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Editorial

Intensify the people's war in the face of Aquino's fascist brutalities

Heighted intensity and brutality marks the Aquino regime's successive acts of armed suppression over the past few months against activists, mass leaders and entire communities.

After almost three decades since the ouster of Marcos and his military dictatorship, the fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continues to rule various aspects of Philippine society, especially in the countryside.

The regime's brazen and all-out fascist brutality is rousing more and more Filipinos. The victims of massacres in Surigao del Sur, Bukidnon, Masbate and many more places are demanding justice. The victims of rape and other crimes against women cry for justice. The youth studying in the schools razed and ruined by the AFP are burning with rage. They demand punishment of officials and the AFP for these brutalities. There are also protests and condemnations from other countries that expose the bloody record of the Aquino regime in the international community.

Units of the NPA across the country must respond to the demand for justice. In the guerrilla fronts across the country, they should determinedly launch small and big tactical offensives against the AFP, PNP and their various paramilitary groups.

The entire people applaud the units of the NPA in Surigao del Sur for launching tactical offensives targeting the evil units of the AFP be-

hind the massacre in Liangga, the killing of Lumad leaders and activists, and causing hardship and oppression of the peasant masses in the areas.

As in the past, the barefaced use of military force to suppress grievances and democratic aspirations of the Filipino people is evidence, not of strength and stability of the ruling system, but of its weakness and desperation to maintain the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system.

This shows that the Aquino regime's Oplan Bayanihan continues to fail in its objective to render the NPA inconsequential by 2016. This is also proof that Aquino has failed in his corollary objective of drawing the people away from the revolu-

tionary path through the "straight path" psywar that portrays the reactionary government as responsive to their interests and welfare.

The AFP is the principal instrument of US imperialism and the ruling state in suppressing the people. Under direction of its JUSMAG and CIA "advisers", the AFP establishes itself as the authority and power. Military officials trample on the authority of civil officials. The military assumes the role of the government and pretends to deliver services. It directs the implementation of priority programs of various government agencies for "counter-insurgency" purposes that only serve to suppress democratic grievances and the people's revolutionary struggles.

The ruling regime now employs outright military violence to suppress mass struggles, including



legal movements. The so-called "campaign against criminality" is used as pretext to suppress and render illegal the democratic movement through endless accusations and filing of trumped-up charges in order to arrest and put mass leaders and activists under prolonged detentions.

The brazen use of state violence indicate that Aquino and the AFP are failing to win over the hearts and minds of the people, especially the rural peasant masses, through fraudulent programs such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program and Pamana. Despite all-out fund allotments and loans, the 4Ps and other sham programs are still ineffective in making the people believe in Aquino's "inclusive growth."

This is because they continue to suffer from the absence of genuine land reform, from land grabbing and mining plunder and destruction, the continuing stagnation of the economy and widespread unemployment and low

wages, lack of educational and health services and relentless rise in the prices of food and other commodities.

All in all, the ruling system has failed in using psywar instruments in order to cover up the roots of the social crisis and draw the toiling masses from the national democratic struggle.

No amount of violence and terrorism, psywar and deception employed by the Aquino regime and the AFP can stop the advance of the revolutionary movement.

In the entire country, anti-feudal struggles in the countryside, as well as struggles against large plantations and mining companies, continue to advance. In the cities, workers, poor people, students and youth and other sectors wage struggles left and right.

The people and their revolutionary forces also wage people's war in the entire country. The NPA continues to strive to seize the initiative in launching more frequent and bigger tactical offensives. **AB**

Massacres and other AFP crimes earn widespread condemnation

THE fascist US-Aquino regime earned widespread condemnation as sectors and individuals offered support and condolences for the victims slain by the vicious military troopers in Diatagon, Lianga, Surigao del Sur and Pangantucan, Bukidnon.

March of thousands

In Butuan City last September 12, 10,000 marched in the funeral of Emerito Samarca, director of the Alternative Learning Center for Agriculture and Livelihood Development (Alcadev). The procession passed by and held noise barrages in front of the regional police headquarters in Camp Rafael Rodriguez and the base of the AFP's 402nd Brigade in Camp Bancasi. The next day, September 13, Manobo leaders Dionel Campos and Datu Juvel Sinzo were laid to rest in Lianga. Renabel Enriquez, the four-year old girl who died in the Tandag City Provincial Sports Center last September 8, was also buried. The Enriquez family has been staying for over a week in the sports center that has served as an evacuation center.

By the third week of September, evacuees from the towns of Lianga, San Miguel, San Agustin and Tago who fled to Tandag City due to the terror campaign have swelled to 3,000, forcing the provincial government to declare a state of calamity.

"We honor the death of our martyrs through our commitment to truth," the group Kahugpungan Alang sa Lumadnong Organisasyon sa Caraga (Kasalo-Caraga) said. Karapatan-Caraga reported that while Campos and Sinzo were being interred in Lianga, four military agents from Camp Bancasi were



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caught taking pictures and pretending to be among the mourners. Taken from one of them was a caliber .45 pistol.

The Aquino regime's indifference to the massacres and military abuses have earned widespread condemnation from church people, politicians and workers.

Catholic bishops called for an "honest, thorough, impartial and speedy investigation so that the guilty may be held to account for their wrongdoing." Archbishop Socrates Villegas, the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, was concerned by the report that "national leaders have been quick to exonerate the militia group of wrongdoing."

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) condemned the recent spate of massacres. Reverend Ephraim S. Fajutagana, Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) Obispo Maximo XII and NCCP Chair, upheld the statements of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), the National Priest Organization (NPO), and Council of Priests (COP) of the IFI that the circumstantial evidences of the Lianga massacre pointed to the 36th Infantry Battalion and the paramilitary group Magahat-Bagani Forces as culprits. The NCCP also called for the pull-out of the 1st Special Forces Battalion under the 4th Infantry Division and the 36th IB from Pangantucan and Lianga.

Meanwhile Solidagro, an organization based in Belgium, called for the dismantling of the Magahat and other paramilitary groups. In a letter to the Philippine embassy, Solidagro general coordinator Jan Vanhuyse demanded that the government "immediately and thoroughly investigate the killings" of the school head and two tribal leaders. The Solidagro supported Alcadev

and other community-based initiatives in the Cordillera, Samar and Masbate, as well as in Africa and Latin America.

Many Filipinos expressed their visceral anger at the massacre and the role of the military through the internet. At one point, the hashtag #StopLumadKillings became a top trend in the social media.

According to Kasalo, "they made a mistake in killing Onel, Emok and Datu Bello, because instead of intimidating and silencing hundreds of us who directly witnessed the brutal killing of the three, many have given strong testimonies, many refuse to be silenced and many refuse to hide what they know: many are crying for justice."

Sustained exposes, protests and condemnation

Some 20 organizations led by Karapatan-Northern Mindanao conducted a fact-finding mission in Pangantucan, Bukidnon to investigate the massacre by elements of the AFP on the members of the Somina and Samia families in the area. Aside from the massacre, which was confirmed to have been undertaken by the military against the civilians, 12 more violations of human rights were recorded. These included torture, attempted murder, food and economic blockade and the use of civilians as human shields.

Meanwhile, an armed military agent was caught spying on a human-rights conference held in

Cagayan de Oro City last September 11. Seized from Roldando Gamonit Sr. was a caliber .45 pistol when he attempted to infiltrate the conference of the Barug Katungod while posing as a representative of a Lumad group. IFI Bishop Antonio Ablon recognized Gamonit as someone who attempted to infiltrate a similar activity earlier this year.

In Quezon City, Gabriela staged a picket at Camp Aguinaldo last September 12 to call for the arrest of three soldiers involved in the rape of a 14-year old Manobo girl in Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

Gabriela also called for the withdrawal of military troops in the Lumad areas due to the military abuses, including sexual abuse. In related news, progressive groups strongly condemned the sexual harassment by a military lawyer on Janess Ellao, a reporter of *Bulatlat.com* and member of *Altermidya*.

In Congress, Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares angrily castigated AFP Deputy Chief of Operations Brig. Gen. Angelito de Leon after he presented a video of a young Lumad singing "Lupang Sinira" (Land Devastated). The song is an alternative version of the national anthem arranged by nationalist singer and composer Pol Galang. De Leon ridiculously used the video as evidence that the NPA was running the school Salugpungan Ta'tanu Igkanugon Community Learning Center (STICLC). The general called for the closure of the STICLC school, or the turn-over of such schools to the control of the military. In August, the Department of Education (DepEd) trained soldiers to act as teachers in the Lumad schools.



"Does singing one song make one an NPA? This is the problem with the AFP!" Colmenares blasted. "Many are being killed because of such psychology!"

War against the Lumad

A powerpoint presentation was revealed by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan as evidence that the repressive Oplan Bayanihan (OpBay) forcibly targets Lumads and their communities. The presentation, which had the seal of the Department of Science and Technology, details the Whole of Nation Initiative (WNI), the basis and means through which the military and the civilian bureaucracy jointly implement OpBay through psywar and deception.

One panel of the presentation indicated that 74% of the NPA in Eastern Mindanao allegedly come from indigenous people and 90% of the guerilla bases can be found in ancestral domains. Among the strategies of the WNI is the holding of "service caravans" composed of government agencies. Some 14 departments and agencies are involved in the WNI. Among the instruments of deception are the 4Ps, livelihood seminars and others. For 2015, the WNI prioritizes during the first and second half of the year corridors in the regions of Eastern Visayas, Region XI and Caraga.

These areas hold the highest numbers of human rights violations, including massacres and extra-judicial killings.

In August, the AFP simultaneously held peace caravans in Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur. In Lianga, the MAPASU was invited but the group declined as members were busy with preparations for the Alcadev foundation day. The military castigated them and said that they did not attend because their children "are NPAs". A week later, the

Alcadev massacre took place.

The AFP is desperately using its supremacy over civilian agencies to pursue its failed objectives under OpBay. The AFP, for example, conspired with the DepEd to put out a memo allowing the military's use of schools as barracks, in violation of international rules.

Among the cosmetic services given by WNI are free haircuts, dispersal of school supplies, distribution of iodine-fortified drinking

water, and other psy-war projects.

Karapatan also wrote to the special rapporteurs of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council to investigate the Lumad killings. "The political killings happening right now are part of the government's policy and not simply an internal conflict among indigenous peoples as the government wants the public to believe," Cristina Palabay of Karapatan wrote to the UN rapporteurs. **AB**

Serving the people

"Kahit maputi na ang buhok ko"

(The following are excerpts from Rafael G. Baylosis' statement submitted to the Manila Regional Trial Court last July 30 after he decided not to attend the arraignment and move to the countryside to continue his work for the revolutionary movement.)

I have decided to forego and not attend the last chance given me today by the fair Lady Judge of this GPH (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) Trial Court to be formally arraigned...

First, I would like to forestall an immediate and imminent threat to my life and liberty after I received reliable information last January and April 2015 from some sources in the GPH military and security circles, that I have been identified, together with some other colleagues, as "current and priority tracers" to the new leadership of the CPP-NPA-NDFP (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front of the Philippines). In another top secret GPH intelligence project I was informed of, I am among the targets for "neutralization" for being suspected to be in the lead of upsurge of the mass movement in the National Capital Region to oust the present GPH President from power.

I do not wish at all to be arrested, tormented and imprisoned for the third time in my life. That is, if I would not be summarily executed by enforced disappearance as has been the practice of the GPH military in many cases of revolutionary oppositionists in the last three decades,

even after the ouster of the Marcos fascist dictatorial regime... I would not be surprised if I was outrightly arrested had I attended this pre-trial hearing, based on a new "arrest warrant". Some GPH military, police and court officials have specialized in this kind of black magic over the years.

That is why I have taken one or two steps ahead of this threat to my person and to the revolutionary ranks to which I belong. I have chosen to go to and live once again in an established territory of the People's Revolutionary Government under the NDFP somewhere in the countryside, to continue doing my work and share in the revolutionary movement in serving the people. Even at my relatively advanced age, *kahit maputi na ang buhok ko* (even though my hair has turned white). If something happens to me, even if I suffer, get captured or killed by the enemy, I have far better chances of fighting here with the strong support of the peasant masses, with numerous young revolutionaries and the

protection of the New People's Army...

Second, I consider it my responsibility to the people's revolutionary movement, the NDFP and comrades in GPH prisons, to vehemently denounce and protest the "criminalization" of suspected and arrested revolutionaries, in gross violation of the time-honored GPH Supreme Court decision pertaining to the Hernandez doctrine on political offense, of the internationally recognized legal precept that alleged political offenders with a lofty cause,

Andrea Rosal freed

COURTS ordered the release of Andrea Rosal last September 7 after a murder case against her was dismissed. Andrea believes that the only reason she was apprehended and detained on March 27, 2014, was because she is the daughter of the late Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, erstwhile spokesman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Andrea was seven months pregnant when she was arrested and detained in Camp Bagog Diwa, Taguig City. In detention, she gave birth on May 17 last year. Her child Diona Andrea died the next day due to lack of oxygen in her blood. Andrea was not allowed to attend the funeral of her daughter, and was given only three hours to visit her wake.

Andrea stated that she will work for the release of 537 political prisoners. The CPP calls for the indictment of Aquino and his top military officers for the unjust detention and inhuman treatment of Andrea Rosal. Aquino should pay for the undue suffering Andrea went through, the CPP said. **AB**

like rebels, should be treated leniently, as different from common criminals...

I respectfully ask my dear competent legal counsels to understand the decision I have taken, even as in all fairness they have advised me to be present here last May 7 and today. Thank you very much for your staunch and generous defense of my demo-

cratic rights. To my revolutionary colleagues under trial now, I wish you all the fortitude, cheerfulness and good health while under the coercive instruments of the present reactionary state, to persevere in the struggle and to seek freedom to resume revolutionary work outside prison.

(SGD) Rafael G. Baylosis

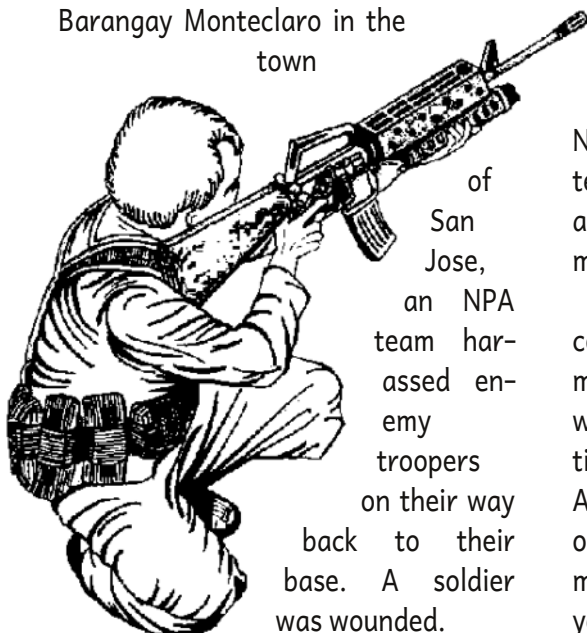
AB

NPA foils AFP military operations in Mindoro

Red Fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) foiled attacks by state security forces in the island of Mindoro. From June to September, the 203rd Bde has commanded battalion-sized operations using units from the 4th IB and CAFGU, in tandem with the Regional Public Safety Battalion and Provincial Police Mobile Group.

The first series of operations took place from July 23 to 28 in the town of Roxas. Before operations were in full swing, the Red Army fired against troopers travelling on foot on July 24, wounding one soldier. Prior to this, nine soldiers from the 4th IB's Bravo Company were wounded after Red fighters detonated a land mine in Guiob, Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro.

From August 6 to 16, the enemy launched bigger and wider operations. They combed through the forests and coastal areas while focusing on the towns of Bongabong, Roxas and Mansalay in Oriental Mindoro and on San Jose in Occidental Mindoro. On August 13 in Barangay Monteclaro in the town



of San Jose, an NPA team harassed enemy troopers on their way back to their base. A soldier was wounded.

Enemy forces launched civil military operations from August 22 to September 2 in the third series of operations in the towns of Roxas and San Jose where the NPA have launched victorious tactical offensives. There were small and quick operations in Magsaysay in Occidental Mindoro and Bulalacao. An enemy unit tried to pass itself off as NPA members to conduct strike operations but failed to inflict damages to the NPA.

Before the three series of military operations, largescale and widespread operations have been relentlessly carried out since May and June despite torrential rains and river flooding. Nevertheless, the people's army and revolutionary people have frustrated the enemy's desperate attacks. The NPA has preserved itself and inflicted damages against the enemy while advancing the revolutionary movement in the island.

AFP operations in the island covered areas being claimed by big mining companies, the biggest of which is the Intex Mining Corporation, a Norwegian company. The US-Aquino regime allowed the company's operations despite the local government's ban on mining for the next 25 years. **AB**

NPA attacks AFP in Surigao

SIX soldiers were killed and four wounded in twin ambushes carried out by the New People's Army-North East Mindanao Region last September 5 in Sitio Kabuluhan, Buhisan, San Agustin, Surigao del Sur. The first ambush was launched at 2:00 p.m. against Scout Rangers who were then crossing Hubo River. At around 3:00 p.m., another ambush took place against 36th IB troops in the same area.

San Luis is one of the towns where thousands fled to Tandag City due to the military and its paramilitary group Magahat-Bagani's campaign of terror. On August 28, the Magahat-Bagani killed brothers Crisanto and Ely Tabugol in the town of San Miguel. A few days later, the group brutally killed three Lumad leaders in the town of Lianga.

Lianga is one of the most militarized areas in Surigao del Sur due to big mining companies' interest in the area. Found in this area is the Andap Valley Complex, one of the country's biggest coal reserve and also one of the last frontiers that big companies have failed to penetrate.

Among those interested in the area are Nickel Asia and SR Metals, owned by Salvador Zamora and Eric Gutterez, both allies of the US-Aquino regime. At one time, Caloocan City Rep. Edgar Erice, another of Aquino's rabid defenders, held interests in the area. Last February, several San Miguel barangays were covered by the 4th ID's biggest military operations. **AB**

A cluster at a time

EV launches antifeudal campaigns

Local chapters of the Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) successfully launched an antifeudal campaign against usury, high prices of commodities and low wages in a cluster of barrios in Samar last June. This marked the beginning of the antifeudal campaigns the PKM plans to launch cluster by barrio cluster within the municipality.

The Communist Party in Eastern Visayas had called for the intensification of agrarian revolution in the region. On April, the Party front committee launched a peasant conference to sum up and study more than a decade of the area's antifeudal campaign experiences and victories.

The conference identified widespread problems in the district. They noted the reemergence of dishonest commercial practices, low wages for farmworkers, low prices of agricultural products and others. These problems resurfaced since antifeudal struggles have not been carried out for a while.

The municipal-level PKM was organized from the conference to serve as the district's main antifeudal machinery. Since antifeudal struggles have not been launched for some time, it was decided that plans for a breakthrough will be carried out within the said cluster of barrios.

From there onwards, the campaign is expected to proceed wave upon wave within the municipality by launching local struggles in clustered barrios. The campaign encompasses 50 barrios in four towns.

Peasants in the breakthrough barrio cluster have a long history of antifeudal struggles. In fact, due to the revolutionary movement's influence, there are no longer any big landlords in the area. Most of the peasants till abandoned lands. In line with revolutionary policies, the peasants are aware of their right to till the

land and harvest the fruits of their labor.

During the local PKM's first assembly, the front's situation and district plans of the PKM in the municipal level were discussed. National and international situationers were given. Discussions on solid organizing were held. Previous policies, such as limitations on logging activities, were reviewed and reaffirmed. In every barrio, social investigation and class analysis were conducted by launching investigation meetings. Using simplified methods, case studies were conducted on feudal and semifeudal forms of exploitation in every barrio.

Main front cadres took the lead in the investigation meetings and coordinated closely with members of the local Party branch and mass leaders. Barrio general assemblies were called to unite the membership on the plans and demands. Case studies were presented in the assemblies, as well as drafts containing the maximum and minimum demands of poor peasants.

A panel of negotiators was created in every barrio. Since the campaign was still incipient, PKM officials from nearby barrios participated in the trainings and dry runs conducted by the panel. The training served as preparation for their own struggles.

After a while, the local PKM called for a negotiation with the campaign's targets in the form of confidential democratic consultations. It was de-



cided that this is the appropriate form in confronting small landlords, rich peasants and merchants who could be or are already allies.

Victories

In particular, the peasants gained the following:

1. raising farmworker wages from P150 to P200, in addition to food for the entire workday.

Presently, farmworker wages reach only P152/day in the area. This is a far cry from the pegged daily minimum wage of P260 for Eastern Visayas and far lower from the P1,077/day on the national level. Due to high regional inflation rates brought about by the storm Yolanda, real wages only amount to P129.50 in the region.

During the negotiations, landlords and rich peasants stated that the farmworkers should also be meticulous with their work. They work best if they are given proper wages and food, the PKM representatives retorted. Work schedules were agreed upon — from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The early break at 10:00 a.m. to avoid the heat of the sun was made in consideration of the farmworkers' health.

2. lowering prices of basic commodities in stores by 50%

Merchants take full advantage of the barrios' great distance from town centers. In some cases, commodities are marked up as high as 500% above their original prices. These include such basic commodities as salt, sugar, oil and soy sauce which are bought wholesale and sold by small retail packets or quantities.

In the negotiations, the PKM assured storeowners that they will still profit. Storeowners, in turn,

only asked that those with debts promptly settle their accounts. As a favor, the peasants agreed that debtors late in their payments by a month will pay a 10% penalty.

3. lowering usurious rates. This includes:

a. lowering interest rates in the palangoy (cash to palay) system from 100% to 60%.

At present, interest rates reach up to 100% as debtors pay a P1000 loan with a sack of rice worth P2,000.

In the negotiations, it was agreed that payments will be lowered by P400, equivalent to 50 "salmonan" (a unit of measurement widely used in rural areas using a large sardine tin) for every sack of rice. The palangoy system is the most frequently used and worst kind of usury in area covered by the campaign.

b. lowering interest rates in palay-to-palay system (palay as loan and payment) by almost 100%

Debtors successfully demanded that a loan of one sack of palay (borrowed usually during planting season) should be paid by only a sack of palay and not two (paid during harvest times), as with the previous arrangement.

In the negotiations, the PKM assured the creditors that palay payments will not be full of chaff and will be relatively dried. An agreement was reached as allied creditors gave way to the peasants' demand, even though their profits will be small.

c. lowering interest rates for loans against council members' honorariums and barangay tanod (village watchmen) allowances from 30% to 10%

Negotiators were successful in demanding that watchmen be given P1,200, thus lowering the interest

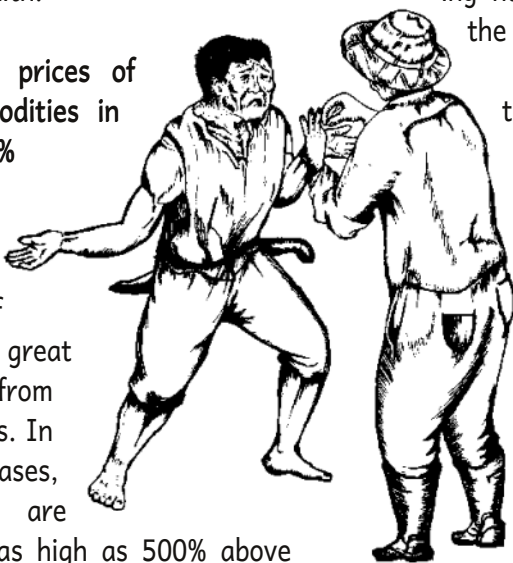
to P100 or 10% for every P1,500 loan. For councilors, interests were slashed by 50%. Creditors will only be allowed to take P1,500 as interest, instead of the current P3,000, for the P9,000 honorarium the councilors receive every five months.

The role of the negotiators

Choosing the panel of negotiators and training them correctly to confront "targets" are important components in the antifeudal struggle. This panel represents the PKM and carries the peasants' issues and demands. Before embarking on negotiations, the guerilla front committee ensures that they master the maximum and minimum demands and are steadfast in their defense of the peasants.

Since negotiations invariably represent the class struggle within the barrio, there were times when class interests surfaced, not only those of the targets, but those of the negotiators as well. At one time, negotiations heated up as both sides took a long time and even failed to reach an agreement. This happened specifically during negotiations concerning the palangoy system, wherein creditors disagreed on which harvest season it would be implemented. It was during this part where the panel's resolve to remain steadfast to the association's interests was severely tested. On the other hand, there was also a time when a member of the panel with a relatively elevated economic standing unwittingly offered an opinion that gave the opposing side undue advantage. This was strongly criticized in the assessment of the negotiations.

The leadership and participation or lackadaisical participation in the campaign of peasant leaders in the local Party branch and PKM in the campaign was also evaluated. Evaluation results would serve as basis for the organizational changes and selection of leaders for the next wave of antifeudal struggles. **AB**



APEC in Manila to benefit foreign capitalists

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leader's Meeting in Manila on November 18-19 is still a few months away but the US-Aquino regime is already showing off and acting as if the APEC would save the country from its current crises.

As host of the APEC leader's meeting, the regime has allocated P4.6 billion to accommodate its guests. This does not include other expenses needed to improve airports, roads and tourism sites in and around APEC venues.

By hosting the APEC in the Philippines, the regime expects to attract more foreign investments and boost tourism, which will supposedly benefit the economy.

APEC's primary agenda is to promote globalization that has impoverished the people for decades. This is why various groups led by Bayan has denounced the Aquino regime for its media hype about the benefits the Philippines will supposedly gain from hosting the APEC.

The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) expressed its solidarity. According to Jose Ma. Sison of ILPS, "The International League of Peoples' Struggle calls on the people of all countries especially in the Asia-Pacific region to expose and oppose the US-led neoliberal offensives lurking inside and around the APEC."

Neoliberal agenda of globalization

APEC is a gathering of 21 economies in Asia-Pacific which comprise 50% of the world economy, 44% of trade and 40% of the world's population. Leaders of government and big business hold yearly conferences to commend neoliberal principles and policies.

APEC is supposed to strengthen economic cooperation among countries in the Pacific region. In truth, it has done nothing but secure the

interests of big capitalist nations, especially that of the US, since its establishment in 1989.

The APEC subscribes to the US-initiated Washington Consensus (so called because of the control exerted over it by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and US Treasury). Its first leaders' meeting in 1993 was convened by the US itself to help jump-start the stalled WTO Uruguay Round and attempt to weaken the resistance of underdeveloped countries one by one.

The second APEC economic leaders' meeting in 1994 adopted the Bogor Goals which categorically aimed to establish trade and investment liberalization in the region by 2010 for developed-countries and 2020 for underdeveloped countries.

The APEC Business Advisory Council and Business Council, organizations through which big business impose their will, are behind APEC agreements, even though such agreements are made to appear voluntary and consensual.

They

work in tandem with various APEC committees such as the Committee on Trade and Investment, which are filled with big bureaucrats, technocrats, and corporate appointees. The detailed guidelines, policy research and recommendations these committees churn out are then given imprimatur in the annual APEC Summit.

APEC 2015: Further neoliberalism in the guise of "integration"

This year's APEC theme, "Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World," revolves around the neoliberal framework of regional economic integration.

Up for discussion at APEC meetings are proposals for the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP); the Strategic Blueprint for Promoting Global Value Chains; the Accord on Innovative Development, Economic Reform and Growth; and the Connectivity Blueprint for 2015-2025. These proposals focus on the integration of economies under which all laws, policies, rules and other restrictions on trade, and flow of information and people are to be dismantled.

Integration solely serves the big capitalist investors' interest to increase their capability to transfer production from one place to another rapidly. The so-called integration focuses on establishing regional standards for education and trainings, and transportation and communication infrastructure



to make monopoly capitalism's international division of labor more efficient. While the capacity of big capitalists to move parts of their production rise, competition intensifies among underdeveloped semicolonial countries to lower the value of their labor-power to attract foreign investments.

This regional integration promotes as its model the system of mass production in China where different products and designs can be introduced or transferred between various centers of production. APEC aims to integrate even small and medium-scale enterprises into the control of transnationals. This gives monopoly capitalists even greater ease to relocate production wherever worker's wages are lowest.

Aside from integration, APEC proposes more controls on marine and coastal resources under its so-called initiatives on the "Green" and "Blue" economy. AB

Capitalist cooperation on "counter-terrorism"

IN the guise of defending economies, APEC member states have moved into military matters supposedly to cooperate on "counter-terrorism".

Alongside the third Senior Officials and Ministers (SOM) meeting in Cebu last September 1-2, the sixth meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Working Group was held wherein member states reaffirmed their "commitments to undertake individual and joint actions to counter terrorism to foster security and resilience of businesses and communities in the Asia-Pacific region."

This categorically states APEC members' willingness to use military force to defend imperialist-controlled business interests in the region.

During the APEC Summit in Shanghai in November 2001, the US demanded member states to endorse a communique condemning the September 11 terrorist attacks and pledging cooperation. Since

then, events have shown how the broad terrorist label has been used by the imperialists against any group, organization or even nations that refuse their domination. The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army are among those that have been tagged by the US as "terrorist organizations". Under APEC agreements, the government can justify involvement of other countries in suppressing the people's struggle anywhere in the Philippines as part of their "joint actions against counter-terrorism".

In the meeting, the member states and economies presented formal reports on the implementation of their respective Counter-Terrorism Action Plans. This working group has been meeting since the start of this year. AB

Aquino fast-tracks neoliberal laws

This year, the US-Aquino regime fast-tracked the approval of several laws framed by neoliberal globalization. Aquino's cohorts in the Senate and Congress successively passed the Philippine Competition Law or the law that allegedly combats cartels and monopolies (RA 10667) and the Full Entry of Foreign Banks Law which further allows the liberalization of the banking industry to foreign ownership (RA 10641). The laws that limits the docking of foreign ships and cargoes was also amended (RA 10668). All these are in pursuit of Aquino's push to implement the requisites imposed by US imperialism to further control the local economy.

A big push for the drafting and quick approval of these laws is the forthcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Integration at the end of year, wherein all 10 economies in Asia are required to have uniform laws. The laws were also pushed by the pro-neoliberal United Nations Convention on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the European Chamber of Commerce, who also said that the laws supports the entry of the Philippines to the

proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership of the US.

These laws are also offerings of the puppet state to US President Barack Obama, who will be arriving for the leaders meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation this coming November.

Inutile and pro-foreign competition law

Chief content of the Philippine Competition Law is the establishment

of a Philippine Competition Commission, a state organ that will directly supervise the dismantling of what it identifies as cartels. The commission is directly under the office of the president and outside of the judicial processes and laws. Decisions and orders of the commission will hold weight over the regulatory agencies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission, Energy Regulatory Commission and the National Telecommunications Commission. Aside from removing and usurping the powers of the agencies that should be watching over public welfare, the law provides that entities need not be proven guilty under the laws to be punished. Instead, it can accept the punishment without admitting so in court. This process replaces the role of the government and enhances self-regulation within the business

sector. Sectors target to be dismantled are telecommunications, food trade, cement manufacturing and other industries identified as “being run by a select few companies.” These sectors and sub-sectors are protected by the 1987 constitution, and thus places limits on what can be owned (for telecommunications, a public service) or performed (for example, food trade) by foreigners. To circumvent these restrictions, the commission can just declare these as “cartels” or “monopolies” so that foreign capital can come in.

The “free competition” that these laws harp on is deceptive. All aspects and sectors of the local economy are dominated by a select few companies of the biggest compradors, bureaucrats and their foreign associates.

Before RA 10667 was approved, some 30 laws and orders related to “free competition” already existed. But these laws did not deter the existence of trade monopolies due to the various sly moves of big capitalists, including the mergers of competing companies to control prices of services and goods.

As in the past, the Competition law will not prevent the connivance by the energy monopolies, who purchase their supplies from their own companies and manipulate prices. It will also be helpless in preventing multinational drug companies from blocking the sale of generic medicine, even if these are cheaper. It will also not prevent the market control of the multinational corporations encroaching on the retail industry and controlling the smallest *sari-sari* stores through credit.

Dominance of foreign banks

The Aquino regime further opened the banking sector under RA 10641 which allows the full entry of foreign banks in the country. It implements not only the further deregulation of the sector but also the removal of the remaining

obstacles to the flow of finance. This further amends the earlier Foreign Bank Liberalization Act passed in 1994. Among the amendments is the removal of the limitations on the number and qualifications of banks that can establish subsidiaries in the country. Restrictions on the number of branches that can be established in the whole country were also removed. Foreign ownership up to 100% of any bank is now possible, as well as the number of small banks that can be owned.

At present, five foreign banks have been allowed by Aquino to invest in the country, This is aside from the 19 foreign banks with local operations. As in the past, the deluge of foreign banks will result not only in the retrenchment of thousands of local bank employees, and the dissolution and merger of these not only to cope with the “competition” but also the further concentration of capital and ownership by banks of local firms. In addition, a more efficient channel for the repatriation of profits out of the country will also be established. Foreign banks will also be allowed to expropriate any mortgaged property, using the full powers of the courts and the police, against the very restrictions enshrined in the reactionary constitution of the country. Among the properties that can be owned by a foreigner are lands sequestered by banks.

Liberalization of ports

Meanwhile, the Cabotage Law was amended to give way to the entry to and operation of foreign cargo vehicles in local ports. Under the new law, it will no longer be necessary for these ships to pay taxes to the government. Foreigners can now invest in the naval transport service that will surely obliterate the local ship industry and the small inter-island passenger boats. Some 446 local ships will be affected, while the volume and scope of trade in and out of the country will further increase.

The shipping commerce situation will parallel that of Puerto Rico, wherein due to the control of all commercial ships by US-owned companies through its Cabotage Law of 1920, prices of goods passing through the sea spiralled continuously. Since 85% of the country's trade passes through water, the cost of food for each individual is estimated to have increased by \$400 per year (P49 per day) due to US control of their seas.

These laws form Aquino's scheme to circumvent the opposition to the amendments to the constitutional provisions related to the economy (through the economic charter change). The Aquino regime will follow through next with the proposed Public-Private Partnership (PPP) law. AB



US two-faced engagement of China

(This is the third in the series of articles discussing the US National Security Strategy of the Obama government.)



Unlike its aggressiveness towards Russia, the US is two-faced in its engagement with China. On the one hand, the US persists in pushing economic cooperation with China; on the other hand, it relentlessly applies trade and military pressure.

In continuing to strengthen economic cooperation, the US seeks the unhampered entry of its monopoly capitalist investments and continue its collaboration with the big Chinese monopoly capitalists in exploiting cheap labor-power of Chinese workers.

On the other hand, the US is also pushing for the complete dismantling of Chinese state enterprises in order to eliminate their relative advantage in business and trade. At the same time, the US aims to prevent the further expansion of, and eventually reduce or seize, the markets controlled by the monopoly capitalists in China.

These two aspects of US engagement with China is reflected in the NSS. It states:

"The scope of our cooperation with China is unprecedented, even as we remain alert to China's military modernization and reject any role for intimidation in resolving territorial disputes."

Currently, "cooperation" is the dominant aspect in US engagement with China. The NSS states: "The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China. We seek to develop a constructive relationship with China that delivers benefits for

our two peoples and promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world."

China is considered as the second largest economy in the world after the US. It is a relatively new imperialist country. While its military strength is presently just one-seventh compared to the US, the US considers China a growing threat to its global hegemony. It states in the NSS that it will closely monitor the expanding Chinese presence in Asia.

According to Obama: "There is enormous trade, enormous business that's done between the United States and China. There are a whole range of issues on the international stage in which cooperation between the US and China are vital... Our message to China consistently... is we want to be a partner with you in upholding international law."

This June, the officials of the Obama government insist that China must be its partner "in framing a new system with definite rules in a fast changing world." Top officials of the US recently visited China. As US Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in China last May, US and China relations were described as "at a new historic

high." This month, the US is set to receive Chinese head of state Premier Xij Jinping.

While pushing for "cooperation" with China, the US is engaging in bellicose and antagonistic challenges. The US-declared "Asia pivot" is marked by the deployment of 60% of its foreign military forces to Asia. Under this "pivot", the US made sure that its military will have access to facilities from Australia to Japan. Also serving this objective is the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) signed with the Aquino regime that will pave the way for the re-establishment of US military bases in the Philippines.

Since 2011, the US has been vigorously promoting the concept of "freedom of navigation" to justify efforts to strengthen the presence of US warships in the South China Sea as an aggressive measure to surround China and ensure control of that trade route through which passes \$5 trillion worth of commodities passes through annually.

In the name of such "freedom," the US outrightly disregards Philippine sovereignty in its territorial waters in the South China Sea. In 2013, US warships made no less than 80 incursions and port calls within Philippine waters.

US fortification of its presence in the South China Sea has provoked China's counter-aggressive assertions of its power in said waters. Since 2013, China has made land reclamations in the middle of the sea that it now uses to assert the legitimacy of its naval presence in the area.

The US military outrightly challenged and provoked China last May when it flew its P8 Poseidon surveillance planes in the airspace above the territories being claimed by China. Earlier, the US flew Global Hawk drones over the Spratly Islands, which China brought down by jamming their GPS signals.

Such military measures are open provocations against China. China asserts that US military acts



increase the possibility of a "confrontation." Still, the US insists that it "will not take sides" over any territorial conflicts in the South China Sea.

In addition to the hostile statements made by the US against China are accusations that the Chinese government hacked US government servers in order to steal information. There are also US accusations of human rights violations in China, state manipulation of currencies to gain advantage in trade and others. From time to time, the US threatens to impose economic sanctions.

At the moment, these US statements are mere saber-rattling and are not set to immediately lead to armed confrontation. However, these conflicts will likely intensify further in the coming years amid continuing unresolved crisis of the global capitalist system and the increasing and intensifying assertion of interests by Chinese monopoly capitalists and their anti-US allied forces. **AB**

Activists mark anniversary of US military bases closure

LAST September 16, national-democratic groups led by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan launched a picket in front of the US embassy in Manila. The rallyists denounced continuing US military intervention and the scheme to reestablish US military bases in the country under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. The protest marked the 24th anniversary of the Senate's abrogation of the Military Bases Agreement and subsequent closure of US military bases in 1991.

The protests were also held in the light of new evidence of US troops' direct participation in the bungled Mamasapano operations by the police' Special Action Forces (SAF) last January. This month, a video surfaced showing that aside from the 44 SAF members, at least two foreigners suspected as US troops were among those who were killed in Mamasapano. The group Suara Bangsamoro had previously revealed a video showing a dead body of a uniformed police with features of a foreigner among police officers killed in the battlefield.

Prior to the picket, members of the League of Filipino Students and Anakbayan staged a lighting rally in front of the embassy. They hurled paint-bombs at the embassy seal and gates. **AB**