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EDITORIAL

## **A NEW REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE LOOMS**

What was foreseen by many quarters last July is now coming true. Only three months after the destructive earthquake of July 16, a powerful political earthquake is shaking the very foundations of the tottering house of the US-Aquino regime.

For the past months, the economy has reeled from one severe shock after another, sending the Aquino regime on a rapid downslide and together with it, the entire system of US and comprador-landlord rule.

The massive devastation wrought by the July earthquake was immediately followed by the economic dislocations spawned by the Persian Gulf crisis. Both have combined with the equally ruinous effects of the "economic reform package" agreed on with the IMF-WB last June 22. All this is pushing the economic and financial crisis to a new level of intensity.

The deficits in the balance of trade, balance of payments and national budget, and the levels of foreign and domestic debts and debt service are unprecedented. Inflation is raging. Wage and salary increases are being left way behind by the spiralling prices of commodities. The unemployment rate continues to rise. Impoverishment is growing more severe. The sense of frustration and despair is spreading, at the same time that the people's rage and resistance are breaking out.

As the regime grows ever more desperate, it clings more tightly to US imperialism and becomes more slavish in following the agenda of this foreign power in the country: the imposition of IMF-WB policies, the retention of US military bases in the country and the relentless pursuit of total war. All these -- in addition to the problems created by its own corruption and incompetence -- fuel the increasing instability of the regime.

It is more and more isolated from the people. Government policies are confused and contradictory, and more and bigger blunders are committed. Disarray and internal rifts plague the Aquino coalition. And the regime becomes more vulnerable to new attacks from militarist rebels and political rivals. After the failed coup d'etat of December 1989, there has been a steady erosion of confidence in the Aquino regime among the middle classes and circles of the ruling classes. Needless to say, the masses have lost all hope in the government and are boiling with anger.

Since July, the "legitimacy" of the regime has itself been crumbling. Its disinterest and inability in solving the problems of the nation have been sharply denounced. There is an ever-louder clamor for Aquino to step down or for the regime to be replaced.

It is not only the survival of Aquino or her regime that is at

stake but that of the whole ruling system. More than ever, the issues that are most prominent, at the top of the national agenda, and directly linked to the everyday problems of the broad masses are those of imperialist domination over the country, feudalism in the countryside, and the puppet and elitist rule of the present government. This kind of popular consciousness is what extremely alarms all sections of the ruling classes, particularly US imperialism.

But they are hard-pressed in finding an immediate solution to the crisis of the reactionary ruling system because of the depths of the economic and political crisis and the intensity of contradictions among the reactionaries themselves. Even as the Aquino regime swiftly loses initiative, there is not a single faction in or out of the Aquino coalition which has an acceptable agenda and sufficient strength to forge a new consensus among the ruling elite and secure the blessings of US imperialism.

Till now, every attempt to unify the anti-Aquino forces is stymied by the conflicting interests and ambitions of their leaders. Militarist rebels pose a big threat to the regime but their capability to launch a new and successful coup d'etat is seriously in doubt.

In our previous analysis, the fascist solution was considered as the most possible scenario. Martial law or emergency rule could be imposed by the Aquino-Ramos faction, or a coup d'etat could be launched and a military-civilian junta installed by a coalition of anti-Aquino factions or a new combination of factions from both camps. As the days pass, it is becoming clear that this possibility is anchored on either or both of these conditions: first, mass discontent and struggle goes in the direction of a revolutionary upsurge, and second, the violent infighting among the reactionaries intensifies.

So long as these two do not occur, the US can manage to prop up the Aquino regime until 1992 or, with the help of anti-Aquino factions, it can maneuver for the holding of early presidential or national elections. As much as possible, the US and most of the reactionaries aim for a constitutional solution and orderly transition. This has been the direction of US policy in many Third World countries after its bitter experiences in supporting fascist dictatorships.

They are greatly concerned that a fascist solution may lead to the heightening of the political crisis because of the deep divisions within the fascist military and the massive and widespread resistance from the people that will surely arise. But there is no certainty either that the crisis will ebb in the wake of presidential or national elections. The elections could even aggravate the contradictions at the root of the present crisis.

In any of the three scenarios (fascist reimposition, early

elections or the regime muddling through until 1992), a tremendous and rare opportunity has been opened for the people to advance the revolutionary struggle for national independence and democracy. While the reactionaries are in turmoil, anti-imperialist and democratic forces are moving towards a new and broader unity -- from the toiling masses whom the regime has abandoned from the very beginning, to the middle classes now able to see through the illusions of democracy being exploited by Aquino, to elements and leaders from the upper classes of society and from traditional institutions who have come to understand and advocate patriotic and democratic demands, to the very ranks of the reactionary armed forces where the nationalist spirit is emerging and being invigorated.

Conditions are becoming ripe for a new revolutionary upsurge. It is the duty of all revolutionaries to develop the situation further and muster the mightiest force of the people to push the struggle for national independence and democracy to greater heights.

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#### TOTAL WAR IN BICOL: COMING TO A DEAD END

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*(The following article is adapted from a document prepared by the regional Party committee in Bicol. -- Editor)*

In the Bicol region can be found some of the wide and consolidated guerilla fronts and bases of the revolutionary movement -- the fruit of two decades of resolute, persevering and heroic struggles of the people, the New People's Army and the Communist Party. Numerous tests and trials have tempered the revolutionary forces and people in Bicol. The reactionary state has attempted several times to crush the revolutionary movement from its inception and all throughout its growth, through a brutal counter-insurgency campaign in the early years of martial rule and Oplan Cadena de Amor in the 80s. None succeeded in stemming the advance of the revolution.

Taking up the reins from its fascist predecessor, the US-Aquino regime has tried to decisively defeat the revolutionary struggle of the people in Bicol since 1987. Oplan Lambat Bitag is the name of the regime's counter-revolutionary total war in the region.

Tens of thousands of reactionary troops have been positioned throughout the region -- to establish and maintain control over large territories and populations adjacent to or within the revolutionary bases and zones, or to guard strategic places such as chokepoints or bottlenecks.

\* The 201st Brigade of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry

Division straddles three provinces in the region. Its 1st IB covers the first and second districts of Camarines Sur while its 2nd IB is deployed in the third and fourth districts. The 22nd IB takes charge of the whole of Camarines Norte and some barrios of Camarines Sur in the Camarines Norte-Quezon boundary.

\* Scout Rangers, estimated at not less than company-strength and possibly battalion-strength, are camped in Villahermoso, Daraga, Albay. Part of the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion, they actively participated in the past two coup attempts and have been temporarily "frozen."

\* The RECOM 5 directly controls a battalion of the Regional Strike Force (RSF), which is made up of 500 troops, many of them belonging to the PC and some to the INP Field Forces. It is estimated that 70 percent of the RSF are RAM sympathizers.

\* Naval District III of the Philippine Navy has its base and headquarters in Legazpi City.

\* The Philippine Air Force maintains a radar station in Panganiban, Camarines Norte, which is guarded by a company of soldiers.

\* Also stationed in Bicol are some units of the 564th Engineering Construction Battalion, which is the service battalion of the 2nd ID-PA assigned to southern Luzon.

\* The US-Aquino regime plans to set up CAFGU companies with 80 members each in every town in Bicol. Until now, however, this target is far from being reached. Only nine CAFGU companies under the command of the PA were formed during the first half of 1989: two in Camarines Norte, four in Camarines Sur and three in Albay. The existing CAFGU units are plagued by low morale and lack of funds.

The 1st Brigade of the PA and the PC-INP each have their own areas of responsibility in the region. The PC-INP is in charge of Albay and Sorsogon while the PA brigade covers Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte.

Philippine Army troops guard the bottlenecks or chokepoints of the Bicol peninsula. The Scout Rangers are concentrated in the Albay-Sorsogon border area (Prieto Diaz, Danlog in Sorsogon and Villahermoso in Daraga, Albay). Detachments are scattered throughout the area around Danlog.

At the Pasacao-Pamplona boundary are the forces of the 1st IB-PA under Maj. Padilla. The chokepoint at Tinambac and Calabanga is under the control of the 1st Brigade HQ. The 49th IB-PA blocks the passageway at Guinayangan, Quezon.

#### Three components of the total war

In a Peace and Order Council Conference in Legazpi City, Defense Undersecretary Eduardo Ermita identified the three important components of the Aquino regime's counter-insurgency program: "development," security and reconciliation.

The "development program" has two aspects.

The first consists of livelihood projects within the framework of the semicolonial, feudal and semifeudal system of exploitation. These are designed to achieve a slight improvement in the economic situation of the poorest sections of the populace in order to defuse their spirit of rebellion while not changing in any way the prevailing system of exploitation.

The long-term objective of the "development" plan is to transform the present system of agriculture to corporate or capitalist farming. Such type of agricultural development is exemplified by the projects of Luis Villafuerte, which aim to set up agribusiness corporations patterned after the kibbutz of Israel.

The "development" program also serves as direct support to military plans and operations. Economic projects are established in areas where SOT operations of the AFP are being launched and in those identified as mass bases of the revolutionary movement. In Masbate, agribusiness projects are being set up in "critical" areas suspected to be strongholds of the revolutionary forces.

Such projects can be an integral part of the SOT operation itself. "Economic projects" come in when the SOT has reached the stage of consolidation and development. They also play a part in the rehabilitation of rebel surrenderees by providing them with means of livelihood.

The machinery responsible for formulating and coordinating the "development program" in the region is the Regional Development Council (RDC) with the NEDA at the core. The RDC sees to it that there is tight linkage between the "development program" and the direction of the AFP's military operations.

The RDC takes charge of the National Development Program in Sorsogon and the integrated area development project in Caramoan. The Sorsogon project is funded by the Asian Development Bank through Juan Frivaldo and Raul Lee while the Caramoan project is funded by the Philippine Aid Plan.

The RDC is under the Coordinating Cabinet Body (CCB) of the Office of the President, which manages "development projects" in various regions. The CCB seeks to insure that the Cabinet effectively implements the different "development projects."

#### Reconciliation program

The reconciliation program is the second component of the counter-insurgency program in Bicol. It aims to entice the revolutionary forces to lay down their arms and surrender to the US-Aquino regime and takes care of the rehabilitation of rebel surrenderees.

An inter-agency effort of the National Reconciliation Development Council (NRDC), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and Department of Local Government and Community Development (DLGCD), this program has four aspects:

- \* BARIL (Bring a Rifle and Improve Your Livelihood), which provides any rebel who surrenders his firearm with a cash incentive to be used as capital for business (the program has become a big source of graft for military and government officials);

- \* "barangay development program," which has objectives similar to the "development program";

- \* amnesty program, which is extended to rebel surrenderees who have not committed grievous crimes;

- \* "community development service," which coordinates the services of various government agencies in order to help the community or barrio of the surrenderees.

The reconciliation program has three stages.

First, propaganda and information campaigns and negotiations are undertaken to convince the rebels to surrender. Broadcasts are made on radio and leaflets are distributed to inform the rebels on how they can surrender and the incentives available to them. The campaign is mainly implemented by the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) and the public information sections of different government offices and military commands.

After laying down their arms, surrenderees are processed in "bayanihan" centers supervised by the DSWD. While they are in the custody of the DSWD, the necessary documentation and "confessions" are taken.

Then, the rebel returnees are reintegrated into society through a rehabilitation program. They are sent to prepared resettlement areas, of which there are three in the region -- in Pangasinan, Camarines Norte; in Bula and Tigaon, Camarines Sur; and in Legazpi City.

Citing the large numbers of "rebels" who have opted to surrender, the Aquino regime claims that the reconciliation program has been "highly successful." In reality, many of the "surrenderees" are either fake or "ghost" surrenderees. Usually, leaders and bodyguards of the bureaucrat-capitalists are used to pose as

"rebels" or politicians simply list down names of non-existent persons in order to get hold of the program's funds.

### Security program

Under the security component of the counter-insurgency program, Special Operations Teams (SOTs) under the PA are being spread out through the countryside. The SOT is based on the concept that the key to victory is winning the trust and support of the masses. The operation has four stages: clearing, holding, consolidation and development.

The clearing stage is marked by large-scale military operations to drive out the armed revolutionary forces from the areas or force them to shift their bases deeper into the interior. Knowing that the tactic of the NPA is to take evasive action and bide time until the bulk of enemy forces move out, the AFP troops engage in deceptive maneuvers to lead the NPA into believing that their big formations are digging in.

In reality, only special operations teams are left behind to undertake the second stage of the operation. There are three major activities during the holding phase. First, civilian-military operations (CMO) are launched, wherein the SOT members integrate and live with the masses. In the process, they do SI-intel work, which consists of gathering information on the immediate problems of the community, the barriofolks' negative observations or complaints about the NPA, and the revolutionary movement's support network and personnel in the area. Based on the findings in SI-intel work, psy-war operations are conducted to undermine the influence and prestige of the revolutionary movement.

During the consolidation stage, those who have been convinced or coerced into turning against the revolutionary movement are recruited into such formations as the CAFGU, Bantay Bayan, or cells in the spy network, and enlisted to support the operations of the local government units. It is also at this time that "development programs" are set up. At the stage of "development," the organizations and programs formed during the preceding stage are supposed to be functioning well and producing benefits for the people. The hidden agenda during this final phase is the total defeat of the revolutionary forces who, by this time, should have been forced into such a narrow area that they can easily be encircled and destroyed by AFP forces.

At present, most of the SOTs are deployed in Camarines Sur. They are at the consolidation stage in the towns of Pasacao, Pamplona, San Fernando, Minalabac, Magarao, Bula, Sipocot and Libmanan; at the holding stage in Calabanga, Tinambac and Siruma; and at the clearing stage in Goa, Lagonoy, Sangay, Presentacion and Iriga.

In Albay, the SOTs are at the consolidation stage in the towns of Libon, Oas, Polangui, Tabaco, Ligao, Malinao and Tiwi. They have



also reached this phase in the environs of Basud and Mercedes in Camarines Norte. On the island of Burias, they are at the holding stage.

At the same time, CAFGUs are being formed in the provinces of Sorsogon and Masbate. Groups of Alsa Masa and Bantay Bayan are being set up around PA detachments.

In an official report from former RECOM commander Brig. Gen. Filart, the whole of Bicol has been classified as at the stage of consolidation.

The SOTs are part of the strategy of gradual constriction. Such a strategy calls for decisive engagements with the revolutionary forces through simultaneous and prolonged campaigns on a nationwide scale. The target is to decisively crush the insurgency within three years.

To aggressively push forward the militar campaign in Bicol, the AFP resorts to heavy use of mortar and helicopter gunships as support for mobile troops. Helicopters, armed personnel carriers (APCs) and trucks are also widely used in their maneuvers. Enemy soldiers actively conduct night actions and commando-style operations. The enemy's spy networks in the barrios are being equipped with radios.

The regime's counter-insurgency program has gained a certain level of momentum but it does not have the capability to advance beyond this point because of the active defense by the revolutionary forces and the effects of the December 1989 failed coup d'etat. The SOTs are unable to reach the stage of "development" anywhere in the Bicol region.

#### Counter-tactics of the revolutionary movement

The counter-tactics and moves of the revolutionary movement are directed against all the components of the regime's counter-insurgency program. Specific measures have been designed to match the clearing, holding, consolidation and development stages of the enemy.

Annihilative and attritive forms of tactical offensives by the NPA in all the stages mentioned play a major role.

Annihilative operations, such as ambushes and raids, are aimed at wiping out enemy formations and capturing high-powered weapons. On the other hand, attritive operations are aimed at inflicting any kind of damage to the reactionary troops, even if whole enemy formations are not wiped out in a single blow. Examples of the latter are sniping, harassment, setting up checkpoints, and lobbing grenades into detachments and military camps.

When the enemy is at the clearing stage, the revolutionary forces

must use every means to throw kinks into the ongoing operations of the AFP. Their civil-military operations must be frustrated or at the very least, disturbed. It is important at this early stage to actively deal blows to the enemy so that at the next stage, they cannot operate without fear of damage from the NPA even as the revolutionary masses are gaining confidence.

At the holding stage, moves should be taken to reduce enemy control over the minds and movements of the masses in areas where the revolutionary movement is active in order to pin down the enemy in a few selected places. Political struggles should be heightened to expose military abuses while actions to harass or wipe out parts of the enemy forces continue.

During the enemy's consolidation stage, our aim is to recover the areas through politico-military actions. The first priority is to dismantle the groups of vigilantes and CAFGUS in these places. Diehard CAFGU members should be punished while there should be determined efforts to win over the rank-and-file members who, in many cases, have merely been forced to join. Annihilative and attritive actions should be launched to destroy the detachments set up within the guerilla zones and to disarm the CAFGUs. Revolutionary units skilled in mass work should be deployed to carry out recovery work.

Steps should also be taken to deal with the "development program" of the counter-insurgency in the region. Those implementing the program must be neutralized and projects under it should be limited in a way that will benefit the people and the revolutionary movement. Out-and-out anti-people projects or programs or parts of these may be sabotaged. A policy of confiscation can be applied in an appropriate manner. Depending on actual conditions, campaigns for the non-payment of loans incurred under these projects can be waged.

Many tactics can be used against the program of reconciliation. The overall tactic is to turn the masses being influenced by the enemy against the enemy themselves. To counter the program aimed at enticing revolutionaries to give up their arms, the revolutionary movement should mobilize NPA units and mass activists to intensify the seizure of arms from the enemy. Partisan operations should also be stepped up.

One way of countering BARIL is to conduct campaigns encouraging enemy troops, especially the CAFGUs, to turn over their arms to the revolutionary forces. Incentives can be offered, such as the extension of benefits from the agrarian revolution program and the guarantee of a peaceful life once they return to their barrios. These can be combined with a broad offer of amnesty to regular and paramilitary troops.

The proper climate for this can be created by selective punishment of diehard reactionary troops with blood debts to the

people, as well as of principal figures involved in the region's counter-insurgency program.

To effectively counter the SOTs in the region, selected and defined forces should be trained in various types of operations. They should be supplied with adequate propaganda materials for special military operations.

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#### BICOL NPA MAKES GAINS IN WAR OF ATTRITION

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Each one was a small blow to the enemy, but the blows were widespread and inflicted damage on many parts of the military machine. Such was the nature of the series of attritive operations launched by the NPA in Bicol in 1990.

As the following reports from AB correspondents in Bicol show, such actions as sniping, throwing grenades into military camps, setting up checkpoints and other forms of harassment have helped to advance the revolutionary armed struggle in the region. From January to October, more than 30 regular and paramilitary troops of the AFP were killed and no less than 17 high-powered rifles were seized by the Red fighters through these actions.

A series of small blows. Last May, an NPA platoon raided the house of a policeman in Bo. Magragondong, Pioduran, Albay and confiscated two Armalites. The policeman escaped.

In July, the NPA attacked the CAFGU detachment in Bo. Manumbalay, Manito, Albay and was able to control the camp. They seized one M14, two carbines and two Garands. One Red fighter was killed and another wounded. There was an undetermined number of enemy casualties.

In Camarines Sur, last July, an NPA platoon harassed an SOT in Lagonoy. Three members of the SOT were killed and their high-powered rifles taken.

In the same month, a platoon of the 1st IB-PA was harassed by sniper fire and pursued by a composite company of the NPA in Culansi, Sipocot. Three soldiers were slain and not less than 10, wounded. The NPA confiscated one M203, three M16s, bullets and some military equipment.

An army platoon was on patrol in Tible, Lupi when two shots were fired at them. One sergeant was immediately killed; another soldier was wounded.

Three military teams were trying to pass through Badas, Lupi last August 6 when they were met by sniper fire from Red fighters. Two

fascists, one of them an officer, were killed and five were wounded.

Repeated acts of harassment. In the town of Gallego this October, NPA units repeatedly sniped at forces of the 22nd IB-PA and CAFGU stationed in a military detachment at Bo. Sinuknipan. Fourteen were killed, among them an officer of the detachment.

The NPA also assaulted an enemy detachment at Bo. Palaspas, Ragay, last October 1, resulting in four troops killed and two wounded.

Two days after, the Red fighters again sniped at a team from the same detachment, resulting in the death of two soldiers. Two more were slain when the NPA fired rifle grenades into the detachment. A helicopter coming to the rescue was met by continuous bursts of gunfire from the guerillas. One soldier on board, identified as M/Sgt. Pepito, was wounded.

Seeking revenge, the detachment launched a military operation in Bo. Cabadisan, Ragay after one week. The Red fighters were immediately alerted and sent a team to monitor the enemy's movements. But the reactionary troops learned of their presence, and an exchange of fire occurred. One guerilla was killed while two enemy troops were slain and one was wounded.

The fighting continued till the next day. Both sides called in reinforcements. The NPA deployed two more teams armed with an M60, an M203 and M14s. The enemy sent three helicopters, which blasted the NPA positions with 24 rockets.

However, not one hit the Red fighters. On the other hand, an NPA sniper caused two more deaths on the enemy side.

The enemy, probably enraged by their own stupidity, picked on easier targets as soon as the NPA forces moved out of the area. The fascists beat up some farmers and burned down five houses.

They did not know that not all the NPA units had left the place. Two days after, the military detachment was again rattled by NPA snipers. Three more fascists lay dead.

Checkpoints in Masbate. In Masbate, last June 2, a different kind of checkpoint was set up in Bo. Estampar, Catangian at 3:30 in the afternoon. Not fascist troops but Red fighters were manning it. When two PC regulars and four CAFGU members passed through the checkpoint from their detachment at Bo. Mabini, Palanas, shots from both sides of the road rained on them. After one hour, one CAFGU member was dead and another one, seriously wounded. The others managed to escape. The NPA seized one M14, one grenade and a pair of binoculars.

Meanwhile, the NPA raided a CAFGU detachment in Bo. Luna, Placer,

Masbate at 3 a.m. on August 5. After one hour and 25 minutes of fighting, they took control of the detachment. Only five fascists were inside the camp; three were out extorting money from small fishermen.

Two of the paramilitary troops were killed; the rest fled with their weapons. The NPA confiscated 130 Armalite bullets, six M16 magazines, one ammunition pouch, several uniforms and a cassette recorder.

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#### NDF PROPOSAL FOR A PEOPLE'S AGENDA

(A Proposal of the National Democratic Front to Address the Current National Crisis)

*(This is a condensed version of a document presented by the NDF to the Conference on National Unity, Survival and Reconstruction held last October 13-14, 1990 at the UP College of Law, Diliman, Quezon City. The conference was sponsored by the People's Caucus, a semi-formal coalition of anti-imperialist and democratic organizations, groups and individuals. The NDF agenda was well-received by the body. -- Editor)*

The nation is reeling from a crisis of unprecedented proportions. It is a crisis brought about not merely by the bankruptcy of a particular regime but by the rapid disintegration of the unjust and rotten social system.

The prostrate economy is completely at the mercy of foreign creditors; the state is wracked by violent internal conflicts; a sense of drift, doom and despair permeates the whole of society. Each day that passes increases the crushing weight of suffering and hardship being borne by the people.

The crisis reveals not only the ineptness of the present political leadership but also the inability of the elite to govern. Whatever faction of the elite has been in power had nothing to offer but worn-out recycled solutions, whether in politics and economics. And these factions have been subservient and ultimately dependent on the same master -- US imperialism.

The principal responsibility of the Aquino regime lies in aggravating the crisis by continuing the policies of the Marcos dictatorship and contributing its own brand of elitism, puppetry, repressiveness, corruption and incompetence.

The Aquino government has become increasingly beholden to imperialist, comprador and landlord interests -- and captive to the still fascist military. It is incapable of reforming itself or of being reformed from within.

The crisis brings into sharper focus the fundamental problems of Philippine society. Throughout the land, the people clamor for radical and comprehensive change.

Amidst the crisis, different factions of the elite vying for power dangle all sorts of solutions, including a return to fascist rule.

It is time for the Filipino people to stand up and fight for their own agenda -- one which addresses the root causes of their sufferings and provides immediate relief as well as basic solutions. As its contribution, the NDF proposes the following agenda based on the 12-Point Program recently approved by its National Congress.

#### Agenda to Bring Immediate Relief and Solve the National Crisis

1. Assert national sovereignty and remove all US military bases and troops by 1991.

The US military bases are both symbol and concrete manifestation of US imperialism's infringement of our sovereign will. Through them, the US has constantly intervened in our national affairs.

All US military bases, troops and movable property must be removed from Philippine soil upon the expiration of the US-RP Military Bases Agreement on September 16, 1991. No new treaty that will prolong US military presence must be negotiated.

A conversion plan for the alternative uses of the bases must be adopted and implemented immediately.

2. Provide immediate economic relief and lay the basis for economic emancipation.

The IMF-imposed economic policies of the Aquino government spawn economic disasters. The Memorandum of Agreement with the IMF must be scrapped. New economic strategies that will lead to nationalist industrialization and modernization of agriculture must be adopted and implemented.

Our proposals for immediate economic relief are as follows:

a. Declare a five-year moratorium on debt service payments and selective repudiation of foreign loans.

b. Abolish the Oil Price Stabilization Fund, reduce oil taxes, centralize the procurement of oil and adopt measures to nationalize the oil industry.

c. Assure adequate across-the-board wage adjustments for workers, government employees and teachers.

d. Scrap the import liberalization program and implement measures to protect, build and strengthen local industries.

### 3. Implement agrarian reform.

Implement the People's Declaration of Agrarian Reform adopted by Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform (CPAR) on May 31, 1987, and substantiated by the People's Agrarian Reform Code (PARCODE).

Recognize the anti-feudal gains achieved by direct peasant initiatives such as land occupations and confiscations, reduction of land rent and abolition of usury in many parts of the countryside.

### 4. Uphold human rights.

The Bill of Rights of the 1987 Constitution must be fully implemented. Abolish all repressive laws, orders and decrees. Political prisoners detained on the basis of these laws must be released immediately.

Cease the total war policy of the Aquino regime to relieve the suffering of the people. Stop all forms of military abuses such as bombings, forced evacuation of civilians, food blockade, burning, hamletting and summary executions or "salvagings."

### 5. Uphold people's empowerment.

Recognize and institutionalize the instruments of people's political empowerment, such as their right to form organizations. Adopt political and electoral reforms to ensure participation of workers, peasants and other marginalized social sectors in the political process. Recognize and further establish local organs for people's self-governance, and replace existing organs used by landlords and other elite groups for their selfish interests.

### 6. Reform the military.

Reorient the AFP in order to stop the use of the military as a mercenary force of the US and the elite. The AFP should take a nationalist and pro-people orientation and cleanse itself of corrupt officers and human rights violators. It should also stop forming paramilitary and vigilante groups.

### 7. Weed out graft and corruption.

To conserve the country's meager resources, trim down the government bureaucracy. Terminate the services of all corrupt officials and prosecute them. Create and maintain only government offices necessary for speedy delivery of basic services to the people. Stop all unproductive expenses and wastage, and redirect resources towards productive investments in industry and agriculture.

## 8. Uphold the right to self-determination and genuine autonomy.

Respect and promote the right of the Bangsa Moro, the Cordillera peoples, and other indigenous peoples to self-determination and to free themselves from all forms of national oppression.

They are entitled to autonomy, which means full guarantees for self-governance within a government structure that ensures their full participation in the political process and respects their cultural traditions and claims to ancestral lands.

## 9. Stop the massive destruction of the environment.

Impose a 25-year ban on commercial logging to allow our depleted forests to regenerate. Those workers displaced by such a ban should be assisted by enlisting them in forest protection and management programs.

At the same time, implement a massive and nationwide reforestation program on severely denuded forests. Prosecute violators of timber license agreements and illegal loggers.

## A Call for Multilevel and Multiform Popular Initiatives

To solve the national crisis, the Filipino people must unite and assert their sovereign collective will.

We enjoin all patriotic and democratic classes, sectors, forces, organizations, groups and individuals to further broaden and intensify the popular mass struggles in all their forms in the political, economic and social spheres.

Let us harness the collective strength of the people by organizing and mobilizing them in their millions through ever-expanding and ever-intensifying forms of popular action ranging from small, dramatic and militant pickets and rallies to gigantic demonstrations and powerful, paralyzing workers' and people's strikes.

The increasing violence of the state against the people and the never-ending factional war within the military show all the more the necessity of armed strength to back up and amplify the people's struggles for national and social liberation. The people's army and the whole armed revolutionary movement put themselves squarely behind the people's struggles and people's agenda toward the resolution of their fundamental problems.

Amidst the crisis and its faltering rule, the Aquino government fills the air with the rhetoric of peace, but cannot visualize peace beyond the arrogant terms dictated by its military chieftains.



We want peace based on justice and the realization of our people's aspirations for national independence, real democracy and social justice.

We have declared ourselves open and ready to engage in talks with the government and to a ceasefire as one of the subjects in the talks.

Let all patriotic and democratic forces come together to fight for the people's agenda and the comprehensive resolution of the problems underlying the national crisis.

Should other positive forces join the people in forcing the government to accept the people's agenda, we can proceed to form a government of national salvation, reconstruction and unity.

But if the government persists in betraying the people's interests and in rejecting the call for lasting peace, let us intensify the struggle and gather strength to bring about a government that is truly of, by and for the people.

We summon our compatriots in the Armed Forces of the Philippines to embrace our people and deny their oppressors the guns that have long kept them in power.

NDF NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
October 10, 1990

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#### MAJOR ISSUES ADDRESSED BY 28TH CPSU CONGRESS

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*(The whole Party is deeply concerned about, earnestly studying and striving to reach a common understanding on the massive and sweeping changes in the socialist world over the past two years. The article that follows is the initial contribution of AB to the need for information and hard data on these developments. It presents in a factual manner the views and assessments of Mikhail Gorbachev and the CPSU on the achievements and shortcomings of perestroika. We invite our readers to send in their own analysis and comments. -- Editor)*

Today the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) is passing through a very critical period in its history. Despite the perestroika reforms instituted since 1985 by the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the USSR continues to face grave political and economic problems. It is in this setting that the 28th Congress of the CPSU was held last July.

The Congress was characterized by lively and heated debates on many urgent issues and questions confronting the Party and the

Soviet Union. In his summing up of the 28th Party Congress, General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev enumerated the crucial issues addressed and debated by the delegates. Assessments were made and conclusions were drawn on the following vital issues: achievements of perestroika, political reforms, Party and ideology, economic reforms, agrarian reform, ecological preservation, law and order, inter-ethnic relations and foreign affairs.

Freedom -- the principal achievement of perestroika

During the Congress, many delegates criticized the perestroika reforms initiated by Gorbachev since 1985. Others blamed perestroika for the instability in Soviet society as well as the current political and economic woes of the country.

Majority of the delegates, however, agreed that the current problems can be attributed to past mistakes and neglect, to the present miscalculations and errors in facing the changing conditions and new realities, and to the failure to resolutely and consistently implement perestroika. On the whole, they upheld the correctness and achievements of perestroika.

According to Gorbachev in his summing up of the 28th Congress: "The principal positive result of perestroika is that society won freedom, which unfettered popular energies, offered scope for ideas previously gripped in the vise of dogmas and old formulas, gave vent to concern about the future of the nation and the future of socialism, and made it possible to involve millions of people in politics and launch vital change."

He added that without this freedom, the 28th Congress could not have been held in such an atmosphere characterized by free and lively exchanges of ideas.

It was admitted, however, that the restoration of freedom throughout the country has been far from pleasant and constructive. Others have abused this freedom. But it had to be tolerated, said Gorbachev. "This is what a revolution is all about. Its primary function is always to give people freedom. And perestroika with its democratization and glasnost has already fulfilled its primary task."

The problem, according to Gorbachev, is that the Party and the country as a whole as well as the old and the newly formed organizations and movements have yet to learn how to use the freedom attained. "Therefore, the priority task now is to learn how to use this attained freedom sooner and better."

"Real Soviet power is being restored"

This freedom can be manifested in the political reforms instituted to establish a truly democratic and law-governed state. New structures of power from top to bottom have been created "on

the basis of the democratic expression of the people's will."

Gorbachev said that the elected new councils are now in place. People's Deputies have assumed "a more responsible attitude and are now working to tackle the specific problems and needs of the people as soon as possible." He pointed out that one of the most important achievements of perestroika is that "real Soviet power is being restored."

Communists and Party organizations have been involved in this undertaking. However, it was noted that there is still a certain distance or coolness between elected councils and the Party. Gorbachev attributed this alienation to the fact that Party members have not yet abandoned the former methods of dealing with local councils, methods inherited from the command-administrative system of the past. In turn, the new government bodies strongly react to such methods.

Gorbachev emphasized that it is the sacred duty of the Party, of Party organizations and committees, of communists working in councils and production collectives to assist in bridging this gap. Communists should understand what renewed councils mean now. And they should contribute to normalizing the situation in the interests of the people.

The new councils have not yet fully functioned effectively. It was pointed out that "there are many shortcomings in the work of these new structures, that experience is lacking, that procedures and mechanisms are not yet operating smoothly and that political culture, competence and specific knowledge are lacking at times."

It was noted that many important decisions and laws, which should have directed social processes and prevented the emergence of negative phenomena, have not been fulfilled. Not much attention was given to fulfilling the requirements of life, the working out of urgently needed laws and decisions. "A real mechanism for this has not been created." Thus, there is need for presidential power, to proceed faster with political reforms and to create new councils. All these will ensure that laws are fulfilled and implemented.

The difficulties encountered by perestroika in political reforms, according to Gorbachev, is not to be blamed solely on the resistance of those who refuse to accept perestroika. Many people have yet to grasp the present situation. To succeed in the implementation of political reforms, Gorbachev called for greater cooperation and the pooling of efforts instead of looking for culprits.

#### Renewal of Party

Some delegates in the Congress blamed the political reforms for the decline in the influence of the Party. Gorbachev and majority

of the delegates, however, blamed this on the failure of the Party to adjust to the new conditions in the country and to come out with policies that will decisively address the problems of society.

The crisis in the Party, Gorbachev said, is "rooted in the inability, and in a number of cases, in the unwillingness to understand that they now live in a new society." "Many Party organizations and communists continue to use customary methods, inherited from the past."

Gorbachev blamed the Party committees, including the Central Committee, for the fact that "during major political campaigns, they were unable to uphold the interests of the working class." "They pondered too long over their attitude towards emerging new forms in the working class movement."

The Party is living and working in a different society. It was pointed out that a renewed Party with a different style of activity is needed. "The Party will be the vanguard of society and will be able to act successfully only if it wholly realizes its new role and completes within a brief period of time its reforms on the road of democracy, and more promptly learns to work with the masses in a new way."

Gorbachev said that it is necessary to overcome the alienation from the people inherited from the previous period. This is to be achieved first of all by "renewal of the activity of primary Party organizations, renewal of cadres and enhancing their prestige."

Gorbachev made it clear that this does not mean that they are changing the Party's line or socialist choice. They remain committed to socialist values. But the Party's success depends on whether it realizes that this is already a different society.

The Party, he said, will be unable to restructure unless communists "realize that an end has come to the CPSU monopoly on power and management." While the Party must act so as to win a majority in the parliament and retain the position of ruling Party, "it is advisable to cooperate with non-Party deputies, representatives of other legally recognized political trends if they are sincerely concerned for the fate of the country."

Gorbachev called for an end to sectarian moods. "Cooperation is a must." Only by shoving aside Party, political and national differences can all efforts be mobilized in order "to take the country out of the present critical situation and implement far-reaching reforms." The Party is faced "with immense possibilities and the main thing is to realize that it shall not achieve much without renewal, democratization, without strengthening the living bond with the people or without active work among the masses." The most important thing is for the Party to increase broad and deep contacts with the working class.

### "Problems of Party life and work boil down to ideology"

It is clear that all problems of Party life and work under the new conditions in one way or another boil down to ideology. Gorbachev said that there is no doubt about the gravity of the situation in some spheres of intellectual development. The decline in morals has become widespread and is "incompatible with the ideals of humane socialism."

"This is not only a legacy of the past but also the result of the explosion of freedom, which society experienced all of a sudden after being confined for a long time in a room with stale air," Gorbachev said.

According to him, these problems demand great attention from the Party, the intellectuals, the school, the entire system of the cultural and educational establishments. He suggested that the problems of ideology should be approached in its new form.

First, "the ideology of socialism is not a textbook where everything is compartmentalized by chapters, paragraphs, rules and principles." "It will shape up together with socialism itself as the [Party] facilitates the development of a well-fed, civilized and spiritually rich, free and happy country, as the [Party] comes to embrace universal human values again not as something alien from the class point of view, but as normal for man."

Second, "the ideology of socialism will shape up as the country gets integrated into the general progress of civilization." It is for this reason that new thinking, which unites rather than splits the world into confronting camps, forms the widest possible framework for shaping this ideology.

Third, "the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin should not be reduced into just another short course." They should be applied and enriched, giving due consideration to the new conditions existing today. Addressing the problems of ideology should be linked to the Party's support for the development and promotion of culture, science, education, art and literature in order to build a prosperous and humane society.

### Transition to a regulated market economy

To build a prosperous society, Gorbachev called on the Party to immediately tackle the country's worsening economic crisis. The key task is the solution of the food shortage. He believes that once this is solved, "70 to 80 percent of the acute problem in the social sphere -- the transition to a regulated market economy and the housing shortage -- will be eased as well."

Gorbachev noted that there is still a "persisting lack of understanding on the word 'market' and the need for an abrupt turn

in order to radically change the economic situation." Tremendous losses were incurred as a result of clinging to the old economic management mechanisms. It has slowed down the process of renewal and the transition to new forms of economic life in the country.

Gorbachev declared that "the advantage of the market economy has been proven on a world scale and the question now is only whether high social protection -- which is characteristic of the socialist system, the system for the working people -- can be ensured under market conditions." It is a regulated market economy that will make possible the augmentation of social wealth and rise in the living standards of everyone. The Soviet state power can make laws and decisions to ensure a smooth transition to market relations.

It was stressed that the most complex task during this period is to work out and take a series of special measures for social protection, particularly of low-income citizens. Some people, according to Gorbachev, visualize a market in terms of high prices, and not shop shelves with adequate supply of goods. There cannot be a transition to a market economy without pricing reform. Gorbachev said that they must "learn to regulate economic processes on the basis of the law of value, and thereby create powerful new incentives for business activity."

"Market conditions open up the possibility of realistically assessing needs and finding ways of satisfying them effectively, balancing supply and demand, and creating a normal environment for the development of production."

Gorbachev called on the Party to submit well-thought out proposals to both the Supreme Soviet and society in order to convince the people and get their support for the economic reforms needed to address the acute economic problems facing the nation.

#### Reviving agriculture and the countryside

Gorbachev agreed that there is a need to revive agriculture and improve life in the countryside. He contended that "once the countryside stands solidly on its feet and the farmers begin to live well and get an opportunity to work with initiative, then the food shortages will be resolved faster."

The Party, he said, should make major decisions on matters concerning the agrarian sector, the countryside as a whole and the position of farmers. Two main approaches to the advance of the countryside have been pointed out:

-- the reorganization of production relations on the strength of the laws of ownership, land and lease arrangements; -- assistance to the countryside in the provision of social amenities and facilities, the construction of roads, the production of farm machinery, etc.

Gorbachev enumerated three important steps to follow in ensuring the renewal of the countryside and the solution of the food problem. First, it is essential to give full freedom to all types of economic management in the countryside on the basis of a completely free choice. Second, it is necessary to establish reasonable exchanges between town and countryside, industry and agriculture in order to promote the advance of the countryside within the shortest period of time. And third, the state should promote as fully as it can a solution to the urgent problems of the countryside, primarily the improvement in the living conditions of the farmers.

#### Concern for ecology, law-and-order and inter-ethnic relations

In addressing the problems of food and supply shortages as well as the living conditions of the people, Gorbachev pressed for an immediate solution to ecological problems. He explained that the acuteness of these problems in the ecology has been realized too late.

The Chernobyl nuclear accident, which affected the people and environment of Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Bryansk regions, has caused great suffering to the entire country. The Soviet people have come to realize that "clean air and water are essential in a no lesser degree than food."

Gorbachev called for the formulation of state programs to address the major ecological problems -- pollution, ecological balance, nature's destruction, etc. -- and the situation of the environment as a whole. It is "necessary to provide a substantial amount of funds in nature conservation, regarding it absolutely at par with such vital tasks as the provision of people with food and housing."

The alarming rise in economic crimes and anti-social activities has also been noted. Gorbachev explained that "the sooner the market is saturated with goods, the sooner and more effectively the economy will work, the sooner will the government defeat profiteers and the shadow economy." "Fighting profiteering is an 80 percent economic issue."

At the same time, Gorbachev noted that law and order must be tightened. He called for the mobilization of the entire system of Soviets for this endeavor. "Stabilization in society should be linked with the work of government, economic and Party bodies."

Ethnic unrest and secessionist moves from some republics also pose a serious problem for the integrity of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev criticized the Party for having failed to notice in time the problems of ethnic relations. "It should act now without losing time."

The Supreme Soviet, according to Gorbachev, has begun addressing

this problem. A Federation Council, made up of heads of state of the 15 republics, has begun work. A draft of a new Union Treaty is being forged to give the 15 republics greater voice and autonomy under a union of sovereign states. Gorbachev underscored the importance of the Party's active work in consolidating the Union.

#### New thinking in foreign policy

The new foreign policy has promoted peace, nuclear disarmament and arms reduction, as well as cooperation in the world. However, some delegates blamed the new foreign policy for the downfall of Communist parties and socialist rule in most countries of Eastern Europe. Gorbachev defended the new foreign policy's principle of freedom of choice. He asserted that "it has shown the world that Soviet society is capable of being progressive and friendly to all peoples, capable of offering cooperation." "This is the way to influence the world."

On the other hand, it was admitted that the new foreign policy has affected the economy, the army and defense. Gorbachev declared that a state program for servicemen's social protection is deemed necessary in order to show the people's concern for the army. Help needs to be given to the defense industry to quickly restructure production in order to manufacture quality products badly needed by the country.

The conclusions and resolutions arrived at during the 28th Party Congress are crucial in determining the course of perestroika as well as the future of the Soviet Union, of the Communist Party and socialism in the country. Communists all over the world follow with keen interest the developments in the first socialist homeland and hope for the best for the Soviet people as they go through these great, wide-ranging and sweeping changes in the socialist system.

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#### NPA CHALKS UP VICTORIES IN CENTRAL MINDANAO

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Battered from all sides -- politically, organizationally and militarily -- the fascist AFP was put under considerable strain once more as the NPA pulled off another string of military victories, this time in Central Mindanao, a predominantly Moro-populated region down south.

The Central Mindanao region (CMR) is situated between the northern and western parts of Mindanao, its five provinces nestled deep in the heart of Moroland. Aside from being geographically at the center of the island, CMR is also considered "central" (meaning, strategic) from the point of view of national policymakers because it covers a major center of industry (Iligan



City) and a power base of various Moro armed groups.

For this reason, recent military deployments in the CMR have increased in the past years -- from five army battalions/15 PC companies in 1987 to eight army battalions/17 PC companies at present. AFP operations have gone from small-scale to massive, with aerial strikes and scorched earth operations now a main part of military campaigns in mountainous areas. But, despite intensifying militarization, the numerically smaller people's army has kept the fascist AFP jabbing in the air and, as many incidents show, has even turned the tables on them.

From August 10 to October 18, for example, the NPA inflicted heavy casualties on government forces conducting military operations in various Moro areas and gained for the people's army 10 high-powered rifles and additional military logistics, based on consolidated reports by AB correspondents and Sulong Masa, revolutionary mass newspaper in the region. Needless to say, the recent string of military victories helped boost the fighting strength and morale of the Red fighters, the masses and Moro revolutionary forces in the area.

Many of the NPA's actions were counter-offensives, showing its capability to take the military initiative during AFP tactical strikes. Urban partisans, meanwhile, concentrated their attacks on small formations of CAFGU and policemen active in counter-insurgency operations (COIN).

Last August 10, the Fernando Flores Command (FFC) of the NPA waylaid a company of CAFGU and army troopers belonging to the 30th IB who were on patrol near the boundary of Carosa and Calubi in Karomatan, Lanao del Norte. Seven soldiers were killed and an undetermined number of paramilitary elements were wounded. Taken were two M203s, one M16, a telescope, several backpacks and military equipment.

During the firefight, the NPA kept the enemy forces pinned down for a number of hours. A member of the Bantay Bayan Anti-Communist Crusade who sustained gunshot wounds and surrendered was promptly treated by NPA medics before they retreated.

After two hours, enemy reinforcements, with an APC, arrived and retrieved the dead and wounded soldiers. In anger, they shot at a horse, a carabao and two goats which they later brought to their camp. Not satisfied, they bombed a corn plantation nearby.

Then, on August 13, a militia unit harassed a military composite team belonging to an elite striking force of the 30th IB with CAFGU/Alsa Masa vigilantes numbering about a hundred. The enemy forces were sent to Kidalos, Kapatagan in reaction to the August 10 ambush.

Arrogant enemy troopers had just seized chicken eggs from the

masses in the area when the militia unit struck, killing five of the fascists instantly.

In retaliation, the military stalked the nearby forests, thinking that the NPA had retreated there. Along with the newly-formed SOT (Special Operations Team), they launched operations in the vicinity and the barrios nearby and set up camp at Bo. Suso, Kapatagan.

Military operations were conducted without let-up. Joint forces of the 30th IB, 36th IB and CAFGU's swept through five barrios in Kapatagan, namely Bil-is, Kidalos, Suso, Malinas and Waterfall, vainly trying to seek contact with the elusive NPA.

But demoralization and frustration caught up with the exhausted fascists. At a nearby clearing where the Red fighters had gained a strategic position, the NPA commanding officer signalled an attack. The enemy soldiers were thrown into a panic and fled in all directions. In their confusion, one group of soldiers mistook another group for the NPA and began shooting indiscriminately. In the shootout, two soldiers from the 30th IB were killed.

The exchange of fire only stopped when their respective radiomen were able to identify each other through call signs. By then, it was already too late -- the Red fighters had vanished into thin air. The soldiers, their energies spent and greatly demoralized over the fatal misencounter, were no longer in a fighting mood.

Meanwhile, Red fighters of the Cerilo Lausa Operational Command (CLOC) meted out revolutionary punishment on three policemen at Liangan, Maigo, also in Lanao del Norte last September 20. A month later, the same NPA command successfully frustrated an enemy assault through sheer speed and maneuver (see letter below).

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Letter from Central Mindanao

INFLUENCE OF NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT DEEPENS AMONG MORO MASSES

Warmest revolutionary greetings to Ang Bayan!

We send you this report on the latest developments in the Central Mindanao region.

The revolutionary influence of the national democratic movement is not only expanding in the Central Mindanao region -- it is also going deep into the consciousness of a growing number of Moro masses whom we have had the opportunity to meet in the course of our revolutionary work.

What happened last October 18, for instance, at the predominantly

Moro town of Tangkal, Lanao del Norte proved to be another unforgettable experience that warmed the hearts of our Red fighters and inspired us no end.

On that day, a military offensive by the 36th IB and CAFGU against the Cerilo Lausa Operational Command (CLOC) of the NPA turned into an embarrassing defeat for the fascist forces. It was not only a military victory for the NPA but for the broad Maranao masses as well. For a long time now, the unarmed and defenseless Maranaos have been the hapless victims of fascist brutality by AFP and CAFGU elements assigned to their areas. That is why the fascists' every defeat at the hands of the revolutionary forces is always welcome news to all.

The battle took place in Berwar, a barrio in the interior town of Tangkal, Lanao del Norte. In Tangkal, 98 percent of the population are Maranaos, the second biggest Moro group next to the Maguindanaos. Many of them are poor farmers who subsist on corn production. Majority have varying degrees of consciousness about the national democratic revolution. Tangkal can be reached after a 30-minute jeepney ride from the poblacion of Kolambugan, a commercial and transportation center in the same province.

At early dawn of October 18, combined forces of the 38th IB and CAFGU furtively went up a post occupied by a squad of Red fighters belonging to the CLOC. The post was actually a landahan (copra shed), a hut where farmers prepare copra for oil extraction. The terrain is relatively even but there are also rolling hills planted to coconuts, corn and marang (a favorite fruit among the Moro which can only be grown in cool climate).

Close to the landahan is a big road where passenger jeepneys ply between Kolambugan and Munai. Munai is a nearby town that is also mainly populated by Maranaos. At the rear is a long stretch of forested mountains, a source of wood for small loggers, majority of whom are also Maranaos.

The alert Red fighters at the landahan quickly learned of the enemy maneuver. However, the fascist soldiers opened fire at once, sending the guerillas away from their post to seek refuge. Nobody was hit but the fascists overran the landahan and occupied it, confident that they had already scared away the NPA. They did not know that the red fighters were bent on recovering their lost ground and that there were two other squads of the CLOC nearby, ready to provide support to their comrades.

Taking advantage of the enemy's unpreparedness and unfamiliarity with the terrain, the guerillas of the CLOC easily seized the initiative in the ensuing firefight.

In a swiftly-executed maneuver, the Red fighters encircled the landahan and opened fire, killing two army corporals and the commanding officer, a certain Lt. Tabuga of the Bravo company of

the 36th IB. It was then that the soldiers panicked and ran out of the landahan. The second squad of guerillas closed in to retrieve an M16 armalite, a vest and some rounds of ammunitions while the first CLOC squad provided cover.

Heavy gunfire from the CLOC caught up with the fascists who had run towards the nearby corn farm. Four CAFGU elements fell. Sensing that fascist reinforcements were coming, the Red fighters quickly picked up their packs and supplies and retreated to safe ground in an organized manner.

At 7:30 that morning, four six-by-six trucks full of soldiers and CAFGU forces and an APC arrived. But the Red fighters were no longer around. Disgorging their wrath, the fascists fired at the trees of marang, coconut and everything in sight. They burned the landahan and the houses nearby. They held some Maranaos for questioning, too. At about 10 a.m., they left, carrying their dead and wounded.

Meanwhile, at the safe area where the Red fighters had retreated after the firefight, the Maranao masses who were on hand warmly greeted them, shook their hands and listened heartily to their stories while the women enthusiastically prepared food for the weary guerillas.

The next morning, the guerillas went back to the battle scene. At every house and corner where Maranaos gathered, they were cheered. "Give thanks to Allah that nothing happened to any one of you," many called out. Then they handed over to the guerillas their own share of rice and food, anything they could afford. In the glitter of their eyes, the message was visibly clear: "You are our real people's army."

For the people, Ka Tina Maglaya

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