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**"A Vital Partner for Peace, Security & Development
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Navy officers linked to Pestaño slay want trial by military court

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NAVY officers accused of murdering Ensign Philip Pestaño want their case tried by a military court.

In a manifestation and motion filed yesterday, they asked the Sandiganbayan Third Division to refer their case to a military tribunal because of "national security issues" and because the case "involves military terminologies that civilians may not fully understand."

They also said the case should be transferred because all the accused are members of the military, and because the armed forces is conducting its own investigation of military personnel with regard to the cover up of the Pestaño case.

Pestaño was found dead inside the Navy vessel BRP Bacolod City on Sept. 27, 1995, with a gunshot wound in his head.

Earlier investigations ruled his death was a suicide, but his parents refused to believe this and filed a complaint for murder against several Navy officers.

Murder charges

Last month, the Office of the Ombudsman filed murder charges before the Sandiganbayan against Capt. Ricardo Ordoñez; Cmdr. Reynaldo Lopez, Hospital Man 2 Welmenio Aquino, Lt. Cmdr. Luidegar Casis, Lt. Cmdr. Alfrederick Alba, machinery repairman 2 Sandy Miranda, Lt. Cmdr. Joselito Colico, Lt. Cmdr. Ruben Roque, PO1 Carlito Amoroso and PO2 Mil Leonor Igeasan.

The officers have contested their indictment and insisted that Pestaño took his own life. They also said that based on the rank of the officers when the offense was committed, their case must be handled by a regional trial court or a military tribunal.

In their latest pleading, the accused added that their case should be under a military tribunal because of national security concerns. This is because the Navy ship where Pestaño died would be subject to ocular inspection.

"Hence, the defense capability of the country's naval force will be exposed to the public as well as to the enemies of the state, including but not limited to terrorist groups," they said.

They added that four of the accused are senior intelligence officers holding sensitive positions in the Navy.

They also said that during the preliminary investigation of the case, technical and military terminologies and theories that are foreign to civilians were raised. Thus, there is a need for military experts to handle the case.

The accused also noted that a Manila court could have jurisdiction over the case as well because the Navy headquarters is in Manila.

But they do not want the case to go there because of the alleged bias of Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim for the Pestaño family.

Pestaño accused want military trial

INVOKING national security, retired and active Navy officers charged with the 1995 murder of Ensign Philip Andrew Pestaño are asking the Sandiganbayan to refer the case for trial by a military tribunal.

The accused said four of them hold sensitive positions as intelligence officers in the Navy and that confidential military information might inadvertently surface during trial at the Sandiganbayan.

"For national security reasons, since the said Navy ship (BRP Bacolod City) will be subjected to ocular inspection, hence, the defense capability of the country's naval force will be exposed to the

public as well as to the enemies of the state, including but not limited to terrorist groups," they said.

The accused in the case are Navy Capt. Ricardo M. Ordoñez; Commanders Reynaldo P. Lopez and Alfredrick A. Alba; Lt. Commanders Luidegar C. Casis, Joselito L. Colico and Ruben B. Roque; Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Sandy P. Miranda; Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Welmenio U. Aquino; Petty Officer 1st Class Carlito B. Amoroso; Petty Officer 2nd Class Mil Leonor Y. Igcasan and a "John Doe".

Still in active service are Lopez and Casis of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1992, Alba and Colico of Class 1994,

Aquino and Miranda.

Prosecutors said Pestaño was killed for his objection to the use by his superiors of the Navy vessel to transport hot lumber and suspected illegal drugs.

They said the defendants conspired to cover up the crime by making it appear that Pestaño took his own life by firing a gun into his temple.

However, in their motion for reconsideration filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, the 10 accused claimed Pestaño had suicidal tendencies and had attempted to take his own life 17 days before he was supposedly found dead with a gunshot wound in the head inside his cabin on the BRP Ba-

colod City on Sept. 27, 1995.

They said Pestaño tried to commit suicide by slashing his wrist on Sept. 10, 1995 but was saved by two classmates who reportedly took him to the Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City.

The defendants offered that Pestaño may have been suffering from "deep depression" because of an administrative complaint filed against him by a former girlfriend after their breakup due to religious differences.

They claimed Pestaño was pressured by his parents to end his relationship with the girl who belonged to a different religious sect. — Peter Tabingo

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P10

Isang Malugod na
pagbati mula sa inyong
Hukbong Dagat!



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4 combat choppers delivered to PAF

FOUR combat utility helicopters have been delivered to the Air Force by a Polish-Italian aircraft supplier.

The four Sokol aircraft from Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland are among eight that the defense department acquired for P2.85 billion under the military's modernization program.

The four others are scheduled to be delivered in the last quarter of this year.

The defense department awarded the project to Swidnik

in November 2009.

The four aircraft delivered Tuesday night are being inspected at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga by a project team from the Air Force, said Maj. Gen. Roy Deveraturda, AFP deputy chief of staff for plans.

"If there is no problem (seen in the aircraft), the next step is they will be received by the Philippine Air Force. Once received, probably in one or two weeks, they are going to be operational," he said.

The aircraft are expected to

improve the Air Force's combat air support as they will be serving in inserting, extricating, and moving troops and supplies. They are also seen to improve the military search and rescue capabilities during emergencies and calamities.

"These utility helicopters are multi-purpose. You can use these for transporting troops, air evacuation of the wounded or disaster response," said Deveraturda.

Deveraturda could not immediately say where specifi-

cally these aircraft would be deployed. "The determination of where they are going to be used, we are leaving that up to those in charge of the operations," he said.

A number of other equipment and hardware are due to be delivered by various suppliers to the AFP this year, including three attack craft for the Navy, 33 multi-purpose rocket launchers for the Presidential Security Group, and 1,000 units of 81 mm mortar tubes, among others. — *Victor Reyes*

Four new AFP choppers arrive in Pampanga

By Mario J. Mallari

Four brand new night-capable, combat utility helicopters arrived in the country on Tuesday night as part of the ongoing multibillion-peso capability upgrade and modernization program of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

AFP deputy chief of staff for plans and programs Maj. Gen. Roy Deveraturda said the four Polish-made Sokol utility helicopters, which are part of the eight helicopters purchased from Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland, arrived in Clark Air Base in Pampanga.

"We are presently inspecting them...they will be assembled in Clark Air Base by our assessment of the Philippine Air Force. So, as soon as possible we could use them," Deveraturda said.

"They will be a big boost to our capability," Deveraturda added.

According to Deveraturda, the

remaining four Sokols are expected to be delivered last quarter of this year.

Air Force spokesman Lt. Col. Miguel Ernesto Okol said that the eight brand new Sokol combat utility helicopters are worth P2.8 billion.

Okol explained that Sokol or Falcon in Polish can be fitted with equipment depending on the mission that makes it an ideal utility helicopter for the PAF.

"It is NVG (Night Vision Goggle)-capable and is equipped with an SN 350 Autopilot. Compared to the Huey, the Sokol is a more capable utility platform," Okol said.

Okol said that while Huey helicopters can carry seven passengers, the Sokol can accommodate 10 passengers with a maximum takeoff weight of 14,110 lbs., an endurance of three hours and 19 minutes and it can reach a maximum range of 402 nautical miles in a single flight with airspeed of 140.5 knots.

"The Sokol is fitted with gun mounts for the M60D MG on both sides and when utilized during search and rescue or over water operations, it can be equipped with pilot-controlled Emergency Floatation Gear attached to the lowest portion of the aircraft. It can also perform various missions other than combat to support the country's peace and development efforts," Okol said.

Aside from combat operations, Deveraturda said that the Sokol can also be useful in disaster response and relief operations.

The military's capability upgrade and modernization program went on high gear since last year, with the Navy's acquisition of its first ever Hamilton class cutter from the United States Coast Guard. Now named *BRP Gregorio del Pilar*, which is tagged as the iconic symbol of the AFP upgrade, the cutter cost the Philippine government more or less P400 million.

PAF Gets 4 New Choppers

By ANJO PEREZ

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) yesterday disclosed the arrival of four brand new Combat Utility Helicopters from the Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland on February 14, 2012.

The PAF hierarchy said the

brand new helicopters arrived at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga, and is the first batch of the eight helicopters that the PAF is to receive from the Polish aircraft manufacturer.

Major General Catalino G. Dela Cruz, PAF Commanding General, said the delivery of the

(Turn to page 4)



NEW HELICOPTERS – The Philippine Air Force gets a needed boost with the delivery of four brand new Combat Utility Helicopters from Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland at the Clark Air Base in Pampanga on Valentine's Day. (Anjo Perez)

new helicopters is a welcome addition to the fleet of the PAF.

He said that the formal blessing and turnover of the PAF's newest acquisition will be announced following the completion of assembly and rigid test flights to be conducted on the new helicopters.

According to Lieutenant Colonel Miguel Ernesto G. Okol, PAF Public Information Office director, the "Sokol" or Falcon in Polish, can be fitted with various equipment – depending on the mission – that makes it an ideal utility helicopter for the PAF.

It is NVG (Night Vision Goggle)-capable and is equipped with an SN 350 Autopilot, he added.

Compared to the Huey helicopters, he said the "Sokol" is a more capable utility platform.

Okol explained that while the Huey can carry only seven passengers, the

"Sokol" can accommodate 10 passengers with a maximum takeoff weight of 14,110 pounds, an endurance of three hours and 19 minutes, and it can reach a maximum range of 402 nautical miles in a single flight, with airspeed of about 140.5 knots.

The "Sokol" is fitted with gun mounts for the M60D MG on both sides, and when utilized during search and rescue (SAR) or over water operations, it can be equipped with pilot-controlled Emergency Floatation Gear attached to the lowest portion of the aircraft.

It can also perform various missions other than combat to support the country's peace and development efforts.

"The CUH project is worth ₱2.8 billion, and has undergone the rigid screening process prior to its procurement," Okol said.

New combat choppers arrive in Clark

By ALEXIS ROMERO

Four new combat utility helicopters acquired from two foreign firms have arrived in the country, the military said yesterday.

Armed Forces deputy chief for plans and programs Maj. Gen. Roy Deveraturda said the helicopters arrived at Clark Airbase in Pampanga.

"We can use these for transporting troops, air evacuation of the wounded or disaster response," Deveraturda told reporters in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Air Force spokesman Lt. Col. Miguel Okol said the helicopters were purchased from Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland.

Okol said four more combat utility helicopters from Augusta PZL Swidnik are expected to arrive in the last quarter of the year.

The eight helicopters are worth P2.8 billion.

Okol said the "Sokol" (Polish for "falcon") helicopter is an ideal air asset since it can be fitted with equipment depending on its mission.

He said the helicopters are night-vision goggle-capable and equipped with an SN 350 Autopilot.

4 new choppers here for Air Force

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

TWO years since it placed its order, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) received four brand new combat utility helicopters to upgrade its dwindling fleet of vintage "Huey" utility helicopters.

The four new combat utility helicopters from Augusta PZL Swidnik of Italy and Poland arrived on Tuesday at Clark Air Base in Pampanga, according to PAF.

They are the first batch of a total of eight helicopters that the PAF ordered back in February 2010 for P2.8 billion.

The P2.8 billion covers the price of the eight "Sokol" helicopters (sokol means falcon in Polish), the pilots' training as well as maintenance and technical support.

PAF spokesperson Lt. Col. Miguel Ernesto Okol said the four Sokol helicopters will be

assembled and will undergo test flights before a formal blessing and turnover.

The second batch of four other helicopters are expected to be delivered in the last quarter of the year.

Compared to the UH-1H Huey helicopters, Okol said the Sokol is a "more capable utility platform."

It is night vision goggle-capable and equipped with autopilot equipment. While the Huey can carry only seven passengers, a Sokol helicopter can accommodate 10.

Okol said it has a maximum takeoff weight of 14,110 lbs. and endurance of three hours and 19 minutes and can reach a maximum range of 402 nautical miles in a single flight with an airspeed of 140.5 knots.

The Sokol is also fitted with gun mounts on both sides.

Military acquires eight combat helicopters for P2.8b

By Florante S. Solmerin

FOUR of eight Sokol combat utility helicopters from Swidnik of Poland have arrived, an official said Wednesday.

"The brand-new choppers arrived last night in Clark Air Base in Pampanga," said Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans Maj. Gen. Roy Deveraturda.

"A group of technicians and pilots from the Air Force are conducting inspection and assessment and, if satisfied, they will immediately assemble them."

The helicopters were the first batch of a P2.8-billion order placed a year ago. The next and last batch is scheduled to be delivered in the fourth quarter.

"These utility helicopters are

multi-purpose," Deveraturda said.

"You can use these for transporting troops or for air evacuation and disaster response. They can also be converted into ambulance choppers."

Air Force spokesman Lt. Col. Miguel Ernesto Okol said the choppers could be fitted with specialized equipment to match

their mission, making them ideal utility helicopters.

For combat missions, the Sokol can be fitted with gun mounts for M60D machine guns on both sides, and when used for search and rescue over water operations, it can be equipped with pilot-controlled emergency flotation gear attached to the lowest portion of the aircraft. **Next page**

Military...

The Air Force now has 50 helicopters of which 40 are operational at any given time.

Deveraturda said the Armed Forces was discussing the procurement of a squadron of F-16 jet fighters on the next phase of its modernization program.

AFP MAMAMAKYAW NG JET FIGHTERS

Isaunod na ng Department of National Defense (DND) at Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang pagbili ng isang squadron ng F-16 jet fighters bilang kahahagi ng ginagawang modernisasyon sa kagamitan, ayon sa Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans (J-5) kalapitan.

Sinabi ni Maj Gen Roy Deventurda na bagama't hindi nakasali sa first batch ng mga bibilhing kagamitan ang jet fighters, pinag-usapan na ito sa lebel ng DND at AFP na posibleng ipaloob ito sa second batch.

"Simula noong 1995 na-decommission na ang

ating mga jets at malaki na ang gap. Kailangan natin talaga ang [jet] fighter capability. Ang proposal natin ay isang squadron o mga 14 hanggang 24 na piraso ng F-16," ani Deventurda.

Matutundan na mismo ang Department of the Foreign Affairs (DFA) ang naurang nagpahayag na bibili ang gobyerno ng F-16 at nagsimula na itong makipagneg-

sasyon sa gobyerno ng Estados Unidos.

Samantala, dumating na ang 4 sa 8 combat utility helicopters na in-order ng Air Force sa Swidnik, isang supplier sa Poland.

"Dumating na kagabi ang 4 na bagong Sokol natin sa Clark Air Base sa Pampanga. Isinitsek na natin," ani Lt. Col. Miguel Ernesto Okol, tagapagsalita ng Air Force. (JB Salarzon)

Bagong ambulansiya ibinigay ng AFPMBAI sa BFP

Ni Arlene Rivera

ISANG bagong ambulansiya ang tinanggap ng Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) mula sa Armed Forces of the Philippines Mutual Benefits Association Inc. (AFPMBAI) upang magamit ng ahensiya sa pagsasagawa ng medical operations sa panahon ng anumang uri ng kalamidad.

Sa isinagawang turnover ceremony kahapon sa tanggapan ng BFP, tinanggap ni BFP OIC director, Chief Supt.

Samuel Perez ang isang H1000 Hyundai ambulance na donasyon (AFPMBAI).

Sinabi ni Retired B Gen. Ricardo Morales Presidente at CEO ng AFPMBAI, ang donasyon ng pinakamalaking mutual benefit association sa buong bansa ay matapos na umabot P10-B ang asset ng asosasyon.

Nabatid na nag-donate din ng anim na bagong ambulansiya ang AFPMBAI sa General Headquarters Office (GHO), dalawa sa Philippine

Army at tig-isa naman sa Philippine Navy at Philippine Air Force.

Maliban sa BFP, tig-isa din ang ibinigay na ambulansiya sa Philippine National Police, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology at Philippine Coast Guard.

Ayon kay Morales, hangad ng kumpanya na ipagpatuloy na lumago ang kanilang assets at maibalik naman ang benepisyo sa mga miyembro at pamilya nito.

Sa pahayag naman ni Perez, ilalagay ang donasyong ambulansiya sa Rio Grande Basin sa Mindanao.

Sinabi pa ni Perez na malaking tulong ang nasabing bagong ambulansiya para magamit sakaling magkaroon ng emergency o magbigay ng serbisyong medical sa panahon ng kalamidad katulad ng lindol, malalakas na bagyo, landslide at iba pang uri ng calamities.

Binabalak din ng BFP na maglagay ng karagdagan mga rubber boat sa Mindanao para magamit ng mga bumbero sa pag-rescue kapag may matinding baha at kailangan ang agarang paglilikas sa mga residente.

BFP ACQUIRES NEW AMBULANCE

THE Bureau of Fire Protection acquired a brand new ambulance which will be shipped immediately to Rio Grande Basin in Mindanao for medical operations.

BFP acting commander Chief Supt. Samuel Perez said that the new ambulance was the latest share to the flood-stricken area after the two rubber boats.

The H1000 Hyundai ambulance was donated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines Mutual Benefits Association Inc.

In a simple turnover ceremony, AFPMBAI president Retired BGen Ricardo Morales said that the association decided to give away donations to other institutions after its assets have reached the P10 billion mark.

AFPMBAI also donated six ambulances to the General Headquarters Office; two to the Philippine Army and one each to the Philippine Navy and Air Force.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Philippine National Police and Philippine Coast guard also received one unit each.

Morales said that the association will continue to share their benefits to other agencies of the government.

Joel dela Torre



P-NOY awards UPHSD cadet

CADET Col. Charles Anthony Catarbas was awarded by President Noynoy Aquino (above photo) as the Armed Forces of the Philippines ROTC Cadet of the Year 2011. The medal was given during the Armed Forces of the Philippines' 76th Anniversary held last December 21 at the AFP General Headquarters in Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Charles Anthony Catarbas was also awarded the Philippine Air Force ROTC Cadet of the Year 2011 during the Philippine Air Force 64th Anniversary held last July 1, 2011 at the Villamor Airbase Grandstand in Pasay City.

Prior to these honors, Catarbas was conferred the Outstanding Graduate Award on May 28, 2011 during the Task Force Summer Cadre Training Class in Air Force City, Clark Air Base, Pampanga. He placed Top 8 for obtaining a 90.98% grade both in academic and military phases of instruction.

Catarbas is the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA Las Piñas Corps commander of the 136th Department of Air Science and Tactics. He is a third year Mechanical Engineering student at UPHSD. **Dennis Caparus Abrina**

US bases return seen as Okinawa base closes

By Michaela P. del Callar

American military bases seem to be returning to the Philippines under President Aquino's government, despite the 1987 Constitution banning the stay of foreign military bases.

It is being done in such a circuitous way that circumvents the constitutional proviso on military bases.

The United States is eyeing the transfer of some of the thousands of American troops stationed in Okinawa to the Philippines as Washington reduces its military presence in the Japanese island, where residents have called for the shutdown of its large military base.

Washington has scrapped an initial transfer plan and now plans to move only 4,700 of about 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to a new base in the US Pacific territory of Guam. The rest of the Marines may be rotated in Australia and possibly in Hawaii and the Philippines, Japanese news agency *Kyodo* reported Wednesday.

"We've just developed an agreement with Australia to do a rotational presence there. We're working with the Philippines on hopefully a similar arrangement there as well," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was quoted by *Kyodo* as saying at a hearing of the US Senate Armed Services Committee.

US officials have announced plans to deploy Marine contingents in northern Australia, dock ships in Singapore and intensify joint military

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exercises and ship visits to the Philippines as part of Washington's efforts to reassert its military presence in the Western Pacific region to counterbalance China's dominance.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario has said that the United States may also rotate additional troops in the Philippines but gave no other details as both sides discuss additional American military assistance to the Philippines amid simmering territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea or West Philippine Sea to Manila recently became a tug-of-war ground for a rising China and a returning

America, the Pacific power which has come to realize how rapidly it lost the strategic advantage and tight control it once wielded over the region when it stepped back and focused its attention in Iraq and Afghanistan.

China, which prefers bilateral negotiations with other claimant countries to solve the long-running territorial row, rejects any attempts to discuss the disputes in a multilateral forum involving non-claimant countries, especially the US, which it regards with suspicion.

The overlapping claims extend each of the claimants' territory far beyond their shore to cover sea stretches that teem with fish and marine resources. China, along with Taiwan, harbor the most ambitious claims, which cover virtually the whole sea body

although they have not detailed the limits and basis of those claims aside from citing ambiguous "historic titles."

Manila maintains the position that all claimants should adhere to international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in resolving the disputes.

Tensions rose last year when the Philippines and Vietnam have accused China of incursions in their respective territories, harassing its fishermen and sabotaging oil explorations in its waters facing the South China Sea.

This prompted the Philippines, whose military is among the weakest in the region, to turn to the US to upgrade its defense capability so it can guard its regular territorial waters in and near the contested Spratlys.

US report cites PH for 'religious freedom'

THE PHILIPPINES generally respects religious freedom "in law and in practice," the US Department of State said in a report on religious freedom on the Philippines.

The report posted on the website of the US Embassy in Manila said the Aquino administration "does not ban or discourage specific religious groups or factions."

There were "no reports of religious detainees or prisoners in the country," as well as "societal abuses based on religious affiliation," it said.

The government has "attributed a series of attacks, kidnappings and killings to the (terrorist) Abu Sayyaf Group, other Islamic militants and the New People's Army. However, religious affiliation was not seen as a

US REPORT/A19

From page A1

relevant factor in these attacks," the department said.

"Historically, Muslims have been alienated socially from the Christian majority, and some ethnic and cultural discrimination against Muslims has been recorded," it said.

Stereotypes

"Young Muslim professionals reported that some employers stereotyped Muslims as being less educated. Some Muslims also reported that they had difficulty renting rooms in board-

ing houses or being hired for retail work if they used their real names or wore distinctive Muslim dress. Therefore, many resorted to adopting Christian pseudonyms and wearing Western clothing," it said.

"Over the past 60 years, efforts by the dominant Christian population to resettle in traditionally Muslim areas, such as Mindanao, have fostered resentment among many Muslim residents. Many Muslims viewed Christian proselytizing as another form of resettlement with the intention of depriving Muslims of their homeland and

cultural identity, including their religion."

Amicable ties

But "despite these circumstances, amicable ties among religious communities were common and many participated in interdenominational efforts to alleviate poverty," said the agency.

According to the State Department, the government permits "religious instruction in public schools with the parents' written consent, provided there is no cost to the government."

Jerry E. Esplanada

Retrieval operations to be terminated tomorrow

By JAIME LAUDE

Soldiers engaged in retrieval operations in earthquake-ravaged villages in Negros Oriental also distributed P2 million worth of relief goods to the evacuees.

The soldiers donated their one-day pay as their contribution to help address the needs

of the earthquake victims.

This developed as National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council executive director Benito Ramos announced yesterday that the ongoing retrieval operations in Barangay Solongon in La Libertad

town and Barangay Planas in Guihulngan City would be terminated tomorrow.

Ramos said the retrieval operations could have been ended today but were extended upon the request of the local governments.

The decision to termi-

nate the retrieval operations came as joint Army and police rescue teams have failed to recover more bodies from the quake-devastated villages, Ramos said.

He said the two devastated communities would be developed into memorial sites.

- With Danny Dangcalan

Abu leader with P3.3-M bounty falls in Zambo

Government agents arrested a sub-commander of the Abu Sayyaf with a P3.3-million bounty during a raid in Zamboanga City on Tuesday night.

Abdulhan Ussih, alias Jeron, 28, became the third member of the Abu Sayyaf to be arrested by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) this year.

Ussih, also known as Black Tunggang, was arrested by joint elements of the CIDG, 3rd Air Division of the Philippine Air Force, and the local police at the Zamboanga City public market by virtue of an arrest warrant for kidnapping and serious illegal detention.

He was a sub-commander of Abu Sayyaf leader Radulan Sahiron, alias Putol, in Sulu.

CIDG chief Director Samuel Pagdilao Jr. said Ussih is the third Abu Sayyaf leader who

fell into the hands of the joint PNP-CIDG-AFP operating units following the arrest of Harun Jaljalis, alias Abu Indal, in Basilan last Jan. 26 and Sonny Bakim Barahim, alias Abu Ismael, last Jan. 17.

Senior Superintendent Generoso Bonifacio, CIDG-Region 9 chief, said that from 2001 to 2003, Ussih served as the liaison officer of the terrorist group to those who provided them with food supplies.

Bonifacio added that Ussih was among the country's most wanted and had a bounty of P3.3 million by virtue of the joint order of the Department of National Defense and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Ussih is now under the custody of the CIDG in Zamboanga City. — Non Alquitran, Roel Pareño

Ranking Abu Sayyaf leader nabbed

JOINT operating units from the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the Intelligence Unit of the Philippine Air Force have arrested a sub-commander of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Zamboanga City early Tuesday night.

In his report to CIDG chief Director Samuel D. Pagdilao Jr., Region 9 CIDG chief Senior Supt. Generoso Bonifacio identified the

suspect as Abdullan Ussih alias Jeron, 28, a resident of Vajada Meramat, Situnoc, Zamboanga City.

Pagdilao said Ussih is the third ASG terrorist who has fallen in the hands of the joint PNP-CIDG-AFP operating units following the arrest of Harun Jaljalis alias Abu Indal in Basilan on January 26, and Sonny Bakim Barahim alias Abu Ismael of Issbela City, Basilan on January 17.

Ussih, also known as the "Black Tungkang", was arrested by the local CIDG, the 3rd Air Division of the Air Force, and members of local police inside the Zamboanga Public Market at around 6 p.m. by virtue of an arrest warrant for kidnapping and serious illegal detention.

He was a sub-commander of Abu Sayyaf Group leader Radulan Sahiron alias Putol in Sultan

Bonifacio said that from 2001 to 2003, Ussih served as the liaison of the terrorist group with those who provided them with food supplies.

Bonifacio said Ussih is included in the list of most wanted persons for the national category and has a bounty of P3.3 million for his arrest.

Ussih is under the custody of the CIDG in Zamboanga City. — *Raymond Africa*

ABU SAYYAF LEADER CAPTURED

COTABATO CITY: State security forces captured a leader of the Al Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group in Zamboanga city, police said Wednesday. Felicisimo Khu, Jr., regional police director for Western Mindanao, said the suspect, Abdulhan Ussih, 28, was arrested by members of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group on Tuesday night around 6:00 p.m., at his Zamboanga city hideout. Khu said Ussih, a sub-commander who has been on an arrest warrant for kidnapping and serious illegal detention, has a \$77,283 bounty on his head. The Abu Sayyaf is a militant group founded in the 1990s and has perpetrated a number of high-profile attacks, including kidnapping, bombing and beheading. The military estimates the group, which has links with external terrorist organizations such as al-Qaida, at less than 400 members.

XINHUA

Troops seeking kidnap victim clash with Sanyaf

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Troops searching for a kidnapped Australian adventurer clashed Wednesday with Abu Sanyaf militants in Basilan, officials said.

Officials said the fighting erupted in the town of Samisip, an area where Warren Rodwell, 52, is believed being held captive by the al-Qaeda-linked terror group blamed for the spate of kidnappings-for-ransom and attacks in the troubled region.

Rodwell was kidnapped by five gunmen disguised as policemen in December from his home in the seaside town of Ipil in Zamboanga Sibugay province and brought by boat to Basilan.

There were no reports of casualties in the 20-minute fighting, but troops recovered bomb materials, binocular and a motorcycle left behind by fleeing Abu Sanyaf gunmen led by Ustadz Muads, an expert bomber maker, according to Army Colonel Ricardo Visaya, com-

mander of military forces in Basilan, one of five provinces under the Muslim autonomous region.

"There is an ongoing operation against the Abu Sanyaf and we are tracking down the terrorists," Visaya told *The Manila Times* by phone.

Rodwell's fate is still unknown, but the kidnappers demanded \$2 million ransom from his Filipino wife Miraflox Cutang, 27, but the woman said they cannot afford to pay. Both the Philippines and Australia also rejected the ransom demand.

The former Australian army soldier married the Filipina only in June last year in Ipil town.

It was not immediately known whether the militants are among those holding the foreigner, but the military commander said the gang was also tagged as behind attacks on construction sites in the province, just several nautical miles south of Zamboanga City.

AL JACINTO

MILF hands over 8 bandits to local officials

BY AL JACINTO CORRESPONDENT

ZAMBOANGA CITY: Muslim rebels handed over to the authorities eight suspected criminals they arrested in Lanao del Sur.

Von al Haq, a spokesman for the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), said those arrested were accused of banditry and tagged as behind the murder of a local Muslim prayer leader in the town of Piagapo. "We handed the bandits to local

town officials and we understand that they would be handed over to the police authorities," he told *The Manila Times*.

But Colonel Daniel Lucero, commander of an army brigade in the province, said the MILF is still

holding the men. "As of 2 p.m. today, not a single of those being held by the rebels are released, according to Piagapo Mayor Immo-hanie Bato-Macatanong," he said in a separate interview.

Lucero said the local council has passed a resolution demanding the pullout of rebels from the town. "The villagers are scared and they want the rebels out of Piagapo," he said.

He said some of the men were punished by the rebels and received lashes. "The men were given lashes," he said, adding the MILF is holding

the men captive since February 10.

But Al Haq denied the report. "We just arrested the bandits. The MILF cannot ignore the plea of the people to put a stop to criminalities in the town. Even town officials have acknowledged our role in putting a stop to the nefarious activities of these bandits. We have warned them alright," he said.

Al Haq said villagers have sought the help of the MILF in arresting the gang also blamed for many cattle rustling, illegal drug trade and extortion in the town.

The MILF, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, is currently negotiating peace with Manila, and the incident was among those discussed during the three-day peace talks in Malaysia that ended Wednesday.

Chief government peace negotiator Marvic Leonen called on the MILF to work with government to keep the peace on the ground, raising concerns that the rebels have moved and conducted actions without proper coordination with the ceasefire mechanisms, the Ad Hoc Joint Action Group or the Co-

ordinating Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities.

"We do have the AHAG mechanisms that will enable us to work together to interdict 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," Leonen said.

The MILF has previously executed publicly over a dozen criminals it arrested in the southern Philippines over the past two decades, despite a strong protest from the government.

Classified Ads

Thursday, February 16, 2012

5

Police arrest Abu Sayyaf leader in Zamboanga City

Police operatives arrested an alleged sub-commander of the extremists Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Zamboanga City on Tuesday night, police report said.

Arrested was Abulhan Ussih alias Jeron, 28, of Vajada Meramar, Sinunoc, Zamboanga City inside the city's public market around 6 p.m.

Ussih has a P3.3 million bounty on his head, CIDG Director Samuel Pagdilao Jr., yesterday said.

Report said that Ussih is an alleged sub-commander of Abu Sayyaf group leader Radulan Sahiron alias Putol in Sulu.

The arresting men were armed with a warrant of arrest against Ussih for kidnapping and serious illegal detention cases.

Since last month, the PNP had already hauled at least three Abu Sayyaf bandits and they are now facing charges.

Pagdilao said that Ussih was on the list of most wanted persons and was the 3rd bandit apprehended since January this year.

Last Jan. 26, Harun Jaljalis alias Abu Indal was nabbed in Basilan while Sonny Bakim Barahim alias Abu Ismael of Isabela City, Basilan was apprehended on Jan. 17.

Report also said that Ussih served as liaison of the Abu Sayyaf Group since 2001 up to 2003. He was tasked to supply food for the terror group.

Ussih is now under the custody of the CIDG in Zamboanga City, Pagdilao said.

Gina Peralta-Elorde

Sayyaf leader captured in Zambo

Joint police and military operatives arrested a sub-commander of the infamous Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in a follow-up operation in a public market in Zamboanga City.

Director Samuel Pagdilao, director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG), said the arrested suspect, 28-year-old Abdulhan Ussih, carries ₱3.3 million reward for his arrest.

"He was a sub-commander of Abu Sayyaf Group leader Radulan Sahiron alias Putol in Sulu. From 2001 to 2003, Ussih served as the liaison of the terrorist group to those who provided them with food supplies," said Pagdilao.

Pagdilao said the operation was conducted at around 6 p.m. when they received information about the presence of Ussih at the Zamboanga City Public Market.

Popularly known as Black Tungkang, Ussih went into hiding when security forces intensified the operation against the ASG in Basilan and Sulu.

He is facing a string of criminal charges, including kidnapping with serious illegal detention.

Ussih is now under the custody of the CIDG in Zamboanga City. **(Aaron B. Recuenco)**

NPA arms cache found in Bulacan

Military troops in Bulacan unearthed on Tuesday an arms cache believed to belong to New People's Army (NPA) rebels.

Maj. Enrico Iletto, spokesman of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said the cache was discovered in Sitio Tubigan, Barangay Kalawakan in Donya Remedios town by members of the 56th Infantry Battalion.

Seized were an M-14 rifle, six M-14 magazines, three short magazines and one long magazine for M-16 rifle, and four pairs of combat boots.

Brig. Gen. Alan Luga, commander of the 7th ID, said the discovery of the arms would deplete the NPA's capability.

— Alexis Romero

Comprehending China's difficult behavior

IN my previous column regarding China's call to punish the Philippines for allowing the conduct of joint military exercises with the United States, I pointed out that China seems to be at a loss on how to play its role as a major rising power in the world. Such observation came into being, not just for that single provocative statement (call to punish the Philippines) cited in said article, but more so, on other recent incidents happening in the region involving China, which include, among others, its continuous incursions in our territorial waters and just recently its claim on the whole of the international waters in the region as part of its territorial sea.

Such a recalcitrant behavior, perhaps, is China's way of announcing to the world that a new major power has arrived. It intends to project its new found supremacy by flaunting its military might against neighbors in the region. Nevertheless, such actions actually betray China's unpreparedness in assuming the role of a major power.

Indeed, China's behavior has posed difficulties, not only for its immediate neighbors, but also for other stakeholder members of the international community. For our part, it is imperative that we comprehend the inner workings of China's behavior to give us a better appreciation and perspective of the current state of affairs in the region, thus enabling us to craft better policies aimed at preserving peace without compromising our own interest.

A good article that I have come across analyzing the quite confusing behavior China is exhibiting in recent years is one written by David Shambaugh which was published in the Washington Quarterly just last year. David Shambaugh is a Professor of Po-

THOUGHTS ON
THE MILITARY



ALEXANDER YANO

litical Science and International Affairs and Director of the China Policy Program at George Washington University.

In the article, Shambaugh pointed out that China has proven itself quite difficult to deal with in recent years not only by its immediate neighbors in the region but other western powers as well. It says further that Chinese foreign policies lately were varied and exhibit contradictory emphases.

The author attributes the difficulty in dealing with China as a major rising power to the different schools of thought regarding China's international identity currently pervading Chinese society.

Definitely, since these different schools of thought currently permeate Chinese society, I say that each member of the community would carry his own belief from among these thoughts and subsequently make it a basis for argument whenever confronted with issues concerning China's international identity. These individuals would necessarily include those in charge of international policy formulation, resulting in a China with no single international identity but rather one with a conglomeration of competing identities.

Seven perspectives

According to Shambaugh, there exist seven perspectives in China regarding how to project its identity globally. While these per-

spectives simultaneously exist, they do not mutually exclude each other, thus we see a complex country with multiple identities. The seven perspectives or schools of thought with their brief descriptions by Shambaugh are as follows.

1. The Nativist School - This school distrusts the outside world, seeks total national autonomy, distrusts international institutions and thinks China should be internationally active.

2. The Realist - They see international environment as anarchic and unpredictable, thus placing premium on building a strong state that can navigate its own way in the world and resist outside pressure.

3. The Major Powers School - Members of this school of thought argue that China should concentrate its diplomacy on managing its relations with the world's major power blocs, specifically the United States, Russia and perhaps the European Union while playing less attention to the developing world.

4. The Asia First School - The Asia first school believes that priority should be made on building ties and a stable environment all around China's periphery, that is, within its neighbors in the Asian region.

5. The Global South School - This school believes that China's main international identity and responsibility lies with the developing world. They argue that they should prioritize long time partners and client states among developing countries.

6. The Selective Multilateralism School - This school believes that China should expand its global involvement gradually but selectively, and only on issues in which China's national security interests are involved.

7. The Globalist School - This

school believes that China must shoulder the responsibility for addressing a range of global governance issues commensurate with its size power and influence.

I say that the foregoing schools of thought presented by Professor Shambaugh play a very significant influence in shaping the minds of China's policy makers regarding how its country's international identity should be projected. Because of these diverse thoughts, it is uncommon that there would be clashes of views among their key decision makers. This I say because there seems to be no single and specific school of thought which they have categorically adopted to follow, as yet.

It is essential then for our own policy makers to look more closely on these schools of thoughts to better understand China's recent enigmatic behavior. In so doing, we can then better craft a more appropriate response to the difficult character that they China is exhibiting recently.

On another note, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate two of our soldiers deployed in the retrieval site in Solongon, La Libertad, Negros Oriental for their display of honesty while performing their tasks. The two, Private Danny Iuigne and Private Marlon V Vera, recovered cash amounting to seventy thousand pesos which was properly turned over to its rightful owner, a certain Mrs. Virginia Gallora, a resident of the place. Such a display of honesty is a clear manifestation of our soldiers' values in general. To our soldiers out there who toil incessantly to alleviate the sufferings of many, my deepest appreciation and snappy salute.

EDITORIAL**Extra-judicial killings**

DESPITE government efforts to address the problem of extra-judicial killings in the country, the United States (US) still withholds a portion of its assistance to the Philippine military.

This is understandable since in the view of the US government, convicting perpetrators of extra-judicial killings in this impoverished but manpower-exporting Southeast Asian nation of more than 95 million people remains a challenge.

No less than US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell admitted that his government is still concerned about the murder of journalists, militant students and other youth activists.

In his testimony before the House committee on foreign affairs sub-committee on terrorism, non-proliferation and trade on February 7, Secretary Campbell stressed the US long standing advocacy for human rights.

"As you are aware, the US Congress has withheld \$3 million in foreign military financing from the Philippines pending progress toward accountability regarding these (extra-judicial killings)," said the US government official.

Last month, Secretary Albert F. del Rosario of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) told a visiting bipartisan US congressional delegation that the perception of worse human rights situation in the Philippines is not factual.

The seven-member delegation, headed by House appropriations committee chairman Rep. Harold Rogers and Rep. Norman Dicks, was in Manila from January 13 to 15.

Late last year, US Ambassador to the Philippines Harry K. Thomas Jr. said that the US Embassy was encouraged by the pledge that President Benigno "Noy" Aquino III made in his 2010 state-of-the-nation address to curb extra-judicial killings in the country.

With the continued withholding of US military assistance to the country, some quarters said that we have now come to the point where the authorities have to identify, arrest and jail all those behind these extra-judicial killings.

Ito ay kung gusto nating tuloy-tuloy and pagtulong ng gobyerno ng Estados Unidos para mapabilis ang modernization ng Philippine military.



Multi-purpose choppers. This is one of four combat utility helicopters undergoing inspection at Clark Air Base in Pampanga.



Air Force buildup. The military will have eight of these Sokol combat utility helicopters and some F-16 fighter jets (inset).

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

French Navy Ship on Goodwill Visit to Cebu

Cebu City – The French Navy ship Vendermiaire recently (Feb 12, 2012) docked in Cebu City for a four (4) day Goodwill Visit with the people of Cebu and their Philippine Navy counterparts in the city.

The event was kicked off with an Arrival Ceremony at the Cebu International Pier in the morning of February 12, 2012 which was attended by Naval Forces Central (NFC) Deputy Commander, Captain Ingemar S Pernes and French Embassy Second Counselor, Mr. Pascal Slivansky.

Day 2, February 13, 2012, was highlighted by courtesy calls by the French Navy Officers on Naval Forces Central Commander, Commodore Zyril D Carlos later on AFP Central Command Commander, Cebu Mayor, PNP Regional Commander, and Cebu Governor. A luncheon was also hosted by the French navy aboardship during this day which was attended various French officials and the NFC Commander. A Shipboard Tour followed the luncheon which was attended by Philippine Navy officers and enlisted personnel.

The next day, February 14, 2012, a friendship football game was held between the French and Philippine Navies at the Benito Ebuena Football Field in Mactan which will be followed by a city tour of the crew on February 15, 2012. The visiting navy is set to depart the country February 16, 2012 following a send-off ceremony at 9:00 am.

The visit hopes to strengthen existing friendly relations between the two (2) navies through a series of scheduled events aimed at enhancing understanding and cooperation. It also hopes to provide timely exposure of Philippine Navy personnel to the French Navy vessel and equipment. Incidentally, the visit came in as the French Embassy through the Philippine Red Cross provided donations for the victims of the recent Cebu earthquake last February 6, 2012.

The Vendermiaire last visited the Philippines last April 2011 during a port call in Manila. The same series of goodwill events was held between the Philippine Navy and its visiting counterpart. This ship is classified as a Floreal Class light frigate whose usual area of tour is the Asia Pacific region.

<http://www.zambotimes.com/archives/43469-French-Navy-Ship-on-Goodwill-Visit-to-Cebu.html>

Pestaño accused want military trial

INVOKING national security, retired and active Navy officers charged with the 1995 murder of Ensign Philip Andrew Pestaño are asking the Sandiganbayan to refer the case for trial by a military tribunal.

The accused said four of them hold sensitive positions as intelligence officers in the Navy and that confidential military information might inadvertently surface during trial at the Sandiganbayan.

"For national security reasons, since the said Navy ship (BRP Bacolod City) will be subjected to ocular inspection, hence, the defense capability of the country's naval force will be exposed to the public as well as to the enemies of the state, including but not limited to terrorist groups," they said.

The accused in the case are Navy Capt. Ricardo M. Ordoñez; Commanders Reynaldo P. Lopez and Alfrederick A. Alba; Lt. Commanders Luidegar C. Casis, Joselito L. Colico and Ruben B. Roque; Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Sandy P. Miranda; Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Welmenio U. Aquino; Petty Officer 1st Class Carlito B. Amoroso; Petty Officer 2nd Class Mil Leonor Y. Igacasan and a "John Doe".

Still in active service are Lopez and Casis of the Philippine Military Academy Class 1992, Alba and Colico of Class 1994, Aquino and Miranda.

Prosecutors said Pestaño was killed for his objection to the use by his superiors of the Navy vessel to transport hot lumber and suspected illegal drugs.

They said the defendants conspired to cover up the crime by making it appear that Pestaño took his own life by firing a gun into his temple.

However, in their motion for reconsideration filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, the 10 accused claimed Pestaño had suicidal tendencies and had attempted to take his own life 17 days before he was supposedly found dead with a gunshot wound in the head inside his cabin on the BRP Bacolod City on Sept. 27, 1995.

They said Pestaño tried to commit suicide by slashing his wrist on Sept. 10, 1995 but was saved by two classmates who reportedly took him to the Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City.

The defendants offered that Pestaño may have been suffering from "deep depression" because of an administrative complaint filed against him by a former girlfriend after their breakup due to religious differences.

They claimed Pestaño was pressured by his parents to end his relationship with the girl who belonged to a different religious sect. – **Peter Tabingo**

<http://www.malaya.com.ph/02162012/news7.html>