



P N P News Release

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LACSON SUPPORT ASSAULT

This is a rejoinder to Lt. Col. Steve Castro of Task Force Trident (Reader's Forum, Oct. 6).

It is unfortunate that Lt. Col. Castro was reacting to what he merely read in the newspapers, which we are now seeking to correct.

The fact is, Director General Panfilo Lacson fully supports the decision of the Cabinet Cluster E committee on national security to launch a massive military operation against the Abu Sayaff in Sulu.

Lt. Col. Castro may not be aware of it but Director General Lacson never criticized AFP Chief Gen. Angelo Reyes. No less than Gen. Reyes himself has pointed out that the AFP and PNP are fully supporting each other in the ongoing offensive operations in Sulu.

The idea of employing commando-type small-unit operations against the Abu Sayaff was an option recommended by Gen. Lacson before the Cabinet Cluster E committee, although this was never considered and the Cluster E decided to launch a massive military maneuver instead.

Nonetheless, Gen. Lacson never criticized the decision of Cluster E, neither did he insist on having his way.

What is lamentable is the fact that some quarters who raised a fury over the issue were actually reacting not to General Lacson's recommended strategy, but, to his right or duty as a member of Cluster E to voice his opinion and recommend what to his mind is the appropriate strategy for the situation.

Whether the decision of Cluster E was based on his recommendation or not, Gen. Lacson is duty bound to respect such decision and commit his

support to the lead agency concerned, in this case, Joint Task Force Trident under Maj. Gen, Narciso Abaya.

And that's precisely what he did. A company from the PNP's elite Special Action Force is now in support of the AFP's offensive.

To say that Gen. Lacson knows nothing about military operation is devoid of truth considering his 20 years of colorful military service on top of his four years of training in the premier school, the Philippine Military Academy.

Lt. Col. Castro is actually doing an injustice to our alma mater by branding an illustrious alumnus as ignorant in military service.

I understand Lt. Col. Castro's sentiments but sad to say that he could have presented a more intelligent picture of the issue had he been resourceful enough to view it at the "macro" level and not only rely on his reflexes alone.

The PMA trained us to do just that - SR. SUPT. NICANOR BARTOLOME, PNP spokesman.