



**"NAVY 2020: STRONG AND CREDIBLE"**

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Naval Station Jose V Andrada  
2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila



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**Date: 15 FEB 2012**

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## Tutukan ang Pestaño case — Pimentel

Hintimok ni Senator Aquilino Pimentel III ang mga akusado sa kaso ng pagpaslang kay Navy Ensign Phillip Pestaño na hintayin na lamang ang desiyon ng korte at huwag nang ilihis ang isyu.

Inatasan ni Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales na muling buksin ang kaso ni Pestaño na unang iniulat na nagpakamatay sa loob ng isang barko ng Philippine Navy noong 1995.

Nauna nang pinawalang-sala ng korte sina Navy Capt. Ricardo Oridoñez, Commander Reynaldo Lopez, Commander Alfrederick Alba, Lt. Commander Ludogar Casis, Lt. Commander Joselito Colico, Lt. Commander Ruben Roque, Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Sandy Miranda, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class

Welfenio Aquino at Petty Officer 1st Class Carlito Amoroso.

"The accused in the Pestaño case are trying hard to divert public attention from the murder charge filed against them by the current no-nonsense Ombudsman for the killing of naval Ensign Philip Pestaño in 1995," ayon kay Pimentel.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Pimentel na hindi lamang sangkot ang mga akusado, sa halip ay gumawa pa sila ng paraan para pagtakpan ang krimen.

Aniya, ang akusasyon na nagpakamatay ito ay ibinastura na ng mga lokal at dayuhang eksperto dahil hindi totoo ang sinasabi ng mga akusado na naglaslas ng pulso ang biktima.

**Leonel Abasola**

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## Coast Guard, Navy rescue 37 off Surigao City

COAST Guard and Navy personnel rescued 37 passengers whose motor boat sank in waters off Surigao City Tuesday afternoon.

Lt. Cdr. Algier Ricafrente, Coast Guard spokesman, said M/bca Venjun II was half submerged after it hit an unidentified hard object at vicinity seawaters of Panomboyon, Surigao City Tuesday afternoon.

"A hole at the right bow portion of the motor banca caused the leakage," Ricafrente said.

Coast Guard craft DF-311 together with Navy rescue vessel Felix Apolinario and other volunteers immediately responded to the area where they successfully rescued all the passengers onboard.

"All passengers and crew were able to wear their life jacket and hold on to the life raft which only shows their awareness in times of maritime accidents," Ricafrente said. **Joel E. Zurbano**

### 45 MISSING PASSENGERS RESCUED

**COTABATO:** The Philippine Coast Guard has rescued the 45 passengers who were reported missing after their vessel capsized on Monday, local police said Tuesday. All the passengers of the M/B BenJun vessel were rescued and safe after a rescue mission launched by the Philippine Coast Guard, Inocentes Capuno, said an officer in charge of the Dinagat Police office. The vessel, heading for the island town of Basilisa in Dinagat Island province, left the port of Surigao City at around 1:00 p.m. Monday. But upon reaching Hildop Island, big waves hit the boat, causing it to capsize. "All the passengers were rescued including the boat's crew," Capuno said. The Philippines has more than 7,000 islands. Ships and boats serve as the principal means of transportation among these islands. Due to long years of poor maintenance, traffic accidents are common.

XINHUA

### GUNMEN KILL SOLDIER IN ZAMBOANGA

**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** Motorcycle gunmen shot dead a Philippine soldier in an attack here, police said. Police said Sergeant Cesar Simbi, 42, was heading home when he was attacked in the village of Canelar late Sunday. The assailants fled after the shooting and police said it is still investigating the motive of the killing. Simbi, a member of the Philippine Air Force, was assigned with the 206th Air Wing in Zamboanga City. Police said the soldier was rushed to hospital, but emergency staff declared him dead on arrival. No individual or group claimed responsibility for the latest attack, but killings are not uncommon in Zamboanga City where guns-for-hire are actively operating and are largely blamed for most of the murders.

AL JACINTO

## Govt urged to fund Kalayaan pier project

By Florante S. Solmerin

THE mayor of the Kalayaan Island Group, the focal point of a territorial dispute between the Philippines and its Asian neighbors, on Tuesday asked the national government to build a marina on the main island Pagasa to develop the area.

Mayor Eugenio Bito-onon said building the marina was their priority, and that a request to that effect had been submitted to the Bureau

of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources and Malacañang.

"We believe a sheltered port is pivotal to the social and economic development of Kalayaan," Bito-onon said.

"We look up to the national government to provide us this basic facility to enhance the quality of life in the area."

The Kalayaan group is part of the Spratly group of islands, and is composed of more than 750 reefs,

islets, atolls, cays and islands in the West Philippine Sea. The islands lie off the coasts of the Philippines and Malaysia.

The islands contain less than four square kilometers of land but more than 425,000 square kilometers of sea. They are rich fishing grounds, and initial surveys indicate they significant reserves of oil and natural gas.

Pagasa has 300 residents and about 300 personnel from Navy, Air Force and Army. Bito-onon says the proposal to improve the area includes building a causeway and docking piers and dredging and deepening the channel.

Pagasa lacks a safe harbor, but the Vietnamese have built a marina on Pugad Island, which is about 24 nautical miles north of Pagasa, Bito-onon says.

"If the Vietnamese can, why can't we?" he said.

Pugad Island was occupied by Philippine forces in 1975, but the South Vietnamese invaded the area when the soldiers guarding it left to attend a party for their commanding officer on nearby Parola Island. The island later fell to North Vietnam, which garrisoned the area after the defeat of the South.



# Soldier-engineers from seven countries join hands for civil work

BY VICTOR REYES

SOLDIER-ENGINEERS from seven countries, including the United States, will construct and renovate school buildings and a health center in the Samar provinces under an endeavor dubbed Pacific Partnership 2012.

AFP spokesman Col. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos said American engineers and the other foreign participants will be staying in the

country from May 18 to July 1.

On June 18, Burgos said members of the 30th Naval Construction Regiment aboard USS Mercy, a premiere hospital ship, will be arriving on a port call and join the project which will cost about \$159,000. "The US Navy will shoulder all costs," said Burgos.

The project will construct two school buildings in Northern Samar, renovate another school building and a health

center in Western Samar, and reconstruct another school building in Western Samar.

Other foreign soldier-engineers will come from Canada, Australia, Japan, Chile, New Zealand, and Thailand.

Similar projects will be also pursued in other host countries - Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia - under Pacific Partnership 2012.

Burgos said safety of the participating foreign troops

has been considered, acknowledging the risk posed by the communist New People's Army which has a presence in Samar. The US has included the NPA in its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Maj. Emmanuel Garcia, spokesman of the AFP's National Development Support Command and deputy chief of the AFP public affairs office,

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## SOLDIER

said Pacific Partnership 2012 started in the Philippines in 2006 in Zamboanga City, and was repeated in General Santos City in 2008. A third activity in 2010 was cancelled because of the elections.

Garcia said the Samar provinces were chosen as the beneficiaries of the Pacific Partnership 2012 because they are among the "poorest

provinces" in the country. The Pacific Partnership was rooted from the humanitarian initiatives following the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia that killed over 200,000 people.

AFP chief Lt. Gen. Jessie Dellosa said: "This exposure to new approaches in construction and humanitarian projects will definitely help our soldiers, particularly our engineers, in carrying out future civic assistance programs."

### SMUGGLING, HUMAN TRAFFICKING BESET PALAWAN

**PUERTO PRINCESA CITY.** A military official has urged officials of the Bureau of Immigration and Bureau of Customs to implement high visibility among their personnel in Palawan and nearby provinces as smuggling and human trafficking are increasing in the region. Western Command chief Lt. Gen. Juancho Sabban, in a chance interview with *The Manila Times* at the Headquarters Naval Forces West here, confessed that crimes such as human trafficking, smuggling, illegal entry and piracy exist on islands near Palawan. Sabban noted that Marines personnel earlier seized smuggled fuel and arrested three suspects in Bataraza, Palawan. He added that its Marine Battalion Landing Team arrested a motor vessel loaded with smuggled fuel from Malaysia. Authorities who conducted board and search procedures on the vessel found 32 drums or 6,400 liters of diesel fuel without proper documentation. Sabban also said that Palawan is now being used as transit point of human traffickers.

**JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ**

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## Rescuers pull out from landslide sites

By Florence Baesa  
*Inquirer Visayas*

DUMAGUETE CITY—Most of the rescue groups have withdrawn from two landslide sites in Guihulungan City and La Libertad town.

As of yesterday, only the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) team and Army soldiers remained in Sitio Moog, Barangay Planas, in Guihulungan. Other soldiers were still in Barangay Solonggon in La Libertad.

Gov. Roel Degamo met with Minda Morante, regional director of the Office of Civil Defense, and asked her to tell the two local governments to pass resolutions declaring a stop to the retrieval operations. He earlier said he wanted to end the mission himself, but Morante informed him that this was the call of the local officials.

"We will use the soldiers in rebuilding roads and bridges. Let's move on and rebuild damaged infrastructure," Degamo said.

The governor also wanted Morante to tell the MMDA team to stop digging.

### Risky to health

Continuing the retrieval operations posed a health risk as it would lead to diseases since the bodies of the victims were in a state of decomposition, said Dr. Exposito Medalla,

head of the Department of Health (DOH) Regional Epidemiological and Surveillance Unit.

In an interview, La Libertad Mayor Lawrence Limkaichong said he could not do anything to prevent residents from searching for their loved ones. He said he had given the diggers masks and gloves.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, records of the Army's 11th Infantry Battalion showed 46 dead and 59 missing. Of the fatalities, 21 were in Guihulungan, nine in La Libertad, eight in Jimalalud, three in Tayasan, two each in Ayungon and Manjuyod, and one in Bindoy.

The Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council placed the number of deaths at 42 (17 in Guihulungan, nine in La Libertad, eight in Jimalalud, three in Tayasan, two each in Manjuyod and Ayungon, and one in Bindoy) and 60 missing (20 in Planas and 40 in Solonggon).

The provincial police recorded 40 fatalities (17 in Guihulungan, eight each in La Libertad and Jimalalud, three in Tayasan, two in Ayungon, and one each in Bindoy and Manjuyod) and 68 missing (27 in Planas in Guihulungan, 40 in Solonggon in La Libertad and one in Tayasan).

The power supply has been restored in certain parts of the

province, the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) announced.

Five transmission structures along the Amian- Bindoy-Guihulungan 69kV transmission line were affected by the calamity, according to a statement of Elmer D. Cruz of the NGCP corporate communications unit.

### Pope's prayers

In Bacolod City, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Giuseppe Pinto, on Monday night, said the Pope's prayers were with the Filipinos in these trying times.

"I assure you of the solidarity of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in all your aspirations and trials and that he remembers you in his prayers," he said.

The papal envoy spoke before a crowd of more than 500 at a dinner at IFisher Hotel to kick off "Totus Tuus," the week-long event marking the 31st anniversary of the visit of Blessed John Paul II to Bacolod on Feb 20, 1981.

"Our thoughts are with our brothers and sisters who are suffering because of the recent earthquake that hit this island," Pinto said.

Many people and institutions have already done a lot to help, but a lot more needs to be done, he added. *With a report from Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

# Pinoy doc, wanted in US, now a medical reservist in AFP

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) finally caught up with a Filipino doctor long wanted in the United States for allegedly defrauding the state of California of some \$3 million in fake medical claims.

Dr. Eric Uy Chan, who had been hiding from US authorities since 2000, was arrested right inside the Armed Forces of the Philippines headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo where he had managed to wangle a commission as a lieutenant colonel in the Medical Reserve Corps.

NBI Foreign Liaison Division chief Claro de Castro said yesterday they had initially received information that the 48-year-old Chan had assumed the name Eric Uy Garbitorena and had joined the AFP.

De Castro told the *Inquirer* they waited for the doctor to turn up at a medical reservists meeting at Aguinaldo on Saturday morning and arrested him on sight.

He said they had been looking for Chan

since Aug. 28, 2006, when a Manila court issued a warrant for his arrest based on a request from the US government coursed through the Department of Justice.

Chan is wanted by US authorities for conspiracy to commit a crime, grand theft and health care fraud for presenting false medical claims and collecting payments amounting to more than \$3 million from the California Medi-Cal Program.

Two California state courts separately issued warrants for his arrest in January 2000 and February 2003 stemming from a complaint that alleged that in 1996, Chan and his two coaccused operated the Green Cross Medical Clinic in Carson City, California, with neither a license from the state nor a medical service provider number.

To secure payments from the state's Department of Health Services through its Medi-Cal program, Chan and his coaccused allegedly used the provider number of a licensed doctor they had hired, submitting claims for services not actually provided by

the doctor amounting to \$517,000.

When the doctor deactivated her provider number, Chan and his cohorts allegedly opened another clinic, Evergreen Medical Clinic, in the same city in March 1997.

They hired another doctor, whose provider number they again allegedly used to make fraudulent claims of \$1.7 million.

When this con was discovered, Chan allegedly put up West Coast Intermed Management where he again hired a licensed doctor to obtain his Medi-Cal provider number and use it to receive payments for fabricated patient charts in the total amount of \$900,000.

When the fraud was discovered in 1999, charges were filed against Chan and his coaccused. While Chan hid out in the Philippines, one of his coaccused, Chan Annille Arcangel Ferrer, pleaded guilty in California and was sentenced to five years in state prison.

Chan is being held at the NBI jail pending his extradition to the United States to face the charges filed against him in the Superior Court of California.

## **Military doctor inaresto sa panggogoyo sa US**

Inaresto ng National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), isang doctor at may ranggong full colonel na miyembro ng Armed Forces of the Philippines Reserve Command (AFPRESCOM) sa loob miseno ng Camp Aguinaldo noong Sabado dahil sa inakusahan ng panggogoyo ng halagang tatlong milyong dolyar na health-care program sa Estados Unidos.

Kinilala ni NBI Foreign Liaison Division (NBI-FLD) Chief Atty. Claro de Castro Jr., ang Pinoy na doctor na si Eric Uy Chan, kilala bilang Eric Uy Garbitorena, tags-No. 684 T. Mapua St. Maynila, at matagal ng wanted sa United States (US).

Si Chan ay sinampuhan ng kasong felony at conspiracy to commit crime, Grand Theft at Health Care Fraud o Presenting False Medical Claims by collecting/receiving payments sa California Medical Program na nagkakahalaga ng tatlong milyong dolyar.

"As a background, Mr. Chan is wanted to stand trial in the Superior Court of the State of California, County for Los Angeles. He is wanted by the US government for defrauding the California state Medical program for over three million dollar. It was reported to us that the subject fled to the Philippines to evade arrest and prosecution," ayon kay De Castro. **(Juliet de Loza/JB Salazar)**

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## Air Force sergeant shot dead

A MEMBER of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) was shot dead yesterday by motorcycle-riding gunmen in Zamboanga City.

Zamboanga City Police Office (ZCPO) Director Edwin de Ocampo identified the victim as Technical Sergeant Cesar Simbi, 42. He is assigned with the PAF's 206th Air Wing based at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in the city.

According to the report, Simbi was driving his motorcycle on his way home at Prada Drive, Canelar Village when the suspects showed up.

The suspects, ridding in tandem, chased Simbi. One of the two gunmen shot him.

Simbi sustained multiple gunshot wounds and was declared dead on arrival at the Zamboanga City Medical Center.

De Ocampo ordered the ZCPO's Criminal Investigation and Criminal Management to identify the masked suspects.

**Isaiah Immanuel  
Crisostomo**

## Calabarzon has new Army chief

THE Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry "Jungle Fighter" Division, the military unit responsible for internal security operations (ISO) in Southern Tagalog, has implemented a major reorganization in its command structure with the promotion and transfer of one of its key field officers to the Bicol region.

Col. Leo Baladad, erst-while chief of the 202nd "Unifier" Brigade which covers the ISO in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (Calabarzon), will assume his new designation as assistant division commander (ADC) of the 9th Infantry Division.

He was replaced by Col. Ivan Samarista, his deputy at the 202nd brigade, in a simple turnover ceremony yesterday at brigade headquarters in Rizal, Laguna, witnessed by Maj. Gen. Eduardo del Rosario, chief of the 2nd ID, and other important guests.

Samarista and Baladad are both products of the "Mapitagan Class" (Class 1982) of the Philippine Military Academy.

The division, with three Army brigade, is responsible for the ISO in Calabarzon and in the island provinces of Mimaropa (Region 4B).

**Paul M. Gutierrez**

**2 SUNDALO  
NAGSAULI  
NG P90K NA  
NAPULOT  
SA LUGAR  
NA NILINDOL**

**DALAWANG** sundalo ng 32nd Division Reconnaissance Company of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division ang nagsauli ng bag na naglalaman ng cash na P90,000 na kanilang napulot habang nagsasagawa ng retrieval operations sa La Libertad, Negros Oriental kamakalawa, ayon sa ulat kahapon.

Sina Privates Danny Paiganc at Marlon Vera ay bahagi ng retrieval team na dinapoy sa La Libertad kasunod ng 6.9 magnitude earthquake na tumama sa Negros Oriental noong Pebrero 6, ayon kay Capt. Reyhan Juva.

Tuwang-tuwa naman ang may-ari ng pera na Si Virginia Callora kasabay ng pabayag na malaki ang matutulong nito sa kanilang paghango mula sa nangyaring lindol.

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## PNP's No. 3 moves up

By DJ Yap

THE RETIRING No. 2 man of the Philippine National Police (PNP) is giving way to No. 3, while No. 4 is moving up to No. 3.

Deputy Director General Benjamin Belarmino, a member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1977, will reach retirement age this week and is poised to turn over the reins to the next ranking official.

He will receive retirement honors at the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame today, while the turnover ceremony is scheduled when he turns 56 on Thursday, officials said.

Belarmino, the deputy chief for administration, confirmed he will be replaced by Deputy Director General Arturo Caodac Jr., a member of Class 1978, and the deputy chief for operation.

"I have signed the appointment of [Caodac] as the next DCA and Deputy Director General Erelito Sarmiento, as the next DCO (deputy chief for operation). They will assume the next higher position after my retirement," Belarmino said.

It was not yet clear who will replace Sarmiento, chief of the directorial staff and a member of Class of 1980.

## PNP sponsors mass wedding

EIGHTEEN policemen and their wives were married in a mass Valentine's Day wedding ceremony in Camp Crame.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Nicanor A. Bartolome and his wife, Dra. Noemia stood as among the principal wedding sponsors.

"One of the most important aspects of my 10 Action Plan is the 'Enhancement of Morale and Welfare Projects' and this Mass wedding which coincides with the day of the hearts will inspire our PNP personnel to do their best not only in performing their duties as law enforcers but also by being responsible providers for their families and loved-ones," said Bartolome.

AFP/PNP Bishop, Most Reverend Leopoldo S. Tumalak was the main celebrant with PNP Chaplain Service director, Fr./Senior Superintendent Deody O. Barret and all the PNP Chaplain Service Catholic Chaplains as co-celebrants in this "PNP Mass Wedding 2012".

"This yearly activity in celebration of the PNP Foundation Day is part of the mission of the PNP Chaplain Service to 'transform from within' all our PNP personnel with sound moral and spiritual foundation for the PNP to attain a highly capable, effective and credible police service," said Fr. Barret.

Camp Crame Base Chaplain, Fr. Jason D. Gettzo, said this year's newlyweds came from different PNP offices and units with Inspector Alfredo Maluto from the Police Regional Office 4-B as the oldest at 50 years old.

## Sulu exec backs oil exploration in Mindanao

SULU Gov. Abdusakur Tan on Tuesday expressed full support for the government's oil exploration program in the Sulu sea including the Liguasan Marsh in Maguindano, which is being opposed by the rebel group Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

"I have always been support-

ive of efforts in harnessing not only the human potentials but also the rich natural resources and minerals found in Sulu and the rest of Mindanao, like the oil exploration in the Sulu Sea and the natural gas reserves in the Liguasan Marsh in Maguindano," Tan said.

He said the development of areas for the benefit of the majority of the people could not be put on hold for any reason.

"Sulu and the rest of the region can ill-afford to miss another phase of economic opportunities to better secure their future," Tan said.

"I speak with moral ascendancy over this matter for I am clothed with the mandate of the people being an elected Governor and Chief Executive of Sulu.

"I view the events in Sulu with full awareness of its history and the vantage role the province

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can perform in furtherance of regional peace and security and development."

Tan's position runs counter to the MILF's. The group, which is negotiating a peace agreement with the government, has nonetheless cautioned it against implementing onshore and offshore oil and gas exploration projects.

"They should have stopped that or else this may cause a grave problem," MILF chief peace negotiator Mahagher Iqbal has said.

"The problem is not yet settled and definitely, we will raise the issue in the negotiation." **Florante S. Solmerin**

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BY ALITO L. MALINAO  
XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

# PHL gov't, MILF tackle 'substantive' issues in KL peace negotiations

MANILA: Negotiators from the Philippine government and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) resumed their peace negotiations in Kuala Lumpur Monday with both sides agreeing to tackle substantive issues.

The three-day 25th formal exploratory talks were held a month after the last meeting of both panels in Kuala Lumpur on Jan. 9 to 11.

In his opening statement, Marvic Leonen, chief of the government panel, stressed the need to "focus once more on the substantive issues and explore common grounds" in order to come up with a final peace agreement.

"We are optimistic that we can

find mutually viable solutions. Let

us redouble our efforts to conclude these negotiations in the soonest possible time," Leonen said.

For his part, MILF chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal said that

## >>> news analysis

"practically all issues are on the table and clear

to all parties."

The MILF has expressed optimism that the negotiations would resolve the 'stickiest

> Substantive A9

### ■ 'SUBSTANTIVE' FROM A8

## PHL gov't, MILF tackle

points," saying that during the January talks, negotiators were preoccupied on issues involving power-sharing, wealth-sharing, and interim mechanism.

"They managed to come to [an] understanding, short of a formal decision, on the powers exclusively exercised by the central government. But they lacked time to deal on powers [that] are concurrent to the central government and state government, and powers to be exercised by the state government," the MILF said.

The MILF said that the respective roadmaps of the two panels have many things in common, but they "differed substantially on timeframes and the need for mechanism that would ensure perpetuity of the agreement."

In their January meeting, Leonen has revealed details of an expanded autonomy scheme for the Filipino-Muslims in the Southern Philippines in lieu of the establishment of a semi-sovereign sub-state that the separatist group has demanded.

Also in the January talks, Leonen expressed the hope that the two sides could craft a formal peace accord within the first quarter of this year.

Leonen said that President Benigno Aquino is now "willing to risk his own political future to cleanse government of past sins of corruption and misadministration."

He cited the efforts of the current governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) who, within 100 days of his appointment, has shown re-

solve to "cleanse entrenched interests to bring about a government that delivers justice."

The MILF has not formally discarded its original demand for a sub-state, which has been heavily criticized by other Philippine government officials including leaders of Congress for being unconstitutional.

But the MILF has said that the ARMM, which was created under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, is merely an administrative body and does not have the sovereign functions that they have envisioned under a Bangsamoro sub-state.

Leonen also called on the MILF to work closely with other leaders that represent the Bangsamoro people, citing in particular the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which signed a peace accord with the government in 1996.

"We hope that it can actually see the current proposals of the MNLF and find common grounds

with them," he said.

Leonen likewise called on the MILF to work with the Manila government and desist in conducting actions without proper coordination with the ceasefire mechanisms, the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group (AHJAG) or the Coordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCH).

"We do have the AHJAG mechanisms that will enable us to work together to induct these criminals that find sanctuary within various communities. It is also by working together that we avoid needless panic and instability as we negotiate a final peace agreement," he said.

Malaysian facilitator Tengku Dato Ab Ghafar Tengku Mohamed described the current round of talks in Kuala Lumpur as "interesting because we will try to resolve issues that are quite serious to deal with."

"At the end of the day, we should be able to see something as both parties have timelines to achieve," Dato Ab Ghafar said.

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# AFP rejects CPP-NDF calls to release detained consultants

By Mario J. Mallari

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday rejected calls by the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front for the release of detained CPP-NDF consultants in compliance with the Joint Agreement on Security and Immunity Guarantee (Jasig) signed by the government.

The CPP-NDF has particularly demanded the government of Aquino to release Alan Jazmines, who is claimed to be CPP-NDF consultant protected under the Jasig.

AFP spokesman Col. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos Jr. stressed that Jazmines is a wanted person facing murder and frustrated murder charges.

"He has to face cases filed against him, he should be made

answerable to the charges filed against him," Burgos said.

"He committed crimes, he is wanted for several (cases). He has arrest warrant for murder and frustrated murder," Burgos added.

The AFP spokesman, however, maintained that the final decision regarding the release of CPP-NDF personalities remains in the hands of the Office of the Presidential Affairs on the Peace Process (OPAPP).

"We will always uphold the rule of law... and then in terms of the disposition and other decision of his case, it will be coured through the OPAPP," Burgos said.

Burgos expressed fears that Jazmines might commit atrocities if freed from detention. Jazmines, who is tagged by the military as a member of the CPP Central Committee, is presently detained

at Camp Crame.

The CPP, however, countered the release of Jazmines and other CPP-consultants is not a "side issue" in the peace negotiations between the government and the communist organization as claimed by government chief negotiator Alex Padilla.

"Contrary to the claims of Padilla, respect for and compliance with the Jasig have become crucial questions in peace negotiations between the NDF and the GPH (government of the Philippines) under the Aquino regime," the CPP said.

The CPP stressed that Jasig was signed in 1996 by the GPH and the NDF to ensure the safety and immunity of negotiators and others involved in the peace negotiations and allow a favorable atmosphere for peace talks.

"How can the safety of the negotiators, consultants and other NDF personnel involved in the peace negotiations be a side issue? How can peace negotiations progress when the Philippine government continues to attack the NDF's peace consultants and prevent them from performing their work?" the CPP asked.

In claiming that Jasig is just a side issue of the peace talks, the CPP said Padilla only showed his total disregard of the Jasig and his complicity in the attacks carried out by the GPH and its Armed Forces and police against Jasig-protected personnel of the NDF.

Aside from Jazmines, the CPP is also calling for the release of 12 other NDF consultants, including Tirso Meantara alias Ka Bart, the top commander of the New People's Army in Southern Tagalog region.

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## AFP blocks demand to free top leftist

THE Armed Forces of the Philippines has strongly objected on the renewed demand of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) for the release from detention of its top leader, Allan Jasiniez, for humanitarian reasons and in compliance with the agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) peace panels.

Jasiniez is a member of the CPP Central Committee and NDFP consultant on peace process.

In opposing the release of Jasiniez, the AFP, through spokesman Col. Arnulfo Burgos Jr., on Tuesday stressed that the 65-year-old communist leader should first be brought to court to face the murder, a non-bailable offense, frustrated murder and rebellion cases filed against him.

"We will always uphold the rule of law and then in upholding the rule of law he has to face the criminal cases against him and then in terms of the disposition and other decision of his case it will be coursed through the OPAPP [Office of Presidential Adviser on Peace Process]," Burgos said. "No one is above the law."

Burgos also pointed out that even at his old age, Jasiniez remains dangerous if released from jail, saying that "he may perpetrate atrocities."

In demanding the release of Jasiniez, the CPP said that the Aquino administration lacks compassion in prolonging their comrade's detention.

"Jasiniez is 65 years old and suffers from severe hypertension. Even while in detention, Jasiniez is being subjected to harassment by police personnel, having been threatened

thrice with being transferred to Camp Bicutan. His family and friends are always having a hard time bringing in letters, reading materials and other legitimate items to his detention cell," the CPP said in a statement.

It added that the prolong incarceration of Jasiniez and failure to act on the clamor for the release of 12 other NDFP peace consultants was a manifestation of the government's low regard for the peace negotiations.

The CPP accused the Aquino government of distorting and misinterpreting the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) and other standing agreements between the GPH and the NDFP to justify the prolonged detention of Jasiniez and 12 other NDFP peace consultants.

**WILLIAM B. DEPASUPIL**

*Editorial*

## Batik sa PMA si Garcia

**D**APAT tularan ang ginawa ng Philippine Military Academy (PMA) kay dating Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia. Itinakwil nila ang dating heneral dahil sa ginawa nilang paglulustay sa pondo ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) noong siya pa ang comptroller. Hindi na nasikmura ng mga taga-PMA ang ginawa ni Garcia kaya napagpasyahan nilang alisin ito sa roster ng akademya.

Nabunyag ang paglulustay ng pondo ng AFP noong 2005 makaraang mahull ang asawa at anak ni Garcia habang nasa US airport na may dalang libu-libong dolyar. Nabuking ang mga ari-arian ni Garcia sa US at maging sa Pilipinas. Maraming bahay, lupain at mga sasakyan na hindi angkop sa suweldo niya bilang comptroller.

Pagkaraan ng walong taon, tuluyan nang itinakwil ng PMA ang dati nilang miyembro. Hindi karapat-dapat ang katulad ni Garcia sa tinitingalang PMA. Kilala ang PMA na humuhubog para magkaroon ng mabuti, malinis at matapat na sundalo ang republika.

Kahanga-hanga ang ginawa ng PMA sa kanilang dating miyembro na nagbigay ng batik o dungis. Ang ginawang ito ay dapat pang magpatuloy sa hinaharap upang magsilbing babala sa iba pang gagawa ng pagnanakaw sa kaban ng bayan. Kung ang lahat ng mga miyembro ng PMA na napatunayang gumawa ng masama ay itatakwil, malilipol ang mga itinuturing na "anay" sa akademya.

Bukod kay Garcia, ilan pang opisyal ng AFP (na graduate din ng PMA) ang nasasangkot sa paglulustay ng pondo at inimbestigahan na ng Senado. May mga heneral ng AFP na tumanggap din ng "pabaon" nang sila ay magretiro. Pawang mga nagtapos din sa PMA ang mga inaakusahang tumanggap ng "pabaon".

Sana gayahin din ng ibang organisasyon ang ginawa ng PMA laban sa kanilang dating miyembro. Ito ang magbibigay daan para malipol ang mga corrupt sa bayan. Itakwil ang mga "batik".

# Obama to take pulse of China's next leader

WASHINGTON, D.C. China's Vice President Xi Jinping will meet US President Barack Obama on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) in a key early test for Washington's relations with the man on course to lead the Asian power for the next decade.

Xi will start a week-long visit with a welcome at the White House and talks with Obama and other top US officials, who are eager to get off to the right start with a leader whose views remain opaque.

The 58-year-old will later try to show a gentler side to the US public — and perhaps also to television viewers in China — when he tours the farm state of Iowa, where he paid a formative first US visit in 1985, and Los Angeles.

Xi, who arrived in Washington on Monday (Tuesday in Manila), is expected to succeed President Hu Jintao in 2013.

Chinese presidents generally serve two five-year terms, meaning Xi could be in charge when some experts forecast that China will surpass the United States as the world's largest economy.

Despite the likely feel-good tone of Xi's tour, the United States and China have had an increasingly fractious relationship.

## Mutual trust

White House officials have pledged to press Xi on concerns including the value of China's currency, which US lawmakers say is undervalued to boost its exports.

China has watched uneasily as the Obama administration steps up military ties with its neighbors including the Philippines and Vietnam, which have turned to the United States amid heated territorial disputes with Beijing.

In a written interview with *The Washington Post*, Xi said that he welcomed a "constructive" US role in East Asia's security but warned not to "deliberately give prominence to the military security agenda."

And in a meeting with former top US officials on Monday, he suggested that Washington should "adopt concrete measures to promote mutual trust, especially to properly and discreetly handle the issues concerning the core interests of China."

In an unusual step, Xi also on Tuesday will visit the Pentagon and be welcomed with a full honor ceremony with music and cannons, weather permitting.

US officials have repeatedly sought greater defense cooperation

with China, hoping to find out more about how it is spending its growing defense budget and also to reduce the potential for unintentional clashes.

"Our military posture in the Asia-Pacific region is not geared toward any one country. We have an arc of interest that stretches from Japan and Korea all the way down to Australia and across India," Pentagon spokesman George Little also told reporters.

"We'll maintain a strong military presence in the region because of these varied interests and I'm sure that will be one of the topics discussed in the meeting with the vice president," Little said.

Tuesday amounts to a major day of diplomacy for China, with Premier Wen Jiabao holding a summit in Beijing with the European Union that is expected to touch on the Iranian nuclear row and escalating violence in Syria.

US officials who have met Xi generally describe him as more extroverted and spontaneous than the famously wooden Hu.

Xi, by all accounts, had a favorable impression of the United States when he visited Iowa in 1985 and his daughter attends Harvard University.

But Xi's priorities remain a mystery to China watchers in the United States.

Some experts believe that he will have little room for maneuver unless he proves his authority on the Politburo's consensus-driven Standing Committee.

Human-rights groups say that China has carried out a sweeping clampdown on dissent since last year, likely in fear of the influence of revolts that have overthrown authoritarian leaders in the Arab world.

## Martial law

Residents say that China also recently imposed virtual martial law in Tibetan areas after at least 19 Tibetans set themselves on fire to protest what they see as a lack of religious and political rights under Beijing's rule.

Flag-waving Tibetans marched through Washington on Monday, and four activists were briefly arrested on the Arlington Memorial Bridge for hanging up a banner that read: "Xi Jinping: Tibet Will be Free."

Lhadon Tethong, an activist with Students for a Free Tibet, said that the group put up the banner to draw attention to the "all-out assault" in Tibet along with China's diplomatic support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. **AFP**

# VP: China, US have converging interests in Asia-Pacific

By JOSE KATIGBAK  
STAR Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — China and the United States have more converging interests in the Asia-Pacific region than in anywhere else and the Pacific Ocean has ample space for both countries, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping said.

"To deliberately give prominence to the military security agenda, scale up military deployment and strengthen military alliances is not really what most countries in the region hope to see," he said in an interview with *The Washington Post* published on the eve of his talks with US President Barack Obama at the White House Oval Office yesterday.

Xi is expected to become China's next president in March 2013 in succession to Hu Jintao and his visit here has been described as crucial to his political ascension and also to US hopes for easing tensions between two of the world's most powerful nations.

"There's little doubt that the United States and China have entered a rough period with tensions over China's economic policies and its territorial ambitions in the South China Sea among other issues," the *Post* said.

For its part, Beijing has sounded increasingly alarmed by the Obama administration's shift of military resources toward Asia.

In advance of Xi's visit, the Chinese government invited *The Washington Post* to submit written questions to the vice president. The *Post* published a transcript

of his written answers as translated and provided by the Chinese government.

Referring to the Asia-Pacific region, Xi said China welcomed a constructive role by the United States in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

"We also hope that the United States will fully respect and accommodate the major interests and legitimate concerns of Asia-Pacific countries," he said

The US plans to deploy troops in Australia and dock littoral combat Navy ships in Singapore and is seeking facilities in the Philippines for surveillance flights and sea patrols in the South China Sea to counterbalance China's growing military might.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US cannot "go it alone" in Asia and the Pacific.

"With five regional allies — Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand — there is a highly effective foundation for cooperation to manage the region's challenges and harness its opportunities," she said in a statement to Congress submitted on Monday with the FY 2013 budget for the State Department and the US Agency for International Development.

## Four foreign terrorists killed in Philippine Navy attack

Manila: Four foreign terrorists were killed in southern Philippines last week, but only two prominent members of the Al Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah were identified following a Philippine Navy's air strike, according to a newspaper report.

Hajan and Saad, who had one name each, were Indonesian nationals and members of the Jemaah Islamiyah who were "believed to have been killed" by the Philippine Navy's air strike on the Abu Sayyaf Group's lair in Duyan Kabau village, Parang town Sulu last Thursday, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) chief Maj. Gen. Noel Coballes told the Star.

"The Western Mindanao Command will provide the necessary support if it is a government-to-government agreement (that will be forged by the Philippine and Malaysian government, for the purpose of identifying one of the four foreign terrorists)," said Coballes, adding that Malaysian authorities were sending representatives to Mindanao soon.

Philippine and Indonesian authorities could also forge an agreement to allow authorities of both countries to cooperate and identify the bodies of Hajan and Saad, another source told Gulf News.

At the same time, Singaporean authorities could be planning to send a representative since one of the killed terrorists in last week's incident, was alleged as Singaporean, the same source said.

Philippine authorities have identified only 11 Abu Sayyaf members out of the 15 terrorists who were killed during the air strike, Coballes admitted.

"The military has yet to secure the bodies of the slain terrorists. Militants were believed to have retrieved the bodies of their casualties and buried them hastily," the Star said, but did not attribute the statement to anyone.

The two other foreign terrorists whose bodies must be identified were named by authorities as Zulkipli bin Abdul Hir, also known as Marwan, a US-educated Malaysian engineer who became Jemaah Islamiyah's top leader, and Muhamda Ali, also known as Muawiya, a Singaporean.

Marwan organised Malaysia's Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, an alleged terror group.

Marwan trained members of the Abu Sayyaf in bomb making after hiding in the southern Philippines after the bombings that killed 200 in Bali, Indonesia in 2002.

Marwan was the alleged associate of Umar Patek, also a Jemaah Islamiyah leader who hid in the south in 2003. He eluded arrest when he escaped from the southern Philippines and went to Abbottabad, Pakistan before Al Qiad leader Osama bin Laden was killed in 2010.

Marwan had a \$5 million bounty issued by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

At the same time, Ali, the Singaporean, was Jemaah Islamiyah's senior leader involved in the Bali bombing. He also had a price of \$ 50,000 on his head.

Also killed was Philippines' Abu Sayyaf leader Gumbahali Jumdale, alias Dr. Abu Pula, one of the group's founding leaders.

Jumdale was allegedly behind the beheadings of the group's kidnapped victims.

The Abu Sayyag Group has been blamed for high profile kidnappings of foreigners in 2000 and in 2001.

Philippine authorities blamed it for kidnap-for-ransom, beheadings, bombings and other terror activities in the south and also in Metro Manila.

It was established in the 1990s, with funds by a non-government organisation that was organised by Bin Laden's relative in the south.

[http://cebusandman.typepad.com/philippines\\_travel\\_news/2012/02/four-foreign-terrorists-killed-in-philippine-navy-attack-gulfnewscom-1.html](http://cebusandman.typepad.com/philippines_travel_news/2012/02/four-foreign-terrorists-killed-in-philippine-navy-attack-gulfnewscom-1.html)

## Rotation policy crucial to military operations, transparency – AFP chief

Tuesday 14th of February 2012

QUEZON CITY, February 14 (PIA) – Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Jessie D. Dellosa directed the implementation of rotation policy for overstaying military personnel.

In a release, Dellosa said the rotation policy is a crucial move in improving the operations in the AFP.

"Alongside our goals of practicing increased transparency, we also see this as a window of opportunity to our personnel and officials as they are acquainted with new line of work," said Dellosa.

He added that the AFP sees the policy as an effective way to achieve more responsible and transparent inter-office operations.

Based on AFP records, around 4,549 overstaying military personnel assigned in various General Headquarters and Unified Areas (GUA) were identified beyond the ideal three-year period.

The reassignment of several personnel to the AFP Major Services – Philippine Army, Philippine Air Force and the Philippine Navy, will be implemented on a "one is to one" and "skill to skill" basis.

Likewise, the rotation policy will commence in three phases: identification of personnel due for rotation, implementation of rotation, and completion of rotation and evaluation phase.

The AFP chief assured that the rotation will not hamper the functional operations of affected offices adding that it (rotation) seeks to advance the career of those who held their posts for more than three years.

Priority will be given to military personnel who have held their positions beyond ten years. Rotation/reassignment of said personnel will be implemented in second quarter of this year.

On the other hand, personnel who are assigned for six to nine years will be reassigned during the third quarter of the year while those who held their posts for three to five years will begin sometime in October until December of this year. (AFP/RJB/JEG-PIA-NCR)

<http://www.pia.gov.ph/news/index.php?article=241329206960>