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NEWS CLIPPINGS

21 April 2018

Saturday

Honor. Patriotism.Duty

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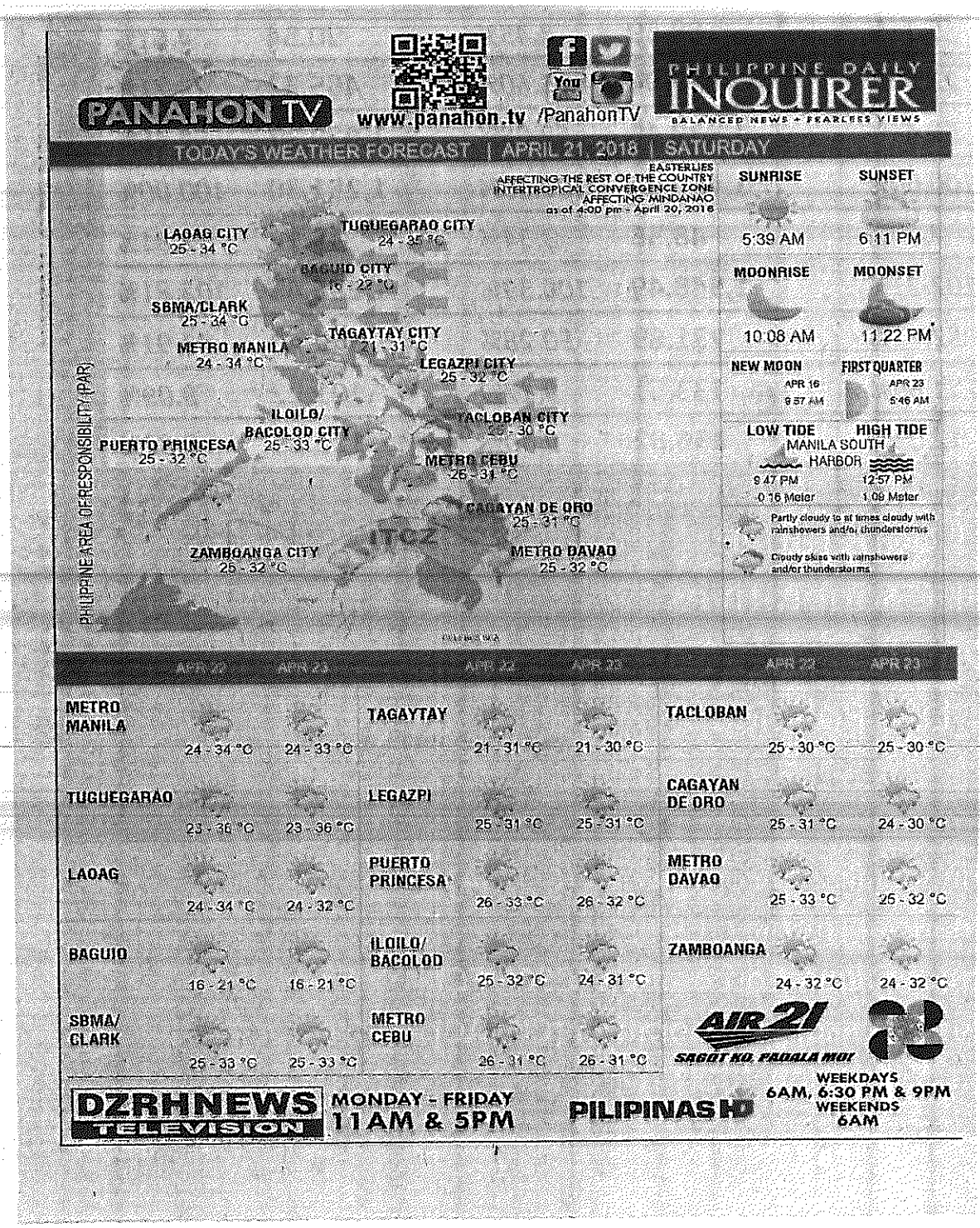

21 April 2018

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Poe tops senatorial poll; Sara in

BY HELEN FLORES

Sen. Grace Poe topped the list of probable winners or the "Magic 12" in the May 2019 elections that also included presidential daughter Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio and former Philippine National Police chief Ronald dela Rosa, a recent survey by Pulse Asia revealed yesterday.

Pulse Asia said 15 of the 58 individuals included in its senatorial survey would have a statistical chance of winning and enter the Magic 12, if the elections were held during the survey period last March 23 to 28.

Special Assistant to the President Christopher "Bong" Go and other possible candidates of the administration did not make it to the Top 12.

Based on the latest Pulse Asia survey, Poe took the solo lead, garnering 70.8 percent of votes of 1,200 adult respondents aged 18 years old and above.

Occupying the second to third places were Sen. Cynthia Villar (55.6 percent) and Taguig City Rep. Pia Cayetano (53.8 percent).

Sen. Nancy Binay grabbed the fourth to sixth places with 45.8 percent of respondents

Turn to Page 6

Poe

From Page 1

voting for her.

Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara and Duterte-Carpio shared the fourth to seventh places Jr., garnering 44.9 percent and 43.8 percent of votes, respectively.

Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III found himself in fifth to ninth places with 39.8 percent.

Former senator Sergio Osmeña ranked seventh to 12th places with 38 percent; followed by broadcast journalist Erwin Tulfo, who took seventh to 13th slots with 36.7 percent.

Taking the eighth to 15th places were former senator Lito Lapid with 33.8 percent, Dela Rosa with 33.1 percent, and former senator Jinggoy Estrada with 32.8 percent.

Ilocos Norte Gov. Imee Marcos ranked ninth to 15th places with 32.2 percent, followed by Sen. Paolo Benigno Aquino, who placed 10th to 19th, with 30.5 percent.

Sen. JV Ejercito obtained 29 percent and was ranked 10th to 19th places.

The nationwide survey has sampaling error margin of plus or minus three percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The other probable administration bets who were outside the winning circle were presidential political adviser Francis Tolentino (14.6 percent, 20th to 26th places), Davao City Rep. Karlo Nograles (10.6 percent, 24th to 32nd), presidential spokesperson Harry Roque (8.7 percent, 27th to 36th), Negros Occidental Rep. Alfredo Benitez (3.7 percent, 36th to 42nd), Oriental Mindoro Rep. Rey Umali (2.8 percent, 38th to 50th), Assistant Communications Secretary Mocha Uson (1.3 percent, 40th to 56th), and Bataan Rep. Geraldine Roman (0.2 percent, 52nd to 58th).

The Pulse Asia survey also found more than half of Filipinos or 57 percent said they already have 12 preferred candidates for the May 2019 senatorial elections.

Go obtained 5.9 percent and placed 28th to 38th.

Communications Secretary Martin Andanar recenty disclosed that President Duterte would support Go's candidacy if the special assistant decides to run for the Senate.

Andanar and other Cabinet members have organized a campaign to encourage Go to run for senator.

Pulse Asia research director Ana Maria Tabunda said Go's popularity in social media and his closeness with Duterte has apparently not yet helped boost his ratings nationwide.

Tabunda, however, added Duterte's endorsement of Go came after the survey.

Go was dubbed as the "Selfie King" for taking photos with world leaders during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit in Manila last year.

He is previously known for "photobombing" or appearing unexpectedly in photos of Duterte.

Ejercito welcomed his inclu-

sion in the top 12 senatorial survey but said he has to work harder as his half brother – Jinggoy Estrada – is also planning to run for the Senate.

"I'm hoping that performance, track record, and clean and unblemished record as a public official will help pull it through," Ejercito said.

Angara said he was grateful for the results of the survey as it would definitely serve as an inspiration for him work harder for Filipinos.

"While I am grateful to our people and humbled by the outcome of the Pulse Asia poll, I would like to assure the public that I will continue to do my job as their senator— with our without the survey," Angara said.

Opposition

Senator Aquino of the Liberal Party (LP) stressed yesterday the need to form a strong opposition coalition for the 2019 senatorial elections.

Aquino, the lone member of the opposition in the top 12 of senatorial race of the latest Pulse Asia survey, thanked Filipinos for their continued support.

He said his inclusion in the top 12 was a sign that the Filipino people still acknowledge the need for dissenting voices.

"Many Filipinos have now lost their voice and are no longer able to fight for their principles. The opposition is here to be their voice and defender," he said.

LP president Sen. Francis Pangilinan said more members of the opposition should be elected to the Senate to serve as vanguard of democracy and advocate of the people's welfare.

"The polls tell us that we need to work much harder in gaining our people's trust and this can only be done by ensuring that we place our people's welfare first as we serve them with our utmost," Pangilinan said.

Dela Rosa yesterday welcomed the survey of Pulse Asia, saying he would likely win a seat at the Senate.

"I'm flattered but It's still too early to decide," Dela Rosa said.

Dela Rosa, the incoming director of the Bureau of Corrections, said he is awaiting the order of President Duterte if he will try a career in politics.

"It's either the Senate or governorship of my province Davao del Sur," said Dela Rosa.

Malacañang said President Duterte is not meddling with the selection of the senatorial ticket of PDP-Laban.

"For now, the President does not interfere with the final slot, although he has endorsed some names," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a press briefing yesterday.

Roque, who has been holding press conferences in different parts of the country, was mum on the results of the survey wherein he ranked 27th.

"I have no reaction on that, because as I said, I leave my political future to fate," he said.

– With Paolo Romero, Marvin Sy, Alexis Romero, Emmanuel Tupas

21 April 2018

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

7 NPA rebels surrender in Misamis, Cagayan

Seven New People's Army (NPA) rebels have surrendered in Misamis Occidental and Cagayan.

Reneboy Empel and Junny Martizano surrendered to Maj. Gen. Roseller Murillo, Task Force Zampelan commander, in Barangay Tuno, Don Victoriano Chiongbian town on Wednesday. They were brought to the Army's 101st Infantry Battalion for debriefing.

Charles Pinapin, 38; Meliton Tapaoan, 58; Edwin Balawag, 37, and Felipe Villanueva, 48, surrendered in Barangay Balani, Sto. Niño, Cagayan on Thursday.

Chief Superintendent Mario Espino, Cagayan Valley police director, said the rebels also turned over their shotguns and ammunition.

Jesus Bautista, 42, squad leader of Platoon Uno of the Central Front Unit Command of the NPA, surrendered to the office of Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy III also on Thursday. **– Lino de la Cruz, Raymund Catindig**

21 April 2018 The Manila Times Page: A7

NPA left dead, soldier wounded in encounter

A MEMBER of the New People's Army (NPA) was left dead by his comrades after an encounter with troops in Laak, Compostela Valley, while one soldier was wounded.

Captain Jerry Lamosao, spokesman for the Philippine Army's 10th Infantry Division (10th ID), said the firefight happened when troops from the 60th Infantry Battalion were conducting military operations at Barangay Kapatagan in Laak.

Lamosao added that the troops received reports that a group of NPA rebels were "planning" to conduct extortion and recruitment activities in the area.

The clash lasted for 45 minutes, with the communist fighters later withdrawing and leaving one of their members dead in the encounter site.

It also resulted in the wounding of a soldier, who is now in stable condition, Lamosao said.

Troops are conducting pursuit operations against the NPA rebels.

DEMPSEY REYES

21 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 6

2 NPA terrorists killed in clash with soldiers

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

CAMP BANCASI, Butuan City — Two New People's Army (NPA) terrorists were slain in an encounter with military troops who were on patrol in Caseras area, Barangay Upper Bala in Magsaysay Davao del Sur, according to Capt. Jerry S. Lamosao, chief of Public Affairs Office (PAO) of the Army's 10th Infantry (Agila) Division (10th ID), on Friday.

Lamosao said soldiers from the 39th Infantry Battalion (39th IB) engaged about 30 heavily armed Communist fighters at around 11:30 a.m. in a fierce gun battle that lasted over an hour.

When the smoke cleared, the soldiers were able to seize from the dead terrorists two M16 Armalite rifles, which were later found to have been the same weapons that were taken from a police station in Matanao, Dayao del Sur on March 10, 3014.

No one was hurt on the government side, according to Lamosao.

The leaders of the NPAs were identified by the witnesses through their aliases of Libra, Borjack and Brix, all of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)-NPA Southern Mindanao Regional Committee, he added.

21 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 6

6 NPAs surrender in Cagayan Valley

At least six members of the New People's Army (NPA) surrendered to authorities in the Cagayan Valley region, following a series of negotiations. Superintendent Mario Maiana, Cagayan Provincial Mobile Force Company (PMFC) chief, and Lt. Col. Camilito Saddam, commander of the army's 17th Infantry Battalion (17IB), received four of the surrenderers in a ceremony in Sto. Niño, Cagayan – Charles Pinapin, 38, of the Militia ng Bayan (MB) from 2009-2015; Melton Tapacan, 58, an MB member since 2016; Edwin Belawag, 37, MB member since 2015; and Felipe Villanueva, 45, an NPA courier from 2005-2016. Two more NPAs – Ansong Esteban, alias "Stey," a medical officer of the NPA, and Jesus Bautista, 42 – surrendered in San Mariano, Isabela. (Liezle Basa Iñigo)

21 April 2018 POLICE FILES Page. 3

EX-ARMY KERNEL, 2 PA HINATULAN NG 'LIFE' SA PAGPATAY SA VICE MAYOR SA ISABELA

CAUAYAN CITY – Hinatulan ng korte ng habambuhay na pagkabilanggo ang isang retired army colonel at dalawang kasama sa pagbaril-patay kay dating Vice Mayor Florante Raspado ng Jones, Isabela.

Batay sa court record, pinagbabaril mismo si Raspado sa loob ng session hall ng Sangguniang Bayan ng Jones noong June 19, 2015, kungsaan gamit ng salarin ang M16 armalite rifle.

Ang hatol ay ibinaba nitong Biyernes ng umaga ni Judge Bonifacio Ong ng Regional Trial Court Branch 24 sa Echague, Isabela laban sa mga akusado na sina retired Army Col. Reynaldo Tapia, Corporal Michael Deocariza, kasapi ng Armed Forces of the Philippines 2nd Infantry Division Philippine Army sa Camp General Mateo Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal, at Victor Fontilara ng Tagkawayan, Quezon.

Sina Jacinto at Deocariza ay nadakip sa follow-up operation ng mga pulis sa Maddela, Quirino, habang si Fontilara ay ipinasakamay sa Jones Police Station matapos siyang madakip at masamsaman ng caliber .45 sa San Agustin, Isabela.

Sa naging panayam ng Bombo Radyo Cauayan, sinabi ni Atty. Vicente Lasam, abogado ng pamilya Raspado, na bukod sa hatol na reclusion perpetua ay pinagbabayad din ang mga hinatulan ng P2 million na moral damages at P1.3 million sa actual damages.

Samantala, pinawalang sala ang tatlong hinatulan sa pagbaril at pagpatay sa aide ni dating SB Member Lanie Uy na si Anthony Agarin matapos sinikap na habulin ang mga bumaril kay Raspado.

Sinabi ni Atty. Lasam na wala silang direktang ebidensiya na naipakita sa korte na ang mga akusado ang bumaril kay Agarin.

21 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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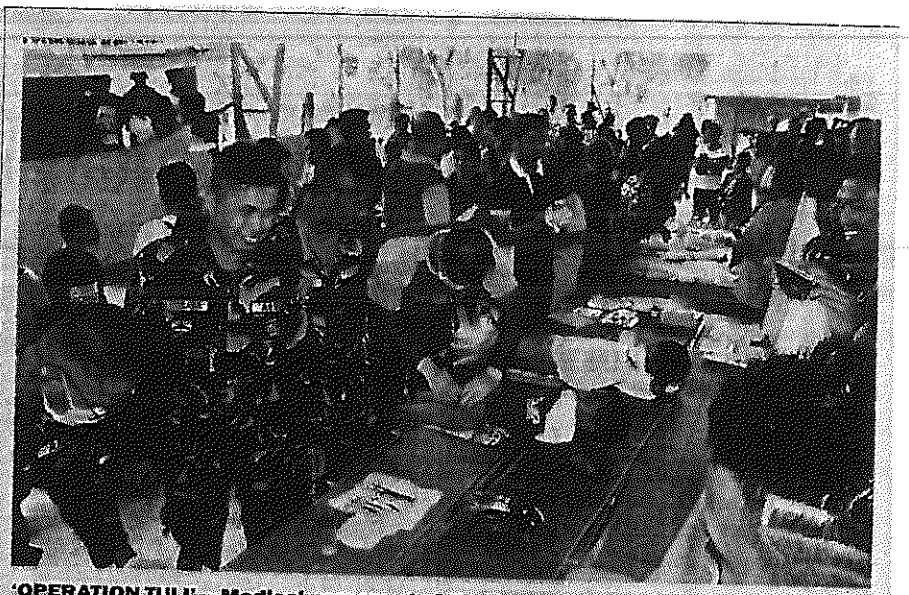

'OPERATION TULI' — Medical personnel of the Fourth Field Artillery Battalion of the Fourth Infantry Division deliver free medical services, including circumcision for the young folk, as part of the Army's outreach mission in Barangay Lingating in Baungon, Bukidnon last April 18. (Photo courtesy of 4th FAB-CMO)

21 April 2018 The Manila Times Page: 13

MARANAOS FAVOR AFP CAMP IN MARAWI

THE people of Marawi are in favor of a plan of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to build a military camp in the city, a member of the task force overseeing the rehabilitation of Marawi said on Friday.

In a Task Force Bangon Marawi news briefing in Malacañang, Toby Purisima, Office of Civil Defense assistant secretary, said feedback on the plan from consultations with the people of Marawi was generally favorable.

"We have to remember, security measures are needed in the most affected area because of what happened in the past, the incident that resulted in the destruction of the most affected area [in Marawi]," Purisima added, referring to the siege of the city by the Maute terrorist group from May to October last year.

"We really need security measures in the area. And based on our feedback during our consultations, the residents of the most affected area are in favor of the camp here," he said.

Purisima reiterated that the people of Marawi are not being bypassed on any step of the rehabilitation.

On January 30, President Rodrigo Duterte led groundbreaking for the new military camp in Marawi.

The 10-hectare camp will cost P400 million and will be developed in Barangay Kapatagan.

The AFP earlier said the military camp would deter another siege by terrorist groups.

The Manila Times reported on February 26 that terrorists from Marawi are regrouping and that they may be gearing up for another attack elsewhere.

Earlier this year, civilian group Ranaw Multi-Sectoral Movement opposed the government's plan to build the camp, saying they are being ignored by the task force.

The group said the rehabilitation of Marawi did not consider the presence of the residents who had been there for so long.

"Plans have been made without our participation. Plans that neither bear the stamp of our will nor reflect our culture. Plans whose mechanics and implementation are not clear to us," it said in a statement.

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, 353,921 individuals, or 77,179 families, were displaced from Marawi City and neighboring municipalities because of the five-month war.

Duterte initially signed Proclamation 216, which declared martial law and suspended the writ of habeas corpus in Mindanao for 60 days on May 23, 2017, in order to stabilize the situation in Marawi.

On July 22, martial law was then extended until the end of the year.

On December 13, 2017, the last day of Congress, military rule was again extended for the whole of 2018 to speed up the rehabilitation and to stunt the regrouping of the terrorists.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

21 April 2018

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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More loose firearms surrendered in N. Cotabato

BY ALI G. MACABALANG

CARMEN, North Cotabato — Ranking officials lauded the turnover here Thursday by local civilian authorities to the government of an initial batch of 102 loose firearms as a gesture of support for the Duterte administration's campaign for communal peace through the Balik-Baril program.

Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza and Maj. Gen. Arnel dela Vega, chief of the 6th Infantry Division, thanked the provincial and municipal leaders for persuading local residents from 28 barangays here to yield undocumented firearms.

In his speech, Dureza said Thursday's turnover rite should inspire the voluntary surrender of more loose firearms in this battle-scarred town, and this should be replicated in 17 other towns in this tri-people (Christian, Muslim and Lumad) province.

"Rebuilding peace and confidence in conflict-affected communities in the south would always necessitate reduction or eradication of unauthorized guns," Dureza said.

In separate speech, North Cotabato Gov. Emmylou Taliño-Mendoza, daughter of the Carmen town mayor, declared that her hometown's turnover of 102 loose firearms was the "start" of the balik baril program in her province.

Military and police officials witnessing Thursday's event here told reporters that barangay leaders in Midsayap, a town in the first district of this province, had yielded 49 undocumented guns last Wednesday, making them the first group to respond to the state-sponsored loose firearms retrieval campaign.

They said the 102 firearms surrendered in Carmen, which included five mini-artillery tubes, and those from Midasayap were "mostly, if not all, home-made."

Dela Vega said all the surrendered firearms will immediately be "demilitarized" or destroyed.

21 April 2018 Tempo Page. 4

2 communist terrorists yield

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Two communist terrorists surrendered to Western Mindanao Command (AFP-WestMinCom) forces in Misamis Occidental Wednesday, AFP-WestMinCom Spokesman, Capt. Jo-Ann Petinglay, identified the surrenderees as Reneboy Gumisid Empel and Junny Cabulag Martizano, both members of the Western Mindanao Regional Party Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines' New People's Army (CPP-NPA). According to Petinglay, Empel is a member of TM Baking Squad, while Martizano is a member of TM Abe, Squad 1, both of Section Committee "JOJI" SRPC II "Monteraza." **(Nonoy E. Lacson)**

21 April 2018

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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AT GROUND LEVEL

SATUR C. OCAMPO

Duterte's odd defense of Philippine sovereignty

"To undermine and treat the Philippines like a mattress to wipe with your feet . . . and you are a foreigner . . . that is something I will not . . . It is a violation of sovereignty."

It's something of a chore for Malacanang watchers these days to make sense of President Duterte's public statements. It's no help at all that he doesn't like reading from prepared texts – but instead prefers to ad-lib on issues of the day, and refuses to police his language. The phrases I have quoted above are from his remarks during the change-of-command ceremonies of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at Camp Aguinaldo last Wednesday.

No, it wasn't Duterte's visceral reaction to aerial surveillance photos published that same morning, April 18, showing two Chinese military transport planes on the the runway of the artificial island built by China on Panganiban Reef. (China refuses to recognize internationally recognized Philippine sovereignty over the reef, which lies 232 kilometers west of Palawan within the country's 370-km exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea.)

Two congressmen and a senator have urged the government to file a diplomatic protest against China over the apparent affront to our sovereignty, normally the first diplomatic step a sovereign state takes in such a situation. But that disturbing incident seemed not to be on Duterte's mind at all.

Rather, he was venting against Sister Patricia Fox, a 71-year-old Australian missionary nun who has lived in the country for 27 years fulfilling her human rights mission, mainly among the poor farmers. On April 17 (the day before publication of the photos, and Duterte's speech), Bureau of Immigration agents took Sr. Pat from her home and detained her for almost 24 hours, pending verification of her travel documents.

After her passport and visa were found to be valid, and there being no legal basis to detain her further, BI Commissioner Jaime Morente ordered her release. However, he required her to answer, within 10 days, certain allegations by the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency (NICA) Region 11 (Southern Mindanao) on her activities as a member of the International Fact-Finding and Solidarity Mission (IFFSM), which I wrote about in this space last week.

The NICA falsely accused her of joining an "anti-government rally" in Tagum City on April 7. No such rally took place. An IFFSM team, including Sister Pat, visited detained farmers at the city jail, carrying a tarpaulin banner that said "Stop killing farmers!" She explained to the BI legal officers that joining the IFFSM was part of her advocacy as a religious missionary to promote justice, peace, and human rights.

Before she was freed, I was able to visit Sister Pat. Along with some nuns and priests, I stayed with her for five hours until her release papers were completed. The custodial officer asked me and Jobert Pahilga (her lawyer), to sign the papers releasing her into our custody. I signed, gladly.

The media reported that presidential spokesperson Harry Roque subsequently admitted that the BI seemed to have made a mistake and "perhaps apologies are in order" but anyway she was quickly released.

Oddly, President Duterte devoted two-thirds of his rambling speech in Camp Aguinaldo to fulminating against what he alleged to be Sr. Pat's "disorderly conduct." Without citing any specific incident, he insinuated that she had criticized the

military and the government on human rights, construing that as an insult on the Philippines and a violation of our sovereignty.

"Let me just state my case as a worker of government," he told the audience of largely military officers and soldiers. "It was not the military who arrested the nun, the Catholic nun from Australia. It was upon my order implemented by the BI. And I take full responsibility, legal or otherwise, for this incident," he said.

Yet nobody had said that it was the military that arrested Sister Pat. Why did Duterte take pains to clarify that it was he who ordered her arrest and not the military? Was there a properly issued arrest order, in the first place?

Moreover, why did he needlessly emphasize that he alone, as Chief Executive, who gives the orders as to "who gets in and who goes out" of the country. "Not the Congress, not the Supreme Court. *Ako, ako ang magsasabi* (It's I who will decide)," he stressed.

"I ordered her to be investigated, not deported at once, not arrested but to invite her to an investigation for a disorderly conduct," he clarified. "You know in our laws, the Philippine laws provide that I can deport you or refuse you entry if you are an undesirable alien."

Apparently stung by criticisms over his having extended martial law in Mindanao until the end of 2018, and threatened to declare martial law nationwide, the president blustered:

"Why would I need martial law? I can order your investigation, (or) anybody, six, nine, 36 hours for investigation purposes. It's legal, especially if you shout there – *sabihin mong mga military, mga taong-gobyerno mga gago* (you say the military, government personnel are stupid). Who are you [to say that]? Just because you are a nun? You go back to your country and try to ponder the enormity of your problems.

"You come here and insult us, you trample with our sovereignty. That will never happen. I assure you: if you begin to malign, defame the government in any of these rallies there, I will order your arrest." He added: "I have a duty to protect this country."

Then he pointed out: "The only reason why she was released was she was not caught *in flagrante delicto*. Meaning to say, she was not caught during her berating the government."

What needs to be proved is: Did Sister Pat ever berate the government? And does a foreigner's berating the government constitute a crime?

The Ecumenical Bishops Forum (EBF), with whom Sister Pat has worked closely in the course of her mission, cites her case as "the most recent blow against church workers and institutions." For the past 27 years, the EBF affirmed, "she has worked hand-in-hand with farmers, supporting through her prayers and selfless service their struggle for land and life."

Her plight "sends a chilling message to everyone," the bishops lamented. "The [political] persecution of church people does not only reveal the sword of a despotic government that seeks to suppress the Church's role as a moral compass of society. It is a demonstration of this administration's noxious attempt to criminalize legitimate dissent. This serves as a prelude to more intensified state-perpetrated violence against those who work for peace, justice, and the promotion of human rights."

* * *

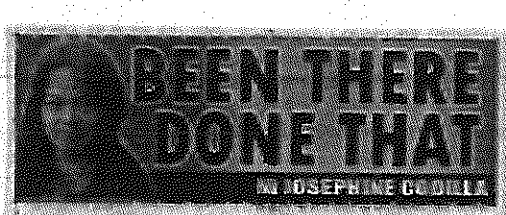
Email: *satur.ocampo@gmail.com*

★

21 April 2018

Remate
ANG DIARYO NG MASA

Pahina. 4



PMA HONORS RETIRING GENERALS

IT was my first time last Saturday to witness a testimonial parade and review for retiring AFP generals at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

I attend various events and activities at the PMA at least twice a year, foremost of which are the PMA Alumni Homecoming in February and graduation in March where families get together in celebration of successes and milestones, and for remembrances.

But I would learn that testimonial parades and reviews and the luncheons that follow are equally, if not more, sentimental particularly because there are just a few people who are given such special honors.

Those who were honored last Saturday were Joint Task Force-NCR Commander Brigadier General Alan R. Arrojado, and his mistahs Police Director Napoleon C. Taas, Director of the PNP's Directorate for Information and Communications Technology Management; Police Director Federico L. Dulay Jr., Director of the PNP's Civil Security Group; Police Chief Superintendent Peter Rosano P. Donato, Deputy Director of the PNP's Civil Security Group; and BGen Carlo Magno L. Tabo, Deputy Chief of the AFP's Intelligence Service.

I swear I heard a sniff from my friend, Brigadier General Alan R. Arrojado, commander of the Joint Task Group-National Capital Region, as he thanked his family, friends and all those he has worked with in his more than three decades of military service while delivering his speech.

Despite his moniker in the AFP as "Cobra," because of his fierce and menacing leadership traits, especially in transforming a ragtag battalion—the 35th Infantry "Makamandag" Battalion—into one of the best in the armed forces, his deep affection for family and friends got the better of this warrior and all the rest of the honorees who could not hide their emotions during the testimonial luncheon in their honor, profusely thanking all their loved ones and people important to them.

Most of all, they thanked the PMA for making them what they have become.

I am honored, as all of General Arrojado's other guests, for his sincere expression of gratitude.

He has become like a brother to me, treating me always with respect and as a coequal. Indeed, he has always been popular with AFP officers and enlisted personnel alike for his empathy, for always looking after their welfare, and for treating everybody with respect no matter their status in life.

I did not stay in Baguio long enough to witness the testimonial parade for outgoing AFP Chief of Staff General Rey Leonardo Guerrero the following day, and for outgoing PNP Chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa, but I am certain their sentiments are captured in the latter's remarks during his own testimonial parade at the PMA last Monday:

"What a journey it has been. It all started here at the PMA grounds, and as I am winding up my service, I am also ending it here.

"Thank you PMA for making me what I am today."

ONLINE NEWS

21 APRIL 2018

Marawi residents back building of military camp: task force

By Jelly Musico April 20, 2018, 10:05 pm

MANILA – The Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM) on Friday said residents of Marawi are in favor of the government's plan to build a military camp in Marawi City.

TFBM spokesperson and Office of the Civil Defense Assistant Secretary Kristoffer James Purisma made this clarification following reports that local residents are opposing the creation of a military camp as part of the city's reconstruction plan.

"Based on feedback we got from consultation with our brothers, they are in favor of military camp because we must remember that we need security measures for most affected area," Purisma said in a Bangon Marawi press briefing in Malacanang.

Purisima said the task force has been conducting series of consultations with the residents to get their suggestions on how to rebuild war-torn Marawi City.

"Overall, the stakeholders participating in the discussions expressed their appreciation for being informed and consulted on the proposed plans for the rehabilitation of the most affected area which directly affects them and the larger community," Purisima said.

"The discussions allowed for sharing of correct information, discussing concerns of stakeholders, as well as potential solutions," he added.

He said the consultations were participated by 34 clans in 13 clusters particularly those from 24 barangays of the most affected area.

Purisima said a third independent party has facilitated the discussions on the plans to rehabilitate and rebuild the severely-damaged area by a five-month conflict between government troops and ISIS-inspired groups.

"The Task force would like to thank all participants in the discussions for their feedback, openness and sharing of concerns," Purisima said.

He said residents have been assured that results of the consultations will be used to finalize the rehabilitation and reconstruction plans for Marawi.

Purisima said the task force has also assured close collaboration with local government units (LGUs) for regular feedback during the implementation of rehabilitation plan.

He said the negotiations for the selection of the developer of the most affected area will be completed by early this May.

"Then we will begin the process for the Swiss Challenge and then other intended proponents may then challenge those terms and we will determine the developer by the end of May," Purisima said.

He said the Bagong Marawi Consortium has submitted initial proposal of Php17.2 billion to rebuild the most affected area. ***(PNA)***

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Ex-AFP chief lauds Filipino soldiers' exemplary courage

By Priam Nepomuceno April 20, 2018, 2:15 pm

MANILA -- The Filipino soldier is truly a class of his own when it comes to bravery and courage, former Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero said during his retirement speech Wednesday.

"The past months as the chief-of-staff of the AFP had shown me why the Filipino fighter is in a class of his own. And we have proudly co-documented achievements in a span of less than six months in the second book entitled, 'Filipino Courage, Filipino Compassion, AFP Strong'. A fitting homage, the fighting spirit and passion to serve of every soldier, airman, sailor, and Marine spread all over the archipelago," Guerrero said.

He said the Filipino soldier's courage was demonstrated against the strong push against the communist terrorists to the rehabilitation of Marawi City, to the processing of thousand rebel surrenders.

"The AFP has stayed focus on making peace the priority and the norm across (the) islands," Guerrero said.

He also lauded the vigilance shown by AFP personnel in preserving and defending the country's territorial integrity, which was done with the help of the various Unified Commands.

"The security of our waters and islands from north to south and east to west post a challenge, one (the) AFP Unified Commands consider as a priority. Be that as it may, we have put out collective minds to work and found support from the highest authorities to ensure that the resources we need are made available," he added.

Guerrero, a member of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1984, formally retired from his post on April 18. He was replaced by PMA Class of 1985 member, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, formerly of the Western Mindanao Command.

On Oct. 26, 2017, Guerrero was appointed as AFP chief, replacing then AFP chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Año, who stepped down after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56. Año is currently Officer- In-Charge Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Guerrero was supposed to retire on Dec. 17, 2017 after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56 but his term as AFP chief was extended by another four months by President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Guerrero was honored with a testimonial parade and review and the prestigious award of the Philippine Legion of Honor (Rank of Commander) during his retirement. ***(With reports from Ericka Cicera, OJT/PNA)***

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