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Editorial

Expose the rotten 2016 elections

The forthcoming 2016 elections is no different from previous reactionary elections. It is essentially a political contest among the ruling classes to select who among them will wield the reins of state power, particularly that of Malacañang, the Senate and Congress, and thus be administrators of the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

The election campaign is a big carnival of political clowns. It generates a large and noisy show to draw the people's attention and provide them with fleeting entertainment. Politicians and parties show-off and issue promises left and right.

The reactionary ruling classes employ the elections to make it appear that the burdensome, oppressive and repressive state is democratic and participatory. It hides the fact that the entire state and the ruling political system are instruments of class rule under the control of the big bourgeois compradors and big landlords and US imperialist interests.

The rotten reactionary elections mirror the rotten ruling system. It twists and distorts the meaning of democracy and the people's democratic aspirations. In the reactionary elections, it is not true that the people's will prevails.

The entire electoral system favors, and is dominated by, the parties and politicians of the ruling classes who control vast wealth accumulated through exploitation, bureaucratic corruption or criminal activities--or from all of these. The reactionary elections in

the Philippines is ruled and controlled by the big bourgeois compradors, big landlords and their US imperialist master.

The rotten Philippine elections deteriorates further in attempts by the rival factions to

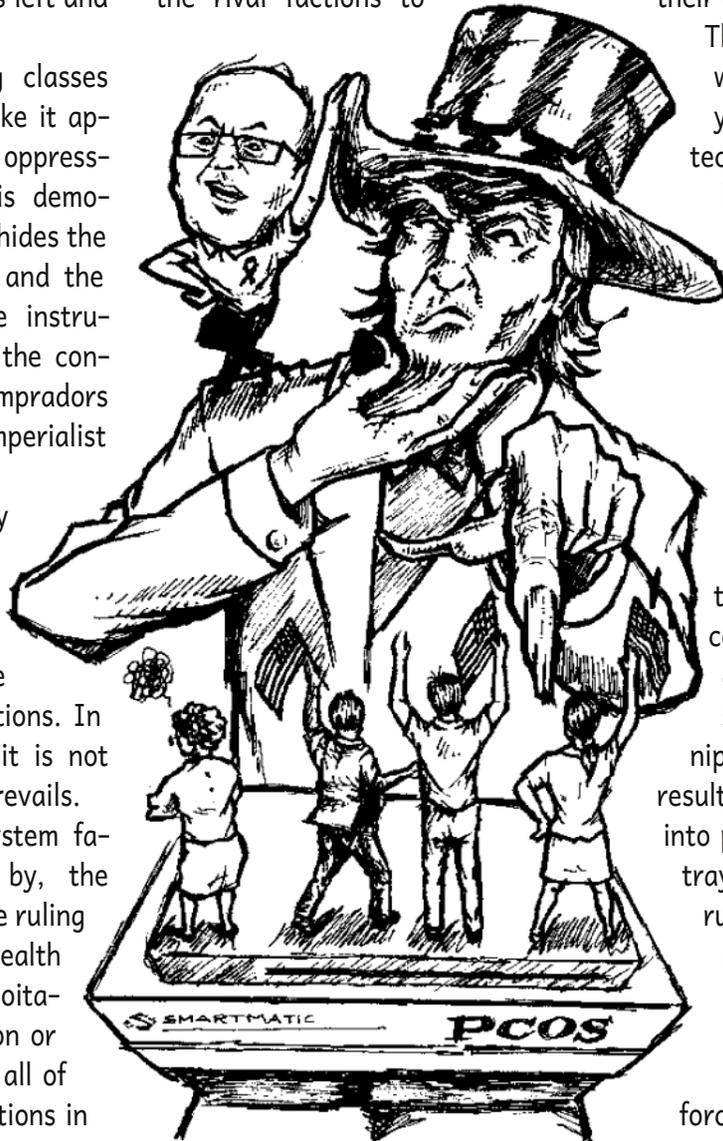
use dirty tactics to control and determine the outcome of the elections. They throw money around to buy commodified votes or forcibly steal using armed goons.

The reactionary Philippine elections has become more rotten in the use of computerized counting system controlled by private foreign companies. In using automated counting, the elections have become more undemocratic as it takes away from the people the power to count their votes.

The automated counting system was pushed by the US a few years ago. By controlling the technologies and companies behind these machines, the US can determine the very outcome of the elections. As such, the US has become more powerful and its puppet politicians more subservient.

US imperialists want to use the 2016 elections to put into power a new government that will perpetuate its counter-insurgency doctrine and program. The US had the same objectives when it manipulated public opinion and results of the 2010 elections to put into power Aquino whom they portrayed as "clean" and "anti-corruption" in order to make their utterly anti-people policies and repressive Oplan Bayanihan more palatable.

The national democratic forces must expose and repudiate



the elections as one big farce to deceive the people. They must take advantage of the elections to raise the people's awareness of the necessity to carry forward revolutionary struggle to smash the rotten ruling system and establish a new one under the democratic power of the people and leadership of the working class.

As in the past, the national democratic forces can participate in the elections to seat patriotic and progressive forces in parliament to gain additional advantages in advancing the democratic mass struggles.

The patriotic and democratic parties representing the interests of the people completely contradicts that of the reactionary politicians. They are the Left opposition in parliament that relentlessly uphold the interests and welfare of the toiling people.

They uphold the patriotic stand against foreign military intervention, advance the democratic struggles for genuine land reform and policies for national industrial-

ization, oppose neoliberal policies and uphold human rights and social justice.

The patriotic and democratic forces must utilize the election period to unite the broadest possible forces to isolate and resist the ruling Aquino faction at the national level, and the worst reactionaries at various levels.

The broad masses of the people and all forces must be mobilized in order to frustrate Aquino's attempts to perpetuate himself in power by putting into position those who will uphold his "straight path" and will allow him to elude culpability for his treachery to national freedom and violations of human rights and other crimes and sins against the people.

The broad united front must also be utilized in order to reach the broadest number of people and gain

maximum advantage for their parties to gain seats in the reactionary congress.

It is also important to utilize the election period to organize the widest ranks of the people, expand their mass organizations and consolidate them by vigorously carrying out the national democratic propaganda and study movement.

The NPA must ensure compliance with the policies of the people's democratic government on

the matter of the conduct of the campaign by politicians including the prohibition against carrying firearms and against bringing along armed soldiers, police and goons as their security force, and others. These aim to ensure order and protect the people's welfare. All parties and politicians must be required to apply for a permit from local revolutionary authorities in order to get their commitment to these policies and coordinate their activities.

The revolutionary forces must ensure that more people will be aroused and mobilized in the people's democratic revolution. They must ensure more rapid recruitment of new Red fighters among the broad masses who will be mobilized and aroused during the elections.

More importantly, the NPA must take advantage of the overstretched AFP and PNP units during the reactionary elections in order to launch more frequent tactical offensives. In line with this, they must undertake an all-out education and propaganda campaign, as well as ensure the welfare and interests of the people, particularly in territories under the supervision of the revolutionary authorities.



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Election 2016:

Fanfare and maneuvers by politicians

THE 2016 reactionary election has started. This past week, candidates have filed for the presidency and vice-presidency, senate, congress and positions of the local government.

Among the aspirants as candidates for president and vice-president are Manuel "Mar" Roxas and Leni Robredo of the Liberal Party (LP), Grace Poe and Francis "Chiz" Escudero who are supported by the Nationalist Party Coalition, Jejomar Binay and Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan of the United Nationalist Alliance, and Miriam Defensor-Santiago of the People's Reform Party along with Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos of the Nacionalista Party. Ending drawn-out speculation that he is running for president, Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte has instead opted to run again as mayor. In all, 130 candidates have filed their candidacy for president, while 19 applied for vice-president.

Fanfare for the reactionary campaign has also gone full blast. Although there is a supposed ban on campaigning, spot television and radio advertisements, posters and the like have come out left and right. Clearly, the elections are contests between the moneyed politicians and parties.

Parties under Makabayan

Most distinct among all candidates and parties contending in the 2016 elections is the Makabayan bloc. Makabayan is composed of progressive and national-democratic parties including Bayan Muna, Anakpawis Party, Kabataan Partylist, Gabriela Women's Party, Migrante Party, Sulong Katribu, Akap-Bata, Piston, Kalikasan and Aking Bicolnon, all of which represent various sectoral interests.

Among those who filed their certificate of candidacy to run for a seat in senate last October 12 is Bayan Muna Rep. Neri Colmenares and the Makabayan bloc. Some 4,000 supporters attended the Makabayan convention last September 30 held at the San Andres Sports Complex in Malate where Colmenares declared his intention to run. Senators Grace Poe, Francis Escudero and Mayor Joseph Estrada were in attendance and endorsed his candidacy.

LP readies widespread fraud machinery

Meanwhile, Kabataan Partylist Rep. Terry Ridon exposed the preparations of the ruling LP to campaign for the uncontested run of its standard-bearer Mar Roxas using its machinery to eliminate potential threats.

"Dirty tactics" are going to be employed to ensure a Roxas victory by all means and thus maintain political power, the platform of continuity for the "straight path." Ridon said the observation is based on the LP's manner of intimidating opponents and the repeated fears of poll fraud.

Ridon's contention was supported by Mayor Duterte who opted out of the presidential race due partly to a vicious smear campaign launched against him by the LP camp.

Duterte said that it was one of Roxas' spokespersons who first spread rumors that he has throat cancer. What is more worrying, Ridon said, is the potential "massive cheating" in next year's elections because of the Comelec's deal with Smartmatic-Total Information Management (TIM) Corp., involving the lease of 93,977 new machines for the upcoming national elections. Ridon dubbed the Optical Mark Reader (OMR) machines that the Comelec will lease as "Oh-Em-Mar" machines. **AB**

Apec in Manila:

Pomp for foreigners, a burden to the people

Amid the deteriorating crisis of the world capitalist system, the US-Aquino regime has extravagant plans for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leader's Meeting on November in Manila.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is set to deploy more than 2,500 traffic and emergency personnel. The government is rushing to finish the Ninoy Aquino International Airport elevated expressway, the streets and bridges and other infrastructures for the use of delegates to the APEC. Three

newly bought Bell-412 helicopters will be used to transport delegates.

Millions of public funds have been squandered in more than 70 different meetings conducted in Clark, Subic, Boracay, Cebu, Iloilo, Tagaytay, Laoag, Bataan, Manila and Makati since January before the grandiose APEC Economic

Leader's Meeting in November.

At the Senior Official's Meeting in Panay in May and September, P5 million was spent for the guests' accommodations. To secure Boracay and Iloilo City, 5,000 military and police forces were deployed. An AFP detachment was even set up at the airport. The anomalous P700-million Iloilo Convention Center was rushed for the APEC.

Contrary to the much-touted benefits for the Philippines, the

country will actually gain nothing from the APEC-driven "globalization" but will instead further foreign corporate plunder and worsen people's poverty.

Worsening Philippine economic state due to "globalization"

Local Philippine production has been steeply dropping since the 1980s when the World Bank-dictated structural adjustment programs gained momentum. Before this, the productive sectors of agriculture, manufacture, construction, mining and quarrying made up 60% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2000, GDP shares of these sectors dropped to 48% and further to 29% in 2010-2014.

The Philippine economy is now dominated by services and trade rather than production and this has resulted in a constantly high rate of unemployment and poverty. The employment growth rate before "globalization" rose from 2.7% in the 1960s to 4.1% in the 1970s. This slackened to 2.8% in the 1980s until it fell to only 2.3% in the 2010-2014 period. These last five years are the worst in generating new jobs in the country's history.

The Aquino regime boasts of a high GDP growth rate (7-8%) which is supposedly an indicator of prosperity. But alongside this are high rates of unemployment and a large number of workers looking for jobs outside the country. The people face unending poverty. This is in stark contrast to the overwhelming wealth of a few families and the gigantic profits raked in by a few local and foreign corporations.

In APEC meetings held in the Philippines since January, the regime's economic officials congratulated themselves in APEC's adoption of their proposals.

These proposals will be endorsed at the APEC Summit on November 17-19.

In the name of ASEAN in-

tegration, transparency and other slogans of elitist economists, different sectors of the Philippine economy are being further opened such as consumer finance, oil and gas, health services, electricity, consumer products, transportation and education which will supposedly yield some \$3.2-\$5.4 trillion yearly. They pray for crumbs from the capitalists in appealing for "inclusive growth" to include the Philippines. The farthest corners of the Philippine economy are being opened to foreign plunder.

Control of local businesses and cheap labor

The APEC Boracay Action Agenda last May and the Iloilo Initiative last September affirmed its goal of drawing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) into "globalization" so that they can supposedly participate in the regional and global market as part of the "global supply chain".

MSMEs comprise an estimated 97% of all registered businesses in the Philippines. It is a measure of the Philippine economy's backwardness that 60% of its labor force

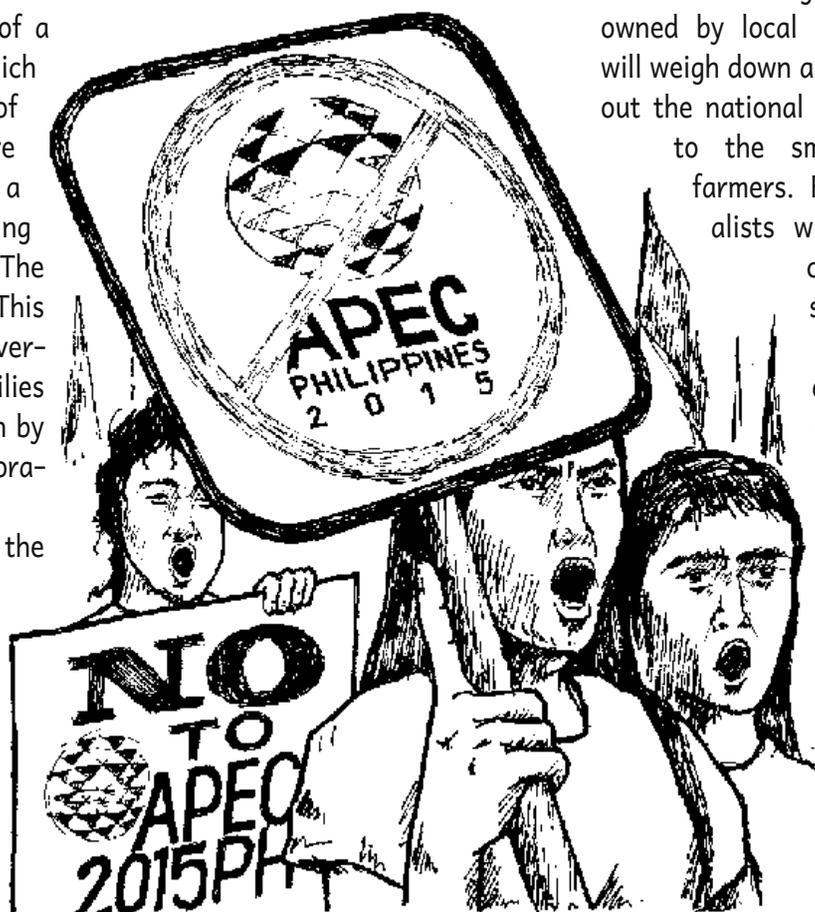
are employed in MSMEs and contribute more or less a third of the country's GDP.

On the surface, APEC seems to aim to improve small businesses. But because global production processes are dominated by big transnational corporations (TNC), APEC's plan will only turn MSMEs into TNC subcontractors or suppliers of raw or semi-manufactured products.

The plan to bind MSMEs to the "global supply chain" aims to heighten the foreign monopoly capitalists' exploitation of domestic cheap labor-force and agricultural, mineral and energy resources. Standards on the use of materials, water and fuel, as well as those on health and environment, are imposed on MSMEs as requirements for entry into the international market. Focus will be on automobile and automobile parts manufacture, pulp and paper, plastic, mass housing, copper and furniture. Efforts will be increased to include domestic rural communities.

The imposition of standards and requirements will increase TNC control of small manufactures, commerce and agricultural products owned by local businesses. These will weigh down and eventually wipe out the national bourgeoisie, down to the small traders and farmers. Foreign big capitalists will gain increased control of land and seas.

Independent development of local MSMEs will become even more impossible with the removal of active state support. State support through cheap credit and tax breaks, trade protection and export promotion, prefer-



ences in government procurement, obligatory technological transfer, and like measures used by the US, Japan, China and other industrial powers when they were strengthening themselves, and which they continue to employ at different levels.

Further privatization

In the 10-year Cebu Action Plan discussed last September, it was proposed that no further requirements will be imposed on foreign companies who want to participate in PPP programs after investing in PPP programs in other APEC countries. According to Asian Development Bank estimates, a total of \$800 billion annually is needed to build infrastructure in the region.

Last October, 27 chief executives of big energy corporations attended the APEC meeting to strengthen PPPs in APEC economies. Among the sectors to be covered by the PPP are the energy-water nexus, eco-tourism, regional standards for products and services, inventory and mapping of energy resources, and human resource training.

Renewable energy, such as water, solar and wind, is also marked for increased investments, which investors plan to double from 2010 to 2030. There are already 682 approved applications from interested foreign and local capitalists to set up power plants with a potential capacity of 13,600 megawatts.

Further liberalization of trade and importation

Last September, 21 APEC member-countries agreed to begin implementing the five-year Renewed APEC Agenda for Structural Reforms this coming year. This seeks to change government policies to ease economic transactions and remove the remaining regulations that delay the setting-up of businesses in the country.

This will supposedly encourage

competition on the so-called “three pillars”: more open and competitive markets, deeper participation by all segments of society including MSMEs, and social policies that promote the above mentioned objectives.

They aim for a 10% improvement in five priority areas: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, trading across borders, getting credit and enforcing contracts.

Farmers have long been complaining about the lack of government support for agricultural production and the plummeting prices of their products due to the influx of agricultural products from other countries. This will worsen with the plan to open up to further liberalization. For instance, corn imported from Argentina which should be levied with 35% to 50% tariff is sold cheaply because only 5% tariff is paid when it comes in through Vietnam, an APEC member.

Further extraction of marine resources

The High Level Policy Dialogue on Food Security and the Blue Economy in Iloilo last October discussed improving agribusiness purportedly for food security and inclusive growth, specially in the fisheries sector. But APEC measures will result into the opposite.

Under the amended Fish-

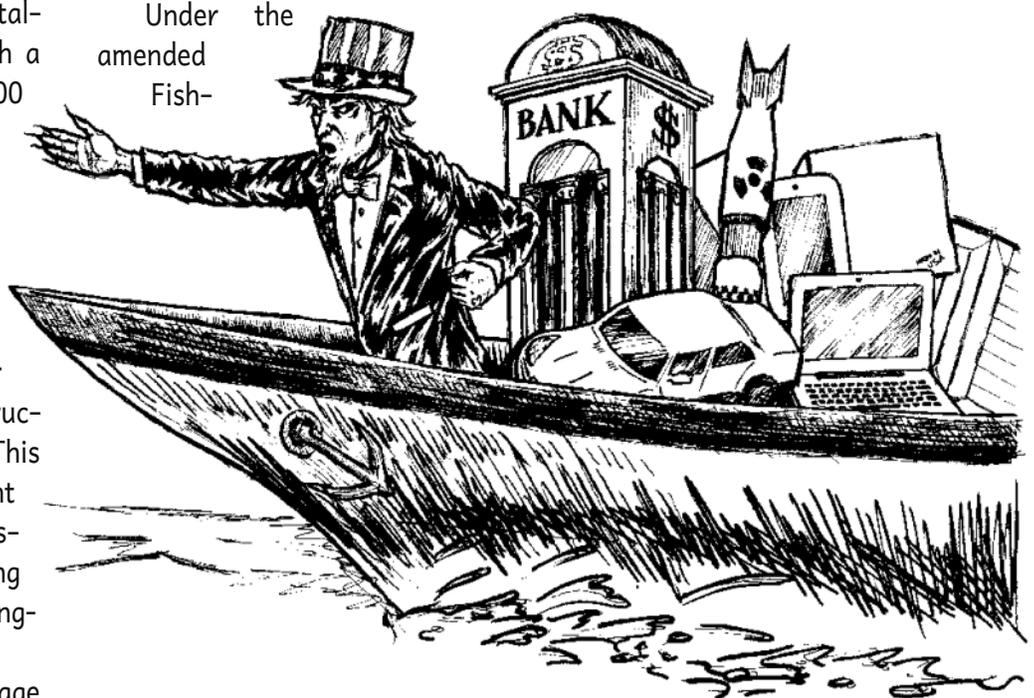
eries Code, only local and foreign big commercial fishers will benefit from the country’s fishing grounds and supply of fish.

Since 2012, a total of \$808.8 million worth of Philippine marine products have been procured by the European Union (EU), US, Japan and other developed countries. The country exports P8 billion worth of fish, seaweeds and other marine products yearly to the EU, while the local fish prices skyrocket.

The aim of the so-called “Blue Economy” is to promote the policy of import-dependent and export-oriented production while killing local production. This will result in the depletion of marine resources and increased poverty for 56 million Filipinos who rely on fish as the main source of protein.

Two-thirds of world fish production and 90% of aquaculture can be found in the Asia-Pacific region. Nine of ten biggest fish producers are APEC member-countries. At the same time, the consumption of seafood of countries in the APEC region is 65% higher than the average consumption in other parts of the world.

The US-Aquino regime wants to raise its income from marine products, which is currently far higher compared to forest or agricultural exports. AB



The US desires Africa and India

This is the fourth of a series of Ang Bayan articles discussing the US National Security Strategy.



While the US attends mainly to strengthening and expanding its power in Asia—confronting, colluding and clashing with China and Russia—it is also constantly eyeing other corners of the world. The NSS indicates how the US craves for the vast markets and wealth of Africa and India.

Expanding US investment and military force in Africa

The US believes that Africa is set to become a major economic center in the future. According to the NSS: "Africa is rising. Many countries in Africa are making steady progress in growing their economies, improving democratic governance and rule of law, and supporting human rights and basic freedoms."

In addition, "We will continue to support U.S. companies to deepen investment in what can be the world's next major center of global growth."

In 2013, US exports to Africa reached \$50.2 billion, which is 40% higher compared to 2009. In 2014, the Obama regime started its Doing Business in Africa Campaign. It allotted \$7 billion in order to encourage increasing investments and exports to Africa. Up to 75% of US investment in Africa is in the power sector.

The US is accelerating its investments to Africa in order to reduce China's advantage in investments and trade. China is fast expanding its investments in Africa which grew from \$10 billion in 2000 to \$165 billion by 2012, including a gigantic dam project in Ethiopia.

For its part, the Obama government is pushing its so-called Power Africa. This aims to invest as much as \$300 billion in the field of energy production by 2030 in different African countries. Through the US Agency for International Develop-

ment (USAID) and other government agencies, the US supports General Electric (GE) and other big companies to penetrate Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Tanzania. GE plans to invest up to \$2 billion in Africa by 2018.

Last June, US Pres. Barack Obama toured Tanzania, Senegal and South Africa in order to push further American capitalist penetration into Africa. In addition to the entry of power companies, companies such as Procter & Gamble, Colgate and Palmolive, Walmart, IBM, Oracle and Microsoft are now more aggressively expanding in Africa.

At the same time, the US is heightening its military presence in the continent. Obama asserts that US capital ventures in Africa is dependent on "security issues", meaning in US ability to maintain and employ military power to pro-

tect its monopoly capitalist economic interests.

"We are strengthening our security cooperation with African countries and institutions," declared the NSS.

US military operations in Africa are widespread. The US Africa Command (US AFRICOM) was established in 2007. In the past years, US AFRICOM military forces have been involved in various operations in no less than 49 of the 54 countries comprising Africa.

It is increasing the number of its military bases and other facilities. The biggest among these is the base in Djibouti where the second biggest squadron of drones is stationed. It also has a large base of drones in Niger and similar facilities in Seychelles Islands and in Ethiopia's Arba Minch Airport.

The US also has numerous smaller military facilities, many of which are not officially acknowledged.

The US military also has agreements with 29 countries in Africa to use international airports as fueling stations of US jet fighters and drones. It has ten large storage facilities in eight countries. In arrangements similar to the Philippine EDCA, there are also American troops stationed inside military camps in Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries.

In exchange



for agreeing to maintain US military bases and troop presence, various countries receive large amounts of aid from the US. The US provides "aid" equivalent to half the budget of Burundi, half of Ethiopia's budget, almost 40% of Rwanda's budget and 30% of the budget of Uganda, countries invariably known for widespread violation of human rights.

The US makes use of "counter-terrorism", response to epidemics, extending assistance to disaster victims and other pretext to carry out large-scale troop deployment in Africa. In 2014, the US used the height of the Ebola epidemic to justify its deployment of 4,000 soldiers in Liberia supposedly to help manage the medical situation.

This October, the US deployed 90 soldiers in Cameroon supposedly to fight terrorism. This is expected to increase soon to 300 troops. This year, the US also engaged in military exercises with troops from Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Tunisia.

US desire for India's arms market

During the early part of the decade, the US has been eyeing the large and expanding Indian arms market. The NSS declared: "We support the role of India as a provider of regional security" in the hope of expanding US share in this market.

India is the biggest importer of weapons and weapons system across the globe. Its total expenses in arms importation increased by 111% from 2004-2008 to 2009-2013. In 2009-2013, India had a 14% share of global arms sale, almost three times bigger than China and Pakistan, both the world's far second and third. In 2011-2015, it is estimated that India will have spent \$80 billion for arms purchases and production.

In the past, Russia was



Relentless war against the Lumad

Amid its relentless war against the Lumad, the US-Aquino regime is fanatically carrying out a campaign of deception under Oplan Bayanihan's "whole-of-nation initiative." At the same time, it is carrying out a campaign to distort the truth about the situation to systematically discredit the Lumads and their supporters.

Killings and unabated militarization

On September 28, motorcycle-riding men shot dead Lito Abion, 44, a Tagdumahan member and Banwaon activist, in Dona Flavia, San Luis, Agusan del Sur. Witnesses recognized the motorcycle as the same vehicle used during the killing of Necasio "Agnis" Precioso, Dalit's barangay captain, on December 2014. As with Precioso's case, Abion's killers are believed to be 29th IB troopers or elements of its paramilitary group.

In South Mindanao, soldiers blocked Lumad schoolteachers and staff in two separate incidents. On October 12, 67th IB elements prevented 30 officials and members of Mindanao Interfaith Services Foundation Inc. (MISFI) from participating in the blessing of their school in Sitio Kasunugan, Mahanog, Banganga in Davao Oriental. On September 28, the paramilitary group Alamara blocked around one hundred staff members, students and visitors who were on their way to celebrate Salugpongan Ta Ta'nu Igkanugon Learning Center Inc.'s 11th anniversary in Talaingod, Davao del Norte.

In Surigao del Sur, the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) unscrupulously offered relocation and housing to Manobo evacuees who came from Diatagon to prevent them from going back to their communities. The Lumads spurned the offer since they know that it is nothing but a ploy to throw them out of their lands and hand over the said lands to interested foreign mining companies.

On October 13, 165 Manobo Pulangions evacuated to Davao City to seek sanctuary inside the Haran Compound due to continued militarization in Kitaotao, Bukidnon.

Deception and distortion

Hand in hand with unrestrained violence, the military and various state agencies carry out sham programs and "services" in NPA "bailiwicks" identified as priority areas under Oplan Bayanihan.

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India's biggest arms supplier. Among India's imports in 2009-2013 were an aircraft carrier, 90 Su-30 combat planes and 27 Mig-29K. India also worked with Russia in producing the T-50 plane.

But starting 2011, the US has surpassed Russia as the biggest arms supplier in India. In 2011-2014, the US sold \$5 billion worth of arms to India, while Russia sold only \$3.9 million.

The US is also seeking to expand its part in India's plan to

spend \$250 billion in the coming decade for its military modernization by improving local production of arms systems.

In the past months, the US has offered India joint production of matériel and weapons system. Among these are drone parts, magnetic catapults for launching fighter planes in aircraft carriers, a new system of engine cooling, a new type of battery, the Javelin counter-tank missiles, MH-60 Romeo helicopters and 127 mm cannons. **AB**

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One of these areas is Compostela Valley, which the military tags as the “number one affected province” in the entire country. On October 15, the military, together with the local government and state agencies, launched the “National Serbisyo (Service) Caravan” in Sitio Mambusao, Barangay Ngan, Compostela under the command of Philippine Army chief Gen. Eduardo Año. The caravan was launched in the midst of intense militarization and gross human rights violations in the area.

Alongside deceptive social services, Año boasted of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program, a program designed to pressure Red fighters to surrender. The Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process, local government officials, DSWD and the Philippine National Police participated in the caravan.

The military and regime use individuals on the take and fake witnesses to concoct lies against the Lumads and their movement. In September, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) presented paramilitary elements posing as “datus” (traditional leaders) in a press conference to cover up the military’s crime in the Surigao del Sur



massacre. This October, the AFP presented to the senate more than 40 “datus” to fabricate stories regarding the NPA’s killing of Lumads who go against the revolutionary movement.

Dissent and resistance

In the face of intensifying state attacks, the Lumad and the people’s struggle continues to expand and strengthen. On October 13, Lumads and their supporters kicked off their journey to Manila to expose and condemn state terrorism in the island. About a thousand marchers arrived in Manila on October 18 and will remain in the capital until November 19 to bring their protest to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting.

Since the call to #StopLumadKillings trended worldwide, human rights organizations from 21 countries have formally asked the US-Aquino regime to investigate the killings. Organizations based in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, South Africa, Switzerland and United Kingdom have condemned the killings.

AB

Harassment and militarization in Bohol, Samar

AN INTERNATIONAL fact-finding mission recently exposed the military and the local government’s harassment of peasants in San Vicente, Bohol. Elements of the 802nd Infantry Brigade have been conducting military operations in barrios where members of Hugpong sa Mag-uumang Bol-anon (Humabol or Bol-anon Peasant Unity) reside.

One of the military’s targets is Humabol’s rice mill in San Vicente, Trinidad which serves peasants in 30 surrounding barrios. Since June, the military has tried various tactics to close the rice mill, including shutting down its power. Soldiers even put up a detachment on the peasants’ lands near the rice mill with the help of the province’s governor Edgar Chatto.

The fact-finding mission condemned Gov. Chatto’s role in the militarization and attacks against the peasants and their rice mill. Anakpawis Rep. Fernando Hicap, a mission delegate, likened the attacks to the AFP attacks on Lumad schools in different parts of Mindanao. He pointed out the similarities of the two as being part of Oplan Bayanihan.

A localized version of Oplan Bayanihan, dubbed Countrywide Development Program-Purok Power

Movement (CPD-PPM) is now in effect in Bohol. While Humabol barrios are being militarized, Chatto offers its members free livestock, *palay* and other seeds in exchange for their withdrawal from Humabol activities.

Aside from disrupting Humabol, Chatto also forbids young people from joining progressive organizations and recruits them instead to the New Guardians for Freedom and Democracy, a paramilitary group run by the AFP.

“Gov. Chatto’s CDP-PPM is modeled after the “whole-of-nation initiative,” where agencies and government forces conspire against progressive organizations. The government has not only failed to provide services to the peasants, it is now attacking victories won by their mass movement,” Hicap said.

The fact-finding mission was

launched in September 20-25 by the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Philippine Peasant Movement) and Asian Peasant Council. Participating in the activity were 40 peasants and their supporters from Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, militarization is also intensifying in Barangay Mabini, Basey, Samar as the second anniversary of the Yolanda tragedy approaches. On October 10, Leni Sabaniano, Sitio Burabod’s captain, exposed on the radio the encampment of their school and community by elements of the 87th IB. Because of this, a certain Lt. Col. George Domingo from the 87th IB threatened her and other barrio residents, telling her to stop revealing the military’s occupation of their barrio. Domingo was documented telling the residents, whom he labeled as “NPA supporters,” to stop calling up radio programs. He even implicated human rights groups like Karapatan, which he labeled as a member of the National Democratic Front.

AB

US doctrine dictates civilians are combatant

STATE propaganda deliberately blurs the difference between civilians and combatants in the drive to portray targeted Lumads and other civilians as "NPA members." They point out that supporters of one side can be military targets and thus killed since they can carry out tasks that directly serve the armed forces, such as giving information, resources and sanctuary.

Erasing the distinction between civilians and combatants to justify attacks on whole communities and the killing of militant mass leaders is not new. Such categorization has long been used and taught by the US and is now formally a declared doctrine in the proposed Laws of War Manual released last June by the US Department of Defense. Since 2001, the US military has used the categories of "lawful" and "unlawful" combatants to justify the arrest and detention of numerous civilians in its "war against terrorism."

In the proposed Laws of War, the US invented the new categories of "privileged" and "unprivileged" combatants to include entire peoples involved in a civil war and conflicts involving the state and non-state actors. The definition includes even protected individuals with distinct roles in the armed conflict, such as journalists, church people and medical personnel. This overturns Geneva Convention standards and other ex-

isting laws of war that protect civilian rights in the middle of armed conflicts by clearly distinguishing them from armed combatants.

Under this doctrine, the Aquino regime's military and security officials, together with its paid hacks in the academe and media, twist events to discredit protesting Lumads and the national-democratic movement. They project that the attacks against Lumads are justified since they allow the "hard Left", which "has its own agenda" distinct from their interests, to "exploit" them.

The Lumads who are organized and who systematically condemn the military and the state are "NPA in Lumad-clothing." The facilities and services within their territories all "serve" or are being "run by the NPA," including their schools, farms, cooperatives and other social services collectively run by the community. The military and state civilian agencies conspire to destroy, close or take over these facilities. **AB**

Obama provocations in South China Sea

THE US is outrightly provoking China when the US Navy announced last week its plan to sail the USS Kidd, a US destroyer warship, to the 12-mile territory surrounding China's man-made island in the South China Sea to supposedly "challenge the limits of freedom of navigation".

The Aquino regime again showed lack of self-respect when it immediately supported the US plan, even if this will, in fact, violate the territory being claimed by the Philippines. Malacañang said, "it is the right of the United States to use the freedom of navigation in the Philippine Sea and South China Sea."

The US is making it appear that the plan is part of its "freedom of navigation operations." In reality, this is part of questioning the UNCLOS and challenging the rights of countries under it. The US claim of increasing Chinese threats to freedom of navigation is a big lie considering the fact that there have been no cases thus far of any ship prevented from plying the trade route where \$5.3 trillion worth of commodities pass through annually.

The US' real objective is to assert its limitless right to launch operations even within the territorial waters of other countries. China immediately condemned the US Navy plan saying it is ready to "meet with headblows" any foreign force that "will violation China sovereignty." **AB**

State hounds 69 Cagayan Valley activists

TRUMPED-UP criminal charges were filed against 69 leaders of the national-democratic movement and progressive church this October. Charges of kidnapping of indigenous peoples were filed against 20 of them. The same charges were filed against activists in Davao City and General Santos City.

Among those charged are Isabelo Adviento, Kagimungan president and Anakpawis nominee; Femie Galapon, National Union of Students in the Philippines-Cagayan Valley chairperson; Agnes Mesina, Save the Valley and Rural Missionaries of the Philippines coordinator; Randy Malayao, Bayan convenor and Bayan Muna vice-president for Luzon; and Romella Liguigan, Karapatan-Cagayan Valley and Gabriela Women's Party coordinator.

Meanwhile, Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment denounced state surveillance and harassment of its national coordinator Clemente Bautista. According to the group, motorcycle-riding men tailed Bautista from his office in Quezon City all the way to Makati City on October 13. Prior to this, Kalikasan members noticed strange men loitering near their office.

Bukal, a local environment and anti-mining organization based in Lobo, Batangas, also reported intensified surveillance of its members. About 200 soldiers were deployed in Lobo barangays after residents successfully opposed the entry of Egerton Gold Philippines. Air Force troopers went from house to house to discredit Bukal.

In Zamboanga, military agents broke into Bishop Nercua Ablon's office in Tubod, Lanao del Norte last October 7. The bishop chairs Karapatan-Western Mindanao. The culprits stole his computer and left threatening messages. The Iglesia Filipina Independiente condemned the threats and harassment disguised as burglary. **AB**



13 AFP casualties in NPA military actions

NPA (New People's Army) military actions from September 13 to October 16 in North Central Mindanano and Southern Tagalog resulted in 10 soldiers, two bandits and a CAFGU element killed. More than 11 soldiers were wounded.

October 16. Two soldiers were killed after a unit of NPA-Batangas (Eduardo Dagli Command) ambushed at around 6:20 p.m. in Barangay Calantas, Calaca, Batangas. Pfc. Jay Lozano and Pfc. Ferrie John Gabica of the 16th IB, a military unit notorious for its killings and human rights violations when it was under the command of the butcher Gen. Jovito Palparan. The latest of its crimes is the massacre of three civilians in Paquibato last July.

September 29. The NPA-Eastern Misamis Oriental-North Eastern Subregional Command foiled an attempt by combined forces of the 58th IB and CAFGU to overrun a

temporary NPA encampment in Purok 2, Balahan, Mat-i, Claveria, Misamis Oriental. A CAFGU element died and four soldiers were wounded.

September 22. A team under the NPA-Mt. Kitanglad Subregional Command killed a soldier and wounded three troopers from the 1st Special Forces Battalion in a harassment operation in Lantapan, Bukidnon.

September 13. At around 8 a.m., two members of the Licanay criminal ban-



dit group fired at a team of the NPA-Mt. Kitanglad Subregional Operational Command in a forested area of Sitio Tandacul, Barangay Lilingayon, Valencia City. The Red fighters were able to return fire and shot dead the two bandits.

The Licanay group is being used by the AFP to promote criminal activities among Lumads by arming them. The 4th ID used the incident to spin a story of NPA abuse on Lumads as a desperate effort to cover up their liabilities in the massacre of five Lumads in Pangantuncan, Bukidnon last August 18.

Ang Bayan has reported in its last issue the NPA arrest of Sgt. Adriano Dela Peña Bengil last September 19 and the ambush on September 20 in Mahagsay, Agusan del Sur that killed two soldiers of 26th IB. The harassment operation in San Luis, Agusan del Sur where five soldiers were killed has been reported in the September 21 issue. **AB**

Groups observe Laude slay's first anniversary

VARIOUS groups observed the first anniversary of the Jennifer Laude slay last October 11. Laude, a Filipina transgender, was found dead at the Celzone Hotel in Olongapo City after she was brought there by US Marine Joseph Scott Pemberton. Laude was severely mauled and tortured before she was killed.

In commemoration, various groups launched mass actions last October 9-11 in Metro Manila. Gabriela led various groups in a candle lighting ceremony in University of the Philippines-Diliman, Quezon City last October 9, and marched to the US embassy the next day. The series of activities culminated in a march dubbed "Vaklash" in Makati City. This was led by Bahaghari, an alliance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) groups.

Abroad, the BAYAN USA North East Queer Caucus together with GABRIELA New York and TransJustice of the Audre Lorde Project led a vigil and march at Roosevelt Avenue in Woodside, Queens on October 11. Among those who participated were Anakbayan New York, Anakbayan New Jersey, New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, Ayotzinapa NYC, and Miss LGBT Philippines-USA Chelle Lhuillier of TransPinay.

Aside from their common call to incarcerate Pemberton in the Philippines, these various groups also called for the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), which brought US troops like Pemberton to the Philippines. Because of the VFA, Pemberton remained in the custody of the US in a facility within Camp Aguinaldo although he had already been arrested and is undergoing trial. Pemberton was part of the Philippine-US Bilateral Exercises (Phiblex) in Olongapo City in 2014 and was engaged in rest and recreation when he committed the crime.

Meanwhile, this year's Phiblex allowed the return of 650 US troops of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade and 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Exercises were held last September 21 to October 9 in Palawan, Zambales and Cavite.

In the latest news, the Bureau of Immigration on October 20 ordered Pemberton's deportation for being an undesirable alien and banned him from returning to the country. The Laude counsel asserted that if Pemberton is found guilty, he must first serve his sentence in the Philippines before being deported. **AB**

US bombs hospital in Afghanistan

The bombing of a hospital run by Doctors without Borders (DWB) in Kunduz, Afghanistan by US forces during the early hours of October 3 earned worldwide condemnation. No less than 22 people died, including 12 medical personnel, while 37 were severely wounded.

A large number of people and institutions, including several United Nations agencies, consider the indiscriminate bombing as a war crime wherein the US should be held responsible.

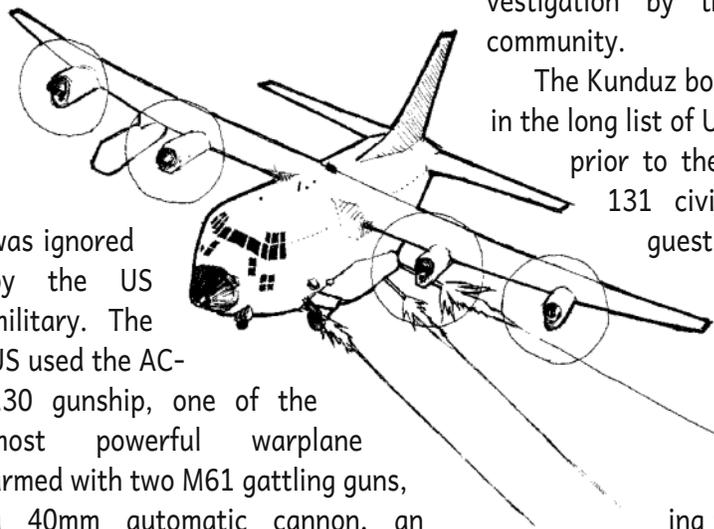
The US deliberately targeted the hospital, despite claims that the bombing was a “mistake.” The hospital was repeatedly bombed for about half an hour, despite desperate pleas from doctors and administrators to Afghan authorities and their military contacts in the US. The DWB had previously forwarded the hospital’s GPS coordinates to the US government, and again when they were under attack, but this

was ignored by the US military. The US used the AC-130 gunship, one of the most powerful warplane armed with two M61 gattling guns, a 40mm automatic cannon, an M102 howitzer and two bombs.

At one point, the US and Afghan government claimed that the Taliban was using the hospital as a command base to justify the

bombing. Later, the US promised to investigate the incident but the DWB is not putting much hope on the process. Instead, the organization called for an independent investigation by the international community.

The Kunduz bombing is only one in the long list of US crimes. A week prior to the incident, about 131 civilians who were guests at a wedding were killed by US-instigated airstrikes conducted by Saudi Arabia forces. According to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, US drones have launched 83 attacks from the start of the year to September, killing up to 700 civilians.



ILPS blames US and NATO for refugee crisis

LAST August, the public was shocked with the miserable conditions of millions of refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Asia when a photo of a drowned two-year old Syrian refugee which authorities found on Turkey’s shores appeared in social media. The child fell aboard the boat he and his family were travelling in while crossing the Mediterranean Sea. They are among the millions who have fled Syria and are secretly entering European and Middle East countries.

According to reports, more than 10 million or 45% of Syria’s population have been displaced from their communities. More than six million remained within its borders, while four million have left the country. Meanwhile, thousands of refugees from Libya are crossing the Mediterranean Sea. Aside from Libyans are refugees from African countries, such as Senegal, Nigeria and Eritrea. There are also refugees coming from Pakistan and Bangladesh. In August, about 2,643 refugees have died while crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

The International League of People’s Struggles con-

demns the US and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in their role in the widespread evacuation of Syrians and other peoples in the Middle East to neighboring countries and Europe. According to the ILPS, there are two reasons why so many are fleeing Syria today.

First is the “relentless imperialist plunder in the Middle East...which displaces people from their lands, disrupts their livelihoods, and forces them to migrate within the region and to Europe for their economic survival.” Second are the “wars of aggression unleashed by the US and its NATO allies, and counterrevolutionary wars and jihadist operations instigated by the US, UK and the Zionists in these same regions, overthrowing or disrupting state systems notably in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan...”

Peoples who are forced to leave their countries due to imperialist wars are refugees and not migrants, as European and Middle East countries claim in order to bar them from entering their borders.