



Special Issue

English Edition

March 29, 1998

RESOLUTELY PURSUE THE PEOPLE'S WAR

Message on the 29th Anniversary of the New People's Army

By *Armando Liwanag*
Chairman, Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines

With utmost joy, we celebrate the twenty-ninth anniversary of the New People's Army (NPA). We salute all the Party members in the people's army, the thousands of Red commanders and fighters and the tens of thousands of people's militia who serve as auxiliary to the people's army.

We congratulate all of them for the hard work and sacrifices and all the victories won in the long course of the people's war and in the year past. We pause to pay our highest tribute to the memory of our revolutionary martyrs.

The NPA is the main mass organization and principal weapon of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Filipino people in waging the new-democratic revolution against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. This revolution can be accomplished only by resolutely pursuing the people's war.

The NPA has a glorious record and standing because the Red commanders and fighters have a high revolutionary consciousness, are well-disciplined, exert their best in different types of work and fight the enemy without fear of death or sacrifice.

The best sons and daughters of the people are in the NPA. They serve the people. They fight for national and social liberation. The people therefore cherish and nurture them.

I. Victories in the Previous Year

The Second Great Rectification Movement, initiated and directed by the Party Central Committee, has continued to strengthen the Party leadership and the Party core within the NPA. In effect, the people's army has become stronger politically and organizationally as a force for fighting, propaganda and production.

The nationwide reorientation, retraining and redeployment of the NPA have been basically completed under the guidance of the rectification movement. Our painstaking mass work has yielded significant results. There is an ever-widening and deepening mass base for extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare.

Revolutionary politics is in command. We uphold and apply the general political line of new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war. For the entire country our revolutionary class line is to uphold the proletariat as the leading class, build the worker-peasant alliance, win over the urban petty-bourgeoisie, further win over the middle bourgeoisie and take advantage of the splits among the reactionaries in order to isolate and destroy the power of the enemy.

In the antifeudal struggle in the countryside, the proletariat rely mainly on the poor peasants and farm workers, win over the middle peasants, neutralize the rich peasants and take advantage of the contradictions between the enlightened and evil gentry in order to isolate and destroy the power of the despotic landlords.

We have promoted the mass line of "from the masses to the masses" in both concrete substance and correct style of work. By relying on the masses, the NPA has become a self-reliant force with an inexhaustible source of strength. We have successfully combated "Left" and Right opportunist currents and have engaged in timely criticism and self-criticism in order to raise the level of consciousness, militancy and efficiency in the performance of tasks.

The peasant masses welcome and are heartened by our self-criticism. They enthusiastically help their army overcome its weaknesses and shortcomings. Our links with the masses are closest where the people's army seeks out and enjoys most the supervision from the masses.

In politico-military training of the Red commanders and fighters, we give the uppermost attention to political education. This provides the revolutionary reasons for military training, operations and improving technique. Their ever rising level of revolutionary consciousness enables the Red commanders and fighters to perform effectively their fighting and other tasks in the service of the people.

There is an increasing proportion of Party members within the NPA. The Party groups and branches are conscientious and active. Because Party education has been stepped up, Party members in the army units are more equipped to give ideological and political education to the Red fighters.

The stress on political education and mass work since the start of the rectification movement has given ample opportunity for the Red fighters to move up from basic mass education and politico-military training to basic Party education and recruitment.

The reorganization of the NPA has enabled us to sustain and develop around 60 guerrilla fronts on a sound mass base. The typical total force in a guerrilla front amounts to a company but it is divided into one platoon as the center of gravity and the other platoons are dispersed to cover a wider radius for mass work, subdividing into squads and further subdividing into armed propaganda teams, depending upon the concrete circumstances.

Many experienced cadres formerly bound by administrative and office work have been deployed to mass work. They share their knowledge and experience with new recruits. This has speeded up organizing work and at the same time helped in the training of new recruits.

Every unit of the NPA develops close links with the masses. The NPA has consolidated and expanded the mass base in the guerrilla fronts. We have a mass base running in millions in more than 60 provinces. However, we need to increase the proportion of those enlisted in peasant and other types of mass organizations. In certain areas our influence is strong and the masses give support to the NPA but solid organizing still lags far behind.

The requisites of expansion include the assignment or deployment of an armed propaganda team, the social investigation, agitation-propaganda meetings, appointments to barrio organizing committees as temporary organs of political power and the formation of people's organizing groups as the embryos of the full-fledged mass organizations of peasants, workers, women, youth, children and cultural activists.

The requisites of consolidation include the building of the local Party branches, the full-fledged mass organizations, the election of barrio revolutionary committees as regular organs of political power and the working committees that oversee mass organizing, education, land reform, production, health, self-defense, settlement of disputes among the people and cultural affairs.

To fulfill the main content of the democratic revolution, the campaign for land reform is carried out as the most important campaign in the countryside. The peasant associations are given full play in realizing their demand for land reform. In view of the current strength of the revolutionary movement, the minimum land reform program is still being carried out on a widening scale.

Wherever there are rural-based enterprises, the NPA encourages the workers to organize themselves and raise their demands for better working and living conditions. There is also cooperation and coordination between the people in the barrios and those in town centers in various types of campaigns. Legal forms of organization and struggle speed up organizing and expansion.

Consolidation work provides the stable basis for expansion work. The NPA expansion units have been able to expand to new areas or recover previously lost areas when the local Party branches, the organs of political power and the mass organizations perform functions in the consolidated areas. There is crying need to expand or recover areas along the coastline, lines of communication and transport and in the plains where the masses are concentrated.

Because of its consolidated and expanded mass base, the NPA has been able to launch tactical offensives within its capabilities in different parts of the country. Last year, we were able to capture a significant number of weapons from the enemy through raids and ambushes. Our initiative in battle was so high that we wiped out enemy units or captured enemy officers and men.

The tactical offensives in the second half of last year embarrassed the enemy nationally and internationally because they occurred soon after the highest military officials of the enemy boasted that the NPA had disintegrated and had been driven to remote areas and because two of these were carried out in town centers close to the national capital region and close to the headquarters of the Second Infantry Division.

The enemy's embarrassment was aggravated when he was compelled to negotiate the release of the prisoners of war after the failure of AFP pursuit operations. High-

ranking police officers who had been taken prisoner in Rizal and Mindoro were released by the NPA to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) under the NPA policy of lenient treatment and upon humanitarian considerations under the Geneva Conventions and its protocols. Reciprocally, the enemy released a number of political prisoners.

Brilliant tactical offensives have been undertaken in response to the call of the Party for intensifying tactical offensives within our capabilities. As it is in the nature and law of things, there is uneven development. Some regions or guerrilla fronts have better conditions and higher capabilities than others. There are cases where the mass base is sufficiently wide and deep but the determination, experience and skills to plan and carry out tactical offensives are deficient.

The Party performs its role of absolute leadership over the people's army by looking over the objective conditions and the general and particular levels of capabilities, sets the line of march, raises the general level of development and encourages those lagging behind to catch up. The Party committee directly leads the corresponding NPA formation in its territory or area of responsibility.

II. Crisis Situation of the Enemy

Short of launching a full-scale war of aggression against the Filipino people, US imperialism has engaged in all forms of intervention in a futile attempt to destroy the armed revolutionary movement of the Filipino people.

These interventions have included instigating the Marcos fascist dictatorship and the post-Marcos sham democracy and massive doses of military assistance, loans and psychological warfare. The revolutionary forces have withstood all these and have become recognized throughout the world as exemplary in persevering in people's war for so long and in addressing thereby the central question of revolution.

Now, the world capitalist system is in an unprecedentedly grave crisis. The global centers of capitalism themselves are being shaken by the contradiction between the overaccumulation of finance and productive capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie on the one hand and the rising levels of unemployment and deterioration of wage conditions among the proletariat on the other.

The social character of the forces of production, including high technology and a well-educated and well-trained work force is so high, but the avaricious character of private monopoly appropriation knows no bounds. The drive of the monopolies to accumulate and concentrate constant capital and cut down variable capital for wages is reducing the market in all types of goods and generating one crisis of overproduction after the other, resulting in the financial strangulation of the proletariat and people and all the countries under imperialist domination.

The myth of the global "free market" has become totally discredited in so short a time. The devastation of the productive forces become far more rapid under the neoliberal economic policy than under its Keynesian predecessor. The imperialist countries are increasingly in cutthroat competition. The United States is relatively in the best economic position only at the expense of Japan and the European Union. But all of them are on a stagnant course, with overall falling rates of growth and profitability.

The few economies which were touted as new emergent markets have collapsed. They were artificially turned into areas yielding the highest rates of profit through the heavy infusion of speculative capital to finance upper class consumption, bureaucrat

operations, privatization, real estate speculation and so on. The overproduction of goods in export-oriented manufacturing proved fatal. In the end, the mounting trade deficits and debt burden turned the so-called Asian miracle into a catastrophe, taking the form of currency and stockmarket meltdowns.

In countries formerly ruled by revisionist cliques and one big country currently ruled by a revisionist clique, the economies continue to break down, de-industrialize and degenerate due to their full integration in the world capitalist system under the traditional imperialist powers.

The ranks of countries suffering from third world conditions of agrarian backwardness have expanded. Social unrest and turmoil have spread and intensified on an unprecedentedly wide scale. The global conditions for revolution are favorable.

Countries geographically close to the Philippines are in grave social and economic crisis. The reactionary puppets in the neocolonial client-states are dumbfounded. Anti-imperialist and class struggles are resurgent. The Philippine revolution stands to benefit from this developing revolutionary situation in East Asia, particularly Southeast Asia.

The Party, the NPA and the NDFP are completely vindicated in consistently standing up against the neocolonial policy of the imperialist powers, from Keynesian to neoliberal terms, and against the policy dictates of the IMF, World Bank and WTO on the Philippine puppet state.

The Philippines is stricken with a far worsened social and economic crisis. This is the result of de-nationalization, privatization, deregulation, liberalization and labor flexibility, all policies dictated by the imperialists and followed unquestioningly by their local running dogs. Advantageously there are already the revolutionary forces, long tempered in the course of the people's war and revitalized by the rectification movement to further arouse, organize and mobilize the people against the imperialists and their reactionary stooges.

Great storms are brewing in the Philippines. The broad masses of the people are outraged by the abrupt reduction of their incomes and sources of income. Since July last year, devaluation and widespread loss of jobs have ravaged the lives of the people. There is an exceedingly fertile ground for all forms of resistance.

The people are revolted by the huge amounts of foreign debt and local public debt that have been squandered on all kinds of anti-industrial activities. These have been characterized by high consumption of the exploiting classes and by the superprofit-taking by the foreign monopoly firms. The export income from low value-added manufacturing and raw materials were always falling far below the expenditures for imports.

The urban-based legal democratic movement of workers and other urban poor, the women, youth, the low-income professionals and the middle social strata is rising and is bound to confront the entire ruling system with massive protest actions against unemployment, rising prices and poverty.

The rural-based armed revolutionary movement is bound to grow and gain strength. The peasant masses and ethnic communities despise the US-Ramos regime for violently opposing land reform and unleashing the wanton landgrabbing operations of the foreign mining, logging, plantation, real estate, tourist and other companies.

In increasing numbers, overseas migrant workers are being laid off and forced to return home. They abhor the long running misuse of their foreign exchange earnings

by the regime. They are restless as job opportunities have grown scarcer than ever before in their own country and abroad.

The Party aims to develop and coordinate the mass struggles in both urban and rural areas. It also encourages Party members and the most advanced activists to join and serve the people in the countryside. As a matter of fact, a significant part of the reinvigoration of the NPA is the inflow of cadres and mass activists who come from the ranks of workers and educated youth.

Currently, the reactionary classes are engaged in an electoral exercise. This cannot stabilize the political and economic situation. This can serve only to exacerbate the political crisis of the ruling system, especially the factional strife among the reactionary factions.

Encouraged by popularity polls, the strongest opposition presidential candidate is convinced that he will win, if he is not cheated. Thus, if he does not win and the candidate of the ruling party wins, then there will be massive unrest in the country. The ruling party proved its ability to cheat in the 1995 reactionary elections.

However, no matter who wins the presidential contest, there will be no fundamental change within the semicolonial and semifeudal system ruled by the big compradors and landlords and in the policy of subservience to the IMF, World Bank and WTO and the foreign monopoly firms.

The Party has denounced the current electoral process of the reactionary state as a farce and as a real instrument for imposing on the people their oppressors and exploiters. At the same time, the Party pointed to the need to apply revolutionary dual tactics and united front tactics in dealing with progressive and reactionary allies and in taking advantage of the splits among the reactionaries.

The counterrevolutionary state is fundamentally rotten. The leading politicians, high bureaucrats and high military and police officials are characteristically corrupt and subservient to the imperialists and exploiting classes.

High military and police officers take many high positions in the bureaucracy, engage in private business transactions and run criminal syndicates. As the economic and political crisis worsens they have established a base from which to seize overall political initiative and gain dominance within the ruling system.

Despite the capitulation of the Moro National Liberation Front to the Philippine reactionary government, the Moro people are determined to fight for self-determination and democracy. For this reason the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and other armed Moro organizations continue to wage armed resistance to the Manila government. This armed resistance objectively helps the NPA because the enemy military and police forces are compelled to divide their strength and thereby become weaker.

On March 16, 1998, the negotiating panels of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines signed the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. This is a highly important document. By a certain measure, it addresses the people's outcry for respect of human rights and international humanitarian law. In the hands of the revolutionary movement, it is beneficial to the broad masses of the people.

But there should be no illusion that a just and lasting peace is just around the corner. There is no basis for thinking that negotiations have laid aside the revolutionary process. In the peace negotiations, there are two more difficult topics of the substantive agenda to negotiate (social and economic reforms and political and

constitutional reforms) before the question of ending the armed conflict and redistribution of forces can be discussed.

In the event that the Party and the NDFP decide to call for a ceasefire of short duration in order to conduct extensive consultations with the people on a nationwide scale, there should be no relaxation of vigilance and no reduction of firmness and militancy. Party members and Red fighters should attend to their work and should not expose themselves to enemy surveillance. Experience of ceasefires in the past has proven that recklessness has fatal consequences sooner or later.

The enemy has called for a prolonged ceasefire with his own motivations, like undermining the fighting morale of the revolutionary forces, inducing an unwarranted leap to an indefinite, repeated or permanent truce, getting an endorsement for his electoral process and ruling system and collecting surveillance stocks.

The Party and the NDFP are fully aware of such motivations. But they have frankly told the GRP that they can run the risk of a ceasefire of a certain duration, if there will be an exchange of approvals of the comprehensive agreement, if all the political prisoners are ordered released and if extensive consultations on a nationwide scale can be conducted by the NDFP without interference from the GRP.

In the absence of a well-founded and complete basis for a just and lasting peace, the revolutionary forces are resolved to pursue the people's war. Likewise, the enemy is bent on continuing the civil war, as can be seen in his current strategic policy and plan to have the Philippine Army take over functions of the Philippine National Police, to redeploy the Army combat units in forward positions against the NPA and to escalate the campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces and the people.

Look Forward to the 30th Anniversary

The entire Filipino people, the CPP, the NPA and the NDFP look forward to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the NPA next year. Towards the celebration of such a historic milestone, the Red commanders and fighters are called upon to fulfill their fighting tasks and win still greater victories in the people's war for national liberation and democracy.

1. Follow the class leadership of the proletariat and the absolute leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines and carry the rectification movement through to the end!
2. Carry forward the general line of the new-democratic revolution against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism!
3. Pursue the people's war more vigorously than ever before, carry out intensive and extensive guerrilla warfare at the current stage and launch tactical offensives within our capabilities!
4. Carry out land reform as the main content of the democratic revolution and give full play to the initiative of the masses in all campaigns for their social betterment and liberation!
5. Expand and consolidate the mass base, build the organs of political power and mass organizations and create more guerrilla fronts!

6. Train and develop Red fighters from the mass movement in the rural and urban areas!
7. Combine the experienced fighters with new fighters in the NPA units and in tactical offensives!
8. Engage in educational and cultural campaigns to raise the fighting spirit of the Red commanders and fighters and the broad masses of the people!
9. Enforce the tax policy of the people's revolutionary government, collect voluntary contributions of the people on the basis of benefits won and engage in production campaigns in order to foster self-reliance!
10. Learn from each other and strengthen the weaker regions and guerrilla fronts and bring them to a new and higher general level of development!

The conditions for making revolution are excellent. The entire world capitalist system is in grave crisis and disorder. The chronic crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system has plunged to a new depth. The Filipino people's revolutionary struggle for national liberation and democracy can surge forward to a bright future.