magpabagsak ng nakaupong Pangulo.

Masyado na silang nasarapan sa puwesto magmula nang magtagumpay silang patalsikin si Marcos.

Kaya nga ginawa rin nila ito kay President Erap noong 2001 kasi nga, hindi sila sanay na mawala sa posiyon. Kung bibilangin ang paghahari ng dilaw sa Pilipinas matapos ang Marcos presidency, aabot na sa halos 26 to 30 years.

Iyong dalawang solid dilaw mula 1986 hanggang 1992 at 2010 hanggang 2016, balikan nyo nga mabuti kung nanaisin nyong makabalik ang dilaw sa poder. Ang combined 12 years ng mag-inang Cory at Noynoy ang worst part ng Philippine history dahil doon natin nakita na pareho silang naging pabaya sa puwesto.

Lumabas na naman ang pangil ng mga oportunistista

Alisin na natin sa usapan si Cory dahil yumao na ito, sumalangit nawa ang kanyang kaluluwa.

Pasyalan nga natin ang Noynoy administration. Sa mga panahong ito nakita natin ang pinakamanhid na gobyerno. Wala itong pinaglingkuran kung hindi ang kanyang mga Kaklase, Kabarkada at Kapartido.

Dito tayo nakakita na nakatunganga ang isang Pangulo habang nagaganap ang madugong Luneta hostage na ikinamatay ng walong turistang Hong Kong national. Live coverage na sa CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera at lahat ng local TV, wala pa rin siyang alam. Patay na lahat ang mga turista at ang hostage taker nang lumabas sa publiko at nakangisi pa!

Dito rin natin nakita na habang pinapatay ng mga ka-peace-talk nilang MILF ang 44 na miyembro ng Special Action Force ay walang ginawa si Noynoy para respondehan ang ating mga kawal. Pinabayaan niyang lapan ng mga kalaban ng gobyerno ang SAF44.

Ang totoong kanagaitan pa

niya ang SAF sa nangyari.

Sino naman ang makakalimot na sampung libong kababayan natin sa Tacloban ang pinatay ng bagyong Yolanda pero nakatunganga pa rin si Noynoy at ang kanyang mga opisyal?

Sobrang dami ng kapabayaang ni Noynoy sa lahat ng aspeto ng governance kaya nga umabot sa puntong lima singko na ang krimen. Talamak ang riding in tandem, talamak ang carjacking, kahwa't kanan ang ambush, pangkaramiwan na ang akwat-bahay. Ang cellphone snatching ay libangan na lang ng mga bata!

Sa sobrang taas nga ng krimen, kailangan nilang dukturn ang crime statistics para magmukhang konti lang.

Huwag nating kabilimutan ang pagbaha ng illegal drugs sa panahon ng yellow administration na lalo nating nakita nang maglunsad ng totooanang kampanya laban sa droga ang Duterte administration.

Ngayong may problema ang bansa sa inflation at mataas na palitan ng dollar, nakakita na naman

sila ng pagkakataon. Naglabasan na naman ang kanilang mga pangil na handang sumagpang sa anumang oras.

Sa pagpasok ni Pangulong Duterte, nasugpo ang malaking sindikato ng droga, nakontrol ang katiwalian sa gobyerno, naging masinop ang paggamit sa pondo, kayod-kabayo sa trabaho ang Chief Executive na talog lang ang pahinga, nasimulan ang mga major infrastructure projects at may taket ang empleyado ng gobyerno.

Sige nga, imagine life kung makakabalik ang dilaw sa poder. Gugustuhin ba natin ang isang miserableng gobyerno na walang ginawa kung hindi kapabayaang at takipan ng mga katiwalian?

Simple lang ang sukatan, kung gusto sana ng mga Pilipino ang pagpapatuloy ng tuwid na daan at dilaw na pamahalaan, hindi sana nanalo sa eleksiyon si Mayor Rody Duterte. Manahimik na kayong mga dilaw, nabigyan na kayo ng tiyansa pero nagpabaya kayo!

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Umaaray na ang taumbayan

TINGNAN NATIN



By VIC REYES

HINDI na biro ang nangyayaring pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilihin.

Umaaray na ang taumbayan, lalo na ang mga mahihirap.

May mga pamilya na ngang kumakain ng pina-ghalong bigas at mais para makatipid.

Ang problema daw ay baka tumaas din ang presyo ng mais.

Ang iba ay dalawang beses na lang kumain sa isang araw.

Sana isantabi muna ng ating mga lider ang kani-kanilang mga 'di pagkaka-unawaan.

Magtulungan muna para bigyang solusyon ang mga problema.

Malibar sa mataas na presyo ng mga bilihin, nandiyan pa rin ang ka-hirapan, kawalan ng trabaho, pagsisikip ng trapiko, pagbabaha, climate change, graft and corruption at illegal recruitment.

Dahil papalapit ang Pasko, sana magkaroon ng "ceasefire" sa Politika.

Subukan lang natin at baka ito ang susi para tayo'y magkaisa.

Ika nga, "there's unity in diversity."

Tuloy pa rin ang pak-ikipagsabwatan ng ilang tiwaling taga-Bureau of Customs (BoC) sa mga ismagler.

Kaya nga muling nan-awagan si BoC Chief Isidro S. Lapeña sa kanyang mga tauhan na magbago sa sila.

Pero sa laki ng kinikita nila sa ismagling, mala-mang na deadma lang ang mga kumag sa panawagan ni Lapeña.

Dahil nga mapera na rin tulad ng mga ismagler, kaya nilang kumuha ng magagaling na abogado sakaling matikha sila

Alam ng mga tiwaling lingkod-bayan na hindi sila basta matatanggal dahil sila'y may permanent position.

Mayroon silang security of tenure, kailangan nilang dumaan sa due process.

Pero naniniwala tayo na kayang i-address ni Lapeña ang problemang ito.

Noon ngang Lunes ay sinabi ni Lapeña na may kalalagyan ang mga bugok na ito.

"Yung mga hindi pa humihinto diyan...you will see that I will soon catch up with you," babala ni Lapeña.

Kamakailan lang ay kinasuhan ni Lapeña sa Department of Justice ang labing-pito nitong opisyal at empleyado.

Sila'y nahaharap ngayon sa mga kasong pak-ikipagsabwatan sa mga ismagler.

Sinabi pa ni Lapeña na kaagad niyang inaaksiyunan ang mga impormasyon na tinatanggap niya mula sa loob at labas ng BoC.

Kagaya ni Pangulong Duterte, pursigido si Lapeña na walim sa gohyer-

no ang tiwali at korap na lingkod-bayan.

Kaya nga inilagay ni Duterte si Lapeña sa Aduana dahil alam niya ang kalibre ng dating heneral ng pulis.

Matagal na nagsilbi sa Davao City Police si Lapeña.

Sina Lapeña at Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana ay mga miyembro ng class 1973 ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

Hangga't nandiyan ang tiwala ni Pangulong Duterte, inaasahan natin na tuluy-tuluy ang ginagawang paglilinis sa Aduana.

Hindi madali ang anti-graft and corruption drive sa BoC.

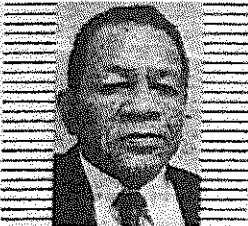
Pero magtatagumpay ang kampa'ya sa tulong ng taumbayan at mga matitnong taga-BoC.

Ang kailangan lang ay sapat na political will ng mga namumuno.

(Para sa inyong komento at suhestiyon, tumawag o mag-text sa 0921-4785430 / email: vicreyes18@yahoo.com. Ilagay lang ang buong pangalan at tirahan.)

Mabibiggo banta ng pula, dilaw at Magdalo kay PDU30

MAGYASA PARA SA BANTO



ATTY. JAY DE CASTRO
PAGDATING mula sa pagbisita sa Israel at Jordan sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na may tatlong grupong pulitikal ang nagsanib pwersa para patatsikin ang kanyang pamahalaan.

Ang tatlong grupo ay ang Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front-New People's Army (CPP-NDF-NPA); ang Liberal Party ni dating Pangulong Benigno Aquino III at ang Magdalo ni Senador Antonio Trillanes IV.

Sa larangan ng ating pulitika, ang CPP-NDF-NPA ay tinaguriang "pulang" grupo, ang LP ni P-

Noy ay binansagang "dilaw" na grupo at ang Magdalo ni Trillanes, sa kawalan ng kulay na ipinangtutukoy rito ay masaring tawaging "itim" na grupo.

Samakatuwid, tatlong pulitikalang samahan, ang mga "pula", "dilaw" at "itim" ang nagsama-sama upang pabagsakin ang gobyernong Duterte.

Matapos ang pahayag ng Pangulo sinabi ni Department of National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na totoo ang plano ng "pula" na patatsikin si PDU30 at ang planong ito'y ginawa noong 2016 at binuo noong 2017.

Hindi nakapagtataka ang plano ng pula sapagka't simula't simula ang hangad nila'y pabagsakin ang pamahalaan ng lahat ng mga nagdaang pangulo.

Hindi kinumpirma ng kalihim ang pakikipag-sabwatan ng "dilaw" at "itim" sa plano ng CPP-NDF-NPA, bagama't batay sa mga pangyayari ang

dalawang grupong ito'y nanawagan ng pagpabagsak sa pamahalaang Duterte.

Noong February 2017, nanawagan ang mga "dilaw" ng EDSA People Power IV sa pamamagitan ng inilunsad nilang "Walk for Life" laban sa extra-judicial killings sa pamahalaang Duterte, subali't karampo lang ang sumama rito.

Nakiisa ang Magdalo sa panawagan ito sa takot nilang ang kanilang lider na si Senador Antonio Trillanes ay mabilanggo tulad ni Senador Leila De Lima.

Subali't magsapi man ang tatlo ay malabong suportahan ng tao.

Ang "pula" ay mahigit ng 50-taong nakikipaglaban sa pamahalaan at sa halip na lumaki ang hanay ay lalong lumit ito. Isa pa, sa buong mundo ay ito na lamang ang nag-iisang partido kumunista na nakikipaglaban pa sa pamahalaan.

Sundan sa Pahina 14

MABIBIGO...

Mula sa Pahina 5

Ang "dilaw" naman ay sadyang hindi mahal ng mga mamamayan. Sa katunayan, batay sa nakaraang halalan, isinaka sila ng sam-bayanang Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng mahigit na 6,000,000 boto ni Pangulong Duterte laban Mar Roxas na bata ni Aquino.

Isa pa, 'di mahilomot ng bayan ang mga katawalian at kapabayaang nangyari sa gobyernong Aquino, tulad ng kurapsyon sa MRT, dahilan sa paulit-ulit na pagkasira nito, ang mahigit it P1 trilyong paglustay ng gobyernong Aquino sa DAP at PDAF, na sinabi ng Korte Suprema na labag sa Konstitusyon, ang pagkawala ng bilyun-bilyong Malampaya at Yolanda funds, ang pagkalat ng shabu sa buong bansa, na nabibiling parang sigarilyo noong panahon nina P-Noy at Mar, at ang kapalpakan nito sa Masapapano na ikinaasawi

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Duterte's oust dare to military an 'expression of confidence'

By Jelly Musico September 12, 2018, 5:08 pm

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte's challenge to the military to oust him was an expression of confidence that Senator Antonio Trillanes IV and other groups will not get support from the soldiers, Malacañang said Wednesday.

"Ang konteksto talaga ng President is kung gusto nyo talagang mag-alsa, mag-alsa na kayo para matapos na. Ibig sabihin kampante ang Presidente na wala naman suporta sa hanay ng military para patalsikin sya (The proper context of the President is if you want to oust me, then oust me so that it will be over. It means the President is confident that there would be no support from the military to unseat him)," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a Palace press briefing.

Roque, however, said Duterte has clarified that he is not clinging to the position he won overwhelmingly in the 2016 elections.

"Chinallenge niya dahil sigurado naman siya na walang suporta. Pero sinasabi niya na ako'y hindi kapit tuko. Kung gusto nyo, gawin nyo (He challenged them because he's sure there would be no support. But he's also saying he is not clinging to his post. If they want to, then do it)," he said.

During last Tuesday's televised one-on-one interview with Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo, Duterte said Trillanes' Magdalo group, Communist Party of the Philippines founding chairman Jose Maria Sison, and other opposition groups are in a "loose conspiracy" to overthrow his government.

"They have combined and we have the evidence and we have the conversation provided by a foreign country sympathetic to us," Duterte said.

The President then dared the soldiers to join Trillanes if they think the senator, a former Navy officer known for his failed coup attempts against former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, can do better in running the country.

"I urge you to go to Trillanes. If you want another president, fine," Duterte said.

The salaries of the soldiers and policemen have been doubled under the Duterte administration.

When asked to expound on Duterte's intelligence report from a "sympathetic" foreign country, Roque said he has no idea if sharing information is a regular thing.

"What I do know is sharing intel is precisely intended to provide you information to avoid eventualities," said the international law expert.

Roque clarified that the sharing of intelligence reports is "recognized as the function of diplomatic nations."

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

“That’s the nature of diplomatic relations nowadays,” he said.

He said the Philippines has actually benefited from sharing information from the United States about terrorists.

Duterte has said the “sympathetic” nation, which he did not identify, has granted his request to declassify the conversation for it to be shown to everyone “maybe any day now.” (PNA)