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NPA arrests AFP General, 2 other officers

February 17, 2:15 PM – The Merardo Arce Command of the New People's Army (NPA) arrested two high-ranking officers of the Philippine Army in So. Tabak, Brgy. Carmen, Baguio District, Davao City.

In a successful entrapment operation, Red fighters were able to capture Brig. Gen. Victor Obillo, Capt. Eduardo Montealto, a Corporal Lipaolipao and their driver Rogelio Mendoza. Obillo is the commander of the 55th Engineering and Construction Brigade (ECB) based in

Davao City. Montealto is the brigade's logistics officer while Lipaolipao is Obillo's aide-de-camp. After a few hours, Lipaolipao and Mendoza were released to relay the Merardo Arce Command's message to the AFP. Both Obillo and Montealto were armed with .45s when apprehended.



In a statement, the Merardo Arce Command said that the two officers were arrested while conducting counterrevolutionary activities within the territories of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

Four days later, on February 21, the NPA-Sorsogon arrested Chief Insp. Roberto Bernal, intelligence officer of the Philippine National Police (PNP) who currently holds office in the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in Quezon City. At about 11 o'clock in the morning in San Juan, Bacon, Sorsogon, Red fighters bagged Bernal while the latter was consulting one of his assets in 4 the barrio.

The NPA-Sorsogon issued a statement stating that Bernal was arrested in a tactical offensive because of his "active role in setting up an intelligence network against the revolutionary movement not only in Sorsogon but in the entire Bicol region". Bernal frequents Sorsogon to check on the network and to visit his mistress.

The arrests of Obillo, Montealto and Bernal are victories that mark the advance of the armed struggle based on an ever-widening and ever-deepening mass base. These are also in compliance with the call of the CPP Central Committee to intensify tactical offensives, including taking as prisoners, whenever possible, officers and enlisted personnel of the AFP and the PNP.

The three officers shall be treated as prisoners of war and will enjoy rights in accordance with the policies of the NPA, the people's democratic government, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law or CARHRIHL and

international laws such as the Geneva Conventions and Protocol 1. This is in line with the recognition of their status as combatants of the reactionary armed forces.

The NPA units serving as custodians of the prisoners of war, respect the rights and assure the health and safety of the three officers. In line with their status as prisoners of war, they can be tried in a revolutionary people's court, and if found guilty, will be punished as war criminals with due consideration for the gravity of the crimes committed. On the other hand, they can be pardoned and released in line with the revolutionary movement's long-standing policy of humane and lenient treatment of prisoners of war.

In this regard, the NDFP immediately expressed its readiness to negotiate with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for the possible early release of the prisoners of war. The NDFP Negotiating Panel is the sole organ of the revolutionary movement authorized to negotiate with the GRP in relation to prisoners of war.

But the Estrada regime outrightly ignored the NDFP Negotiating Panel's generous offer. Instead, it deployed more troops to the mountains of Davao City, zoned the communities, set up checkpoints along roads and even boastfully announced that it has imposed a food blockade in certain areas. Worse, through its mindless military operations, the regime has trampled on the rights and livelihood of thousands of people in the area.

Meanwhile, in a demonstration of irresponsibility, impetuosity and ignorance of the peace process, Estrada formally suspended the peace talks between the NDFP and the GRP, and illegally cancelled the effectivity of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG).

The Estrada regime is being caught in the tangled web of its own lies and its utter incapacity to defeat the revolutionary movement.

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