

2018

**Palace Exec - COA Commissioner and 19 AFP
Senior/Ranking Officers get CA approval; DAR Secretary deferred**

Atty. Roland Cafe Pondoc's nomination as Commissioner, Commission on Audit, for a term expiring on 02 February 2025 vice Isabel B. Dasalla-Agito and the *ad interim* appointments/nominations of 19 Senior/Ranking Officers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) passed the scrutiny of the members of the Commission on Appointments (CA), today, March 14, 2018, during its plenary session presided by Senate President/Chairman of the Commission Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III.

The Commissioner's nomination sailed through at the committee level without hitches. Sen. Cynthia A. Villar, chairperson of the CA Committee on Constitutional Commissions and Offices recommended for the approval of Pondoc's nomination to the plenary with no objections raised.

Pondoc, 48, possesses stellar academic credentials - having obtained his Bachelor of Science in Commerce major in Accounting, *Magna cum Laude* and earned his Masters in Business Administration from the University of Mindanao - Davao City in 1988 and 1997, respectively. He also finished his Bachelor of Laws - a recipient of an Academic Achiever's Award, in 2001 and had a Diploma in Professional Education in 2008 for units earned from the same university. He is a Certified Public Accountant and a Lawyer having passed the CPA Board Examinations in 1990 and the Philippine Bar Examinations in 2001. He is also a Licensed Real Estate Appraiser and a Licensed Real Estate Broker.

Prior to his nomination, he was the Assistant Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration, Office of the President, and concurrent Assistant Deputy Director General for Administration and Logistics, Office of the Director-General for Operations, Office of the ASEAN - National Organizing Council, Malacañang Palace, since 01

September 2016. In 2014-2016, he was the Legal Officer 4 of the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC), where he provided free legal services to its indigent patients. A true blue academician, he served his alma mater - University of Mindanao, for more than 22 years (1994 - 2016) in the College of Accountancy, College of Law, College of Business Administration, College of Criminology and Masters in Business Administration as Full-time and Part-time Associate Professor, Assistant Dean in the College of Law and as Officer-in-Charge / Director in the Office of Student Affairs.

Majority Floor Leader Rodolfo T. Albano III, reading the sponsorship speech of Villar on Pondoc's nomination, described the Commissioner as "competent, honest and of impeccable integrity" befitting the position he was nominated for. "Our nominee's passion to improve the lives of the unserved and powerless is noteworthy," he added. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, Albano also emphasized that, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." This, he said, is a "true testament to our nominee's compassion for the poor and the powerless in our society." In his seconding speech, Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri spoke highly of Pondoc as a fellow Mindanaoan, who, he regarded as a "simple, low-key, dedicated and competent government official."

Meanwhile, the CA Committee on National Defense, chaired by Rep. Roy M. Loyola, deliberated on and recommended for confirmation the *ad interim* appointments and nominations of 19 AFP Senior/Ranking Officers: 10 from the Regular Force and nine from the Reserve Force, with ranks of one Major General, one Rear Admiral, four Brigadier Generals, 12 Colonels and one Captain (PN). Flag Officer in Command **Robert A. Empedrad**'s nomination to the rank of Vice Admiral, along with the nominations of Davao Oriental Representative and CA Member **Joel Mayo Z. Almario** to the rank of Colonel, Philippine Air Force (PAF), Quezon City Mayor **Herbert C. Bautista** to the rank of Brigadier General (MNSA) and former MMDA Chair **Francis N. Tolentino** to the rank of Brigadier General in the AFP reserve force, led the approved nominations/*ad interim* appointments. Other confirmed promotions of Senior/Ranking Officers in the AFP were the following:

Danilo Chad D. Isleta	- to the rank of <i>Major General</i>
Luis Vincent A. Tacderas	- PA, to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>

Alfredo L. Lupig (Res)	- PA, to the rank of <i>Colonel</i>
Joselito R. Serrano	- PA, to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>
Gaudencio A. Cantos (Res)	- PA, to the rank of <i>Colonel</i>
Joel M. Sergio (Res)	- to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>
Arsenio R. Andolong (Res)	- PA, to the rank of <i>Colonel</i>
Roberto T. Ancan	- PA, to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>
Gener P. Del Rosario	- to the rank of <i>Major General</i>
Toribio D. Adaci, Jr.	- PN, to the rank of <i>Commodore</i>
Enrico T. Yuzon (Res)	- PA, to the rank of <i>Colonel</i>
Ernesto C. Torres, Jr.	- PA, to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>
Antonio V. Rosario Jr.	- to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>
Baltazar T. Catbagan (Res)	- to the rank of <i>Colonel</i>
Erwin Bernard L. Neri	- PA, to the rank of <i>Brigadier General</i>

Loyola yielded the floor to Sen. Risa Hontiveros in having the privilege to endorse the confirmation of the appointees/nominees to the plenary in behalf of the committee members. CA Vice-Chair Rep. Ronaldo B. Zamora delivered his seconding speech for the confirmation of the nomination of Davao Oriental Representative and CA Member **Joel Mayo Z. Almario** to the rank of Colonel (PAF) (Res) in behalf of the House contingent in the CA. He stressed that the nominee, “through the years, has fought against illiteracy; he has waged wars against diseases; he has launched campaigns against joblessness - the very enemies that are harder to vanquish.” He also added that he is certain, that the nominee “will be true to his oath, obedient to his orders, loyal to the flag, he will honor the uniform and conduct himself always as an officer and a gentleman.” Zubiri and Loyola, likewise, delivered their respective seconding speeches to support the confirmation of Almario.

In an earlier hearing of the Committee on Agrarian Reform, it suspended the deliberations on the *ad interim* appointment of Agrarian Reform Secretary **John Rualo Castriciones** due to lack of material time. The appointment of Castriciones drew one sworn opposition. The testimony of oppositor Akbayan Citizens’ Action Party List Representative Tomasito S. Villarín was heard by the committee during the deliberations. Sen. Grace Poe, chairperson of the Committee on Agrarian Reform, is yet to set another schedule to continue the deliberations on Castriciones’ appointment upon motion of Sen. Panfilo M. Lacson.

