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## Editorial

# The AFP is on a losing course

The path of defending the puppet, reactionary and disintegrating ruling system is the path to perdition taken by the mercenary and puppet Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). As the ruling system is caught in the morass of a worsening crisis, it relies ever more on the fascism unleashed by the rotting reactionary military. On the other hand, the AFP's rottenness and inutility and its tendency to self-destruct and bring down the whole system along with it has become striking.

The key factor in the AFP's disintegration and enfeeblement is its mercenary, puppet, reactionary and fascist character which has resulted in its extreme isolation from the broad masses. Its political bankruptcy and isolation comprise the fundamental context of the worsening demoralization, factionalization and infighting besetting its ranks.

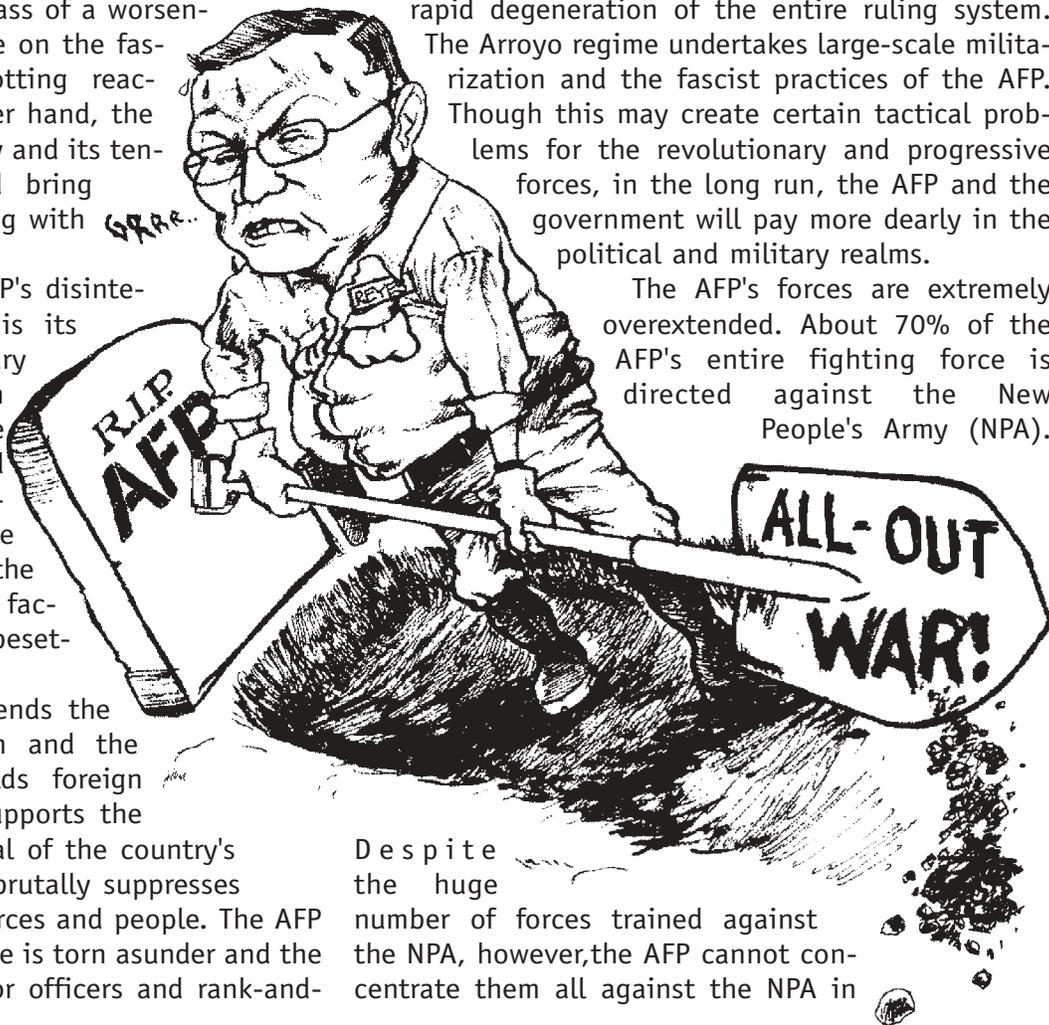
The AFP serves and defends the interests of US imperialism and the local ruling classes, upholds foreign military intervention and supports the puppet state and its betrayal of the country's welfare and sovereignty. It brutally suppresses the struggling democratic forces and people. The AFP and PNP's nationalist pretense is torn asunder and the patriotism of even the junior officers and rank-and-

file is aroused with time's passing.

The severe political and social crisis impedes the AFP's ability to suppress the revolutionary armed movement. These obstacles are mounting due to the rapid degeneration of the entire ruling system.

The Arroyo regime undertakes large-scale militarization and the fascist practices of the AFP. Though this may create certain tactical problems for the revolutionary and progressive forces, in the long run, the AFP and the government will pay more dearly in the political and military realms.

The AFP's forces are extremely overextended. About 70% of the AFP's entire fighting force is directed against the New People's Army (NPA).



Despite the huge number of forces trained against the NPA, however, the AFP cannot concentrate them all against the NPA in

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all parts of the country on a sustained basis. It likewise uses a large number of forces to guard the center of reactionary power because of coup threats, aside from having to fight the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Abu Sayyaf and other armed forces it has to confront to defend the reactionary government.

In its effort to overcome the limited number of its forces, the AFP uses the tactics of rapidly mobilizing, shifting and relatively concentrating its large forces in what it believes to be the strongest NPA guerrilla fronts as well as in other areas of intense armed conflict. Out of the overall number of 120 NPA guerrilla fronts, the AFP is able to concentrate its forces at any one time on not more than 10 of them.

Like a confused firefighter, the AFP shifts its attention to wherever the fires of the NPA's tactical offensives are ignited, even as, when we come down to it, the NPA's tactical offensives have just begun to gain momentum.

As a whole, the ruling state's armed forces come to about

270,000. Although much bigger than during the Marcos dictatorship, it has also grown much weaker. Along with additional recruitment into the AFP, the reactionary state relies on supplementary forces from the Philippine National Police (PNP), the expanded CAFGU and other paramilitary groups, none of whom is very reliable in combat. With 80% of the military budget spent on salaries, pensions and other needs of AFP personnel, (aside from the fact that the bulk of it is stolen by AFP officials) it lacks resources to procure needed weapons and military equipment.

In the face of the worsening economic crisis, the AFP and the entire military establishment have become an extreme burden to the people. The gargantuan allocation and the ever-growing resources gobbled up by the counterrevolutionary war that the AFP is unable to end and win are in contradiction to the worsening problem of an ever-growing government budget deficit. Hence, the bankrupt reactionary government is hard put providing the additional resources demanded by the AFP. These can



**The revolutionary movement and the people's growing resistance, successive defeats suffered by the AFP and continuing attrition in the hands of the revolutionary forces result in worsening desperation among the government armed forces.**

only be provided in exchange for a large reduction in needed social services, further squeezing the people dry, the further escalation of the socio-economic crisis and the further intensification of the people's loathing for the government.

The key to qualitatively improving the AFP's capacity to pursue the counterrevolutionary war is large-scale US military aid. Thus, the puppet government blindly upholds the US' global "war against terrorism" and encourages the basing and intervention of US armed troops in the Philippines. The leaders of the reactionary government and the military also believe that direct US military intervention in the Philippines is now very much needed given the puppet troops' inability to effectively fight the growing revolutionary forces. This will further drive the AFP into becoming an even more mercenary and puppet force, which will further destroy any semblance of the



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AFP's integrity as a national army.

Intensifying demoralization and factionalization within the AFP are pushing it along a losing course. The revolutionary movement and the people's growing resistance, successive defeats suffered by the AFP and continuing attrition in the hands of the revolutionary forces result in worsening desperation among the government armed forces.

Top government and military leaders make matters worse because they use soldiers as cannon fodder, push them to fight meaningless battles, and order them to wreak havoc, undertake dirty schemes and perpetrate heinous crimes against the people. A growing number of officers and soldiers can no longer stomach this situation.

It is in the AFP's character to be undemocratic, repressive and fascist not only in relation to the people but also with respect to relations between officers and the rank-and-file because it is a coercive instrument of the reactionary ruling classes for oppressing and exploiting the people.

The mercenary armed forces have become even more fractious as a result of rivalries among big politicians and the latter's use of the AFP and PNP for their factional interests. Corruption and stealing, involvement in criminal syndicates, excessive privileges and luxurious lifestyles among government leaders and the military organization are rampant, making it more difficult for their armed forces to fight.

Despite the AFP's current overwhelming superiority over the NPA in terms of personnel, arms, organiza-

tion and finances, it cannot prevent the continued advance of people's war.

It is mass support for the NPA that serves as the decisive factor in its victory. The NPA relies on an ever-widening and ever-deepening mass base, on agrarian revolution, and on the masses' strong participation in, and support for, people's war. Together with the masses, the NPA is fighting to achieve a bright fu-



ture for the people. The NPA and the revolutionary movement represent the people's revolutionary aspirations and the national-democratic program which advances the people's interests. The NPA and the masses cooperate with each other in overthrowing the old rotten order to build a new and advanced social system.

The NPA's closeness to the masses of the people is the one undeniable factor responsible for its success. Most of its forces are drawn from the nation's best sons and daughters. Most of its time is devoted to conducting mass work, which is an important factor in the conduct of excellent military work. The masses support the forces of the NPA. Therefore, the NPA is not dependent on any external assistance. In all its actions and its tasks, it always takes into account the interests and welfare of the people. Its officers and fighters are infused with a high sense of cherishing and serving the people and a strong fighting spirit.

Democracy and discipline concurrently exist within the NPA. The people's army strictly adheres to the Three Main Rules and Eight Points of Attention as well as Party and NPA policies. At the same time, it vigorously implements the system of three democracies—political democracy, economic democracy and military democracy.

The Party and the people's army carefully study and adapt to social conditions as well as the nature and movements of the reactionary military forces. Therefore, the NPA is able to outline a successful strategy and tactics for advancing the people's war. Given the country's semicolonial and semifeudal condition and at the present stage of people's war, the NPA correctly carries out the strategic line of encircling the cities from the countryside until the eventual overthrow of the very center of the enemy's political power.

The NPA launches extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare. It launches tactical offensives against weak and isolated enemy forces while avoiding encounters with stronger enemy forces. It expands in areas where the enemy is weak even as it ensures the continued conduct of political work and the maintenance of links, guidance and mass organizing in areas where the military is intensely concentrated and wreaking havoc.

While the reactionary armed forces are on a losing course, the NPA and the revolutionary forces are marching along the path of certain victory. There is no doubt that in the continuing advance of people's war, the NPA and the revolutionary forces will annihilate the AFP and the other reactionary forces and achieve total victory.

AB

# Grave corruption in the AFP

Corruption and criminality are rampant in the entire military establishment, among the highest officials of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Department of National Defense (DND). Aside from accepting various kinds of bribes in the purchase of military equipment and other supplies, they also head the worst criminal syndicates.

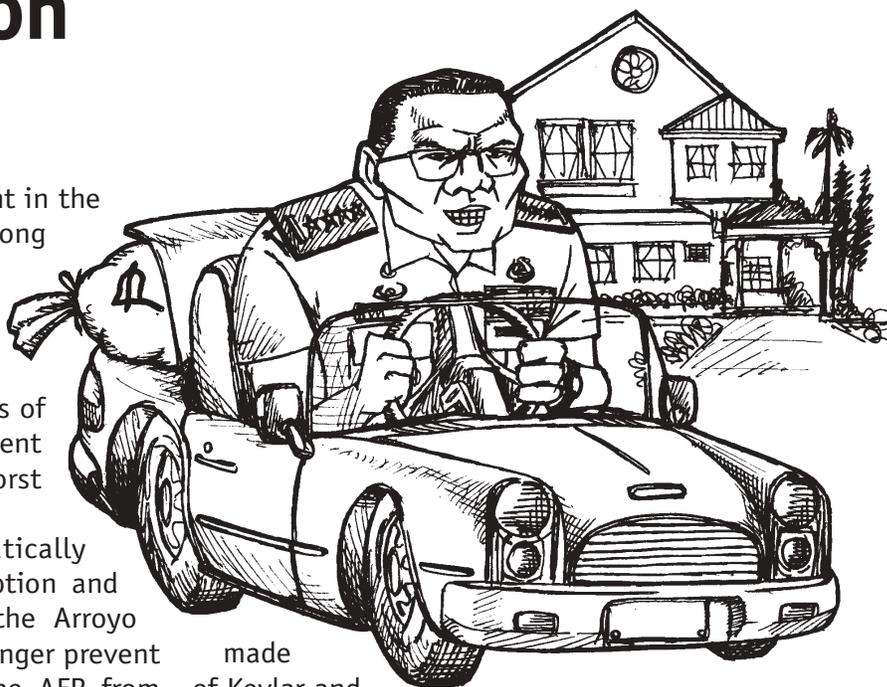
After AFP junior officers dramatically exposed and condemned rampant corruption and repression by the AFP top brass and the Arroyo regime on July 27, the regime could no longer prevent the corruption and anomaly cases in the AFP from being unearthed. On August 18, anomalies in the Government Arsenal (GA) were exposed. According to the Commission on Audit, there is a P77 million difference between the inventory and the actual expenses. The GA is the designated manufacturer of basic weapons, bullets and other police and military equipment. It is under the DND.

The military uses many means to siphon AFP funds. One of them is overpricing. It has been disclosed, for instance, that when the military had Scorpion tanks repaired in 1998, allotting a budget of P200 million, a component known as a contact point which only costs P1,852.50 was overpriced at P30,000.00. The tank's gear box assembly, with an original price of P99,750, was made out to be P12.9 million.

There is also what is called the system of "recycled delivery supplies." In this system, the supplies ordered are intentionally not delivered to the camp in one shipment to make it appear that the first batch delivered is also the next batch delivered.

Even worse is the "ghost delivery" where the AFP does not receive any supplies and the funds intended to procure the military's needs are merely divided among companies and top ranking military officers.

The military also purchases cheaper low quality supplies in order to pocket the money that has been saved. In February 2001, Commodore Guillermo Wong, who was then chief of the Philippine Navy, exposed an anomaly regarding the purchase of Kevlar helmets. The actual shipment was composed of helmets not



made of Kevlar and only a fourth of the actual number indicated in the receipt arrived—500 instead of 2,000 pieces. The chief then of the Philippine Marines was involved in this anomaly.

"Conversion" is reputed to be the worst form of military corruption. In this scheme, the budget allotted for the military's needs is converted to cash. The money is progressively reduced as the money transfers hands among officials. It is said that 25% is usually deducted and converted to cash by those in charge of approving and auditing the budget. A mere 9-16% of the budget ends up being actually spent to meet the military's needs.

Top-ranking military officers are not only involved in plunder. They audaciously flaunt their plundered wealth through their luxurious lifestyles. Most of them are millionaires. In reality, all of the 37 generals confirmed recently by the Commission on Appointments admitted to being millionaires, based on their submitted statements of assets and liabilities (SAL). The "poorest" among them is worth P1 million, and the richest P13.4 million.

Nonetheless, the SALs do not reflect the real value of the generals' wealth. One example is Defense Sec. Angelo Reyes, who only admitted to having P3.5 million, even as the value of just two of his properties comes to P14 million. One of these properties is a lot in Fort Bonifacio which he valued at P115,000 even if its market value is P4 million. It is on this lot that Reyes is building a palatial home worth over P10 million. In addition, it is the usual practice of govern-

ment officials not to include their most profitable assets in their SAL.

The AFP generals have their mansions built and their luxury vehicles parked in the AFP Officers' Village Association, Inc. (AFPOVAI) and areas reserved for the Joint US Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG) in Fort Bonifacio.

On the other hand, the majority of the rank-and-file lives in shanties on land being denied them by the government. One example is a community of over a hundred families of retired and active ordinary soldiers in Sitio Kaunlaran, Western Bicutan within Fort Bonifacio. Their houses have been demolished many times. The AFP claims that these areas are slated to be given to military officers.

Successive regimes have skimmed on housing for the rank-and-file. A family is assigned a very small place. One example is the housing project in Centennial Village, Fort Bonifacio which was put up during the Ramos regime. Made of cheap materials, the buildings are in danger of collapsing during a powerful earthquake because the cement walls already have cracks in them.

To date, none of the generals and other ranking AFP officials involved in the widespread corruption in the Armed Forces of the Philippines-Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS) has been punished. During the Estrada regime, it was disclosed that Gen. Jose Ramiscal Jr., in collusion with other officials, pocketed more than P250 million from the pension and retirement funds of ordinary soldiers. Implicated with them was Lisandro Abadia, then the chief of staff. Instead of being punished, many of the officials under investigation were simply transferred to other jobs, with some even receiving promotions. Instead of using the funds for the soldiers, AFP officials invest them in unstable financial schemes and fly-by-night corporations to earn quick money. One of those implicated in this scheme is former Defense Sec. Orlando Mercado.

High-ranking officials pocket the profits from the businesses that they run. For instance, they have pilfered millions of pesos from the golf courses in Camp Aguinaldo and Fort Bonifacio. It is so easy for them to set up businesses in the name of the AFP because no building or business permits are required, and neither are they required to pay taxes. These businesses are not reported or audited as government businesses. They are run as private businesses by ranking officials. AB

## The brazen murder of Jessica Chavez

On February 9, 2001, fellow soldiers found 2nd Lt. Jessica Chavez close to death with a bullet wound in her chest in her own room inside the AFP headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Makati. She died before reaching the hospital. Instead of waiting for the investigators, the officers in her battalion immediately ordered her room cleaned, discarding everything that would be useful to an investigation. Jessica served as the platoon leader of the 191st Military Police Battalion stationed in Fort Bonifacio.

After a token investigation, the AFP declared Jessica a suicide. But according to a medico-legal expert from the National Bureau of Investigation, Jessica could not have killed herself because the gun that killed her was fired far from her body. It is also difficult for someone trying to kill herself to point a gun at her own chest. Furthermore, Jessica tested negative for powder burns, and hence could not have fired the gun that killed her. Nevertheless, in its final report, the NBI still declared Jessica's death a suicide.

Two months before she died, a worried Jessica came home to her family in Poblacion, Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur. She confided to her grandmother that her own superiors were using her in gunrunning and other anomalous transactions. Once, she was ordered to secure a shipment of arms from Mindanao at the port in Manila in order to sell them outside the AFP. To ensure her own loyalty, she was offered a large sum of money, but she refused to accept it. She informed her family of her decision to leave the military and expose the corruption in the AFP, but was unable to carry out her plan.

A few days after she was killed, her family stumbled on a cassette tape that recorded a suspicious conversation involving four people detailing an illegal operation. The AFP officials ignored the tape in their "investigation."

It is clear that Jessica was murdered to prevent her from exposing the rampant corruption within her own battalion. Her family and her classmates believe that if she were alive, she would have been one of the soldiers who mutinied on July 27. AB

# The triumph of the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog

(The following article was drawn from the document "Assessment of Revolutionary Work in 2002 and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Forces in Southern Tagalog" released in March 2003. The article highlights only some of the factors behind the region's success in parrying off the AFP's attacks.)

For the last five years, the revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog (ST) has faced relentless attacks from reactionary government troops. The scope, the duration and intensity of these attacks have been without parallel in the region's entire history. Even in the history of the Party and the revolutionary movement, it is only now that the reactionary state has concentrated such a huge force for "counter-insurgency" in a single region and in a few of the region's provinces, in particular. However, not a single guerrilla front has been destroyed despite such a heavy concentration of enemy forces.

From the time of the ousted Estrada regime up to the Arroyo regime's term, the AFP has considered the entire Southern Tagalog region a "national priority." Massive, relentless and brutal military operations began in the province of Laguna in 1988. Then they shifted to Oriental Mindoro, later encompassing the entire island in 2001. At the same time, the AFP carried out "containment operations" in other provinces. In the first quarter of 2003, the military force in Southern Tagalog comprised an equivalent of 38 battalions—19 AFP battalions, seven PNP battalions and 12 CAFGU battalions.

Since 2001, the enemy has further built up its forces and used the most brutal forms of terrorism at the basic level to destroy the mass base in the countryside and paralyze the legal democratic mass movement. This intensified further from the close of 2002 to 2003.

The regime has raised planning to the brigade and area command level and broadened the scope (the smallest being a guerrilla front) of its military operations, using large numbers of troops and "swarm tactics" (*taktikang dumog*).

The enemy also used far heavier weaponry such as mortars and howitzers and air support in firefights. Aside from the usual helicopters, it also employed jet fighter-bombers in one defensive incident in Batangas.

The most vicious and murderous military officials have been assigned to the priority areas. Col. Efren Orbon, former commander of Task Force Makiling has been appointed to the 202nd Bde., and Col. Jovito Palparan, former commander of Joint Task Force Banahaw, to the 204th Bde.

The psychological operations (psy-ops) of the Reengineered Special Operations Teams (RSOT) have also been stepped up. The RSOT spreads deception and sows fear and terrorism among the people. Many have been abducted and murdered in the most brutal manner to create the most intense terror effect. Others have been killed in front of their families. Corpses have been beheaded, desecrated or burned.

The military picks on even members of legal mass organizations, church people and human rights advocates. A prominent example was the abduction and murder of Eden Marcellana and Eddie Gumanoy.

In the face of the enemy's intense and brutal operations, the revolution-



ary movement and the people have successfully prevailed. Not only have they succeeded in preserving themselves, they continue to gather strength despite the losses sustained. The majority of the provinces and guerrilla fronts have advanced in various degrees. These advances have made up for the sharp decline of revolutionary work and organization in one front victimized by concentrated enemy attacks, and the temporary setbacks in other areas that also came under intense enemy attack.

The redistribution and restructuring of the forces of the people's army in the region in accordance with a Central Committee directive in mid-2002 was a great help. Instead of the small squads that it was previously accustomed to, the NPA made the platoon its basic formation. This restructuring placed the NPA in a more secure and more effective position to carry out its military tasks and mass work, especially in the face of the intensifying military situation in the entire region. It also gave the people's army

the strength and the fortitude to parry off and confront the Arroyo regime's "all-out war".

Even before this, steps had also been taken to improve the organization of the people's army based on a memorandum issued by the Central Committee's Executive Committee. Special units of the people's army were established, and the centers of gravity on the regional, provincial and front levels were strengthened. Territorial operational commands were also set up in the provinces, and the capacity of the people's army's politico-military academies was enhanced for training at the regional and provincial levels.

In the face of the enemy's intensified campaigns and counter-guerrilla suppression operations, the people's army continues to strive to overcome hardships, avoid defensive battles and launch tactical offensives it is capable of winning.

Throughout 2002, 76 firefights took place. Most of them (63%) were initiated by the people's army. Forty-six enemy soldiers were killed and 32 wounded in NPA tactical offensives, the most prominent of which were the successive raids on the Lopez municipal hall and the 74th IB detachment in San Narciso, both of them in Quezon. Even in the defensive battles, the NPA inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy—40 killed and 21 wounded.

### **AGRARIAN REVOLUTION, MASS CAMPAIGNS AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATIONS**

The people's army would not have grown and lasted and the armed struggle would not have advanced without enjoying extensive and deep mass support. The growth of the people's army and the advance of armed struggle are

hand in glove with the vigorous advance of the antifeudal struggle and other mass struggles in the region's guerrilla fronts.

It is the cumulative victories attained by the agrarian revolution that forge the Party and NPA's strong bond with the broad masses of peasants in the countryside and ensure the ever-growing mass support for the people's democratic

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revolution. It also ensures the failure of the enemy's attempts to destroy the political foundation laid down by the Party and the people's army.

The people vigorously participate in the antifeudal struggle and other political campaigns and mobilizations.

In various areas, victories have been achieved in struggles to reduce land rent and decrease the *resikada* imposed by copra buyers, as well as in struggles against land-grabbing and the setting up of landfills, the assertion by peasants of their right to put up houses in the lands they occupy and the recovery by national minorities of their ancestral lands that have been converted to logging concessions.

In the main, it is areas with pressing issues and struggles that have been targeted by the AFP's military and psy-war operations. But also in the main, the people are able to prevail amid the military situation and become more active and more militant in advancing their democratic interests. All

of the victories of the agrarian revolution attained in the past have been sustained and the masses continue to benefit from the victories achieved in mass struggles.

Overall, the mass base in the countryside remains solid and militant, despite the fact that the NPA has had to temporarily leave certain areas because of heavy enemy presence. In the areas temporarily left behind, the people have maintained a high level of militancy and struggle, and the venues for mobilizations, calls and open and legal mass actions are intact. This has become a very important factor in preserving the integrity of the mass base and making it difficult for the enemy to weaken and coopt the people. In reality, the enemy has only been able to deceive a handful of people. Even in the militarized barrios, the people stand ready to uphold the armed struggle and help in launching punitive operations and tactical offensives.

Antifascist struggles have gained prominence. All of the enemy's attacks in the countryside have been met with people's mobilizations and protests. There has been an increase in supportive mobilizations in the form of fact-finding missions, medical missions and protests in front of camps and military and civilian agencies in places where AFP aggression has been most intense. The people engaged the local government and the military in dialogues, confronted the AFP and held people's assemblies in the barrios to condemn and expose military repression. Barriofolk openly show that they neither need nor accept the AFP, because the latter violates their rights. Clandestine actions and campaigns have also been undertaken to dialogue with and neutralize peasants and youth in the barrios who have been recruit-

ed into the CAFGU or the AFP.

In addition, the democratic movement in the cities and town centers have played a big role in defending the rights of the people in the countryside and opposing militarization throughout the region. The mass actions launched in cities and towns in the militarized provinces have blunted the terror effect in the countryside. A stark example is the struggle of internal refugees and other victims of human rights violations, which became a heated issue that the regime could no longer hide or cover up.

### **CHALLENGES TO THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT AND THE PEOPLE IN THE REGION**

The past five years have tested not only the fortitude and steadfastness of revolutionary strength in the region. More than this, the enemy has tested, through the harshest means, the fortitude, steadfastness and depth of the victories of the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) advanced by the revolutionary movement in the previous decade. With the help of the SGRM's ever-blazing ideals, the region has been able to surmount these challenges.

The Party in the region foresees meaningful advances and a leap in overall revolutionary work in the next three years. Towards this goal, the region faces the challenge of continually surmounting weaknesses and vulnerabilities by paying more attention to consolidation work, struggling against conservatism and comprehensively strengthening the Party's capacity to lead. AB

### *Escalation of US political intervention in the country*

## **Manipulating the peace process**

Together with its military intervention in Mindanao, US imperialism is now directly intervening in the peace negotiations between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Arroyo regime. For this purpose, the US has been using the US Institute for Peace (USIP) to send agents to the peace talks, and to actually derail and control the process. This manifests more brazen and deeper direct US intervention in the situation and fighting in Mindanao. The US is tightening its control and influence in Mindanao, especially as it wants to use the island as a forward base in its global "war against terror."

This August, a group comprised of "facilitators" in the peace talks between the MILF and the Arroyo regime arrived quietly in the Philippines. They included Gen. Anthony Zinni, special US envoy to the Middle East.

Zinni was previously sent by US Pres. George W. Bush to Israel to ensnare the struggling Palestinian people into engaging in worthless negotiations with the aggressor and murderous Israeli government. Zinni also served as mediator in the surrender of militant forces in Aceh, Indonesia to the murderous Indonesian military.

With Zinni were former US Ambassador Richard Murphy, USIP Vice President Harriet Hentges and former deputy chief of mission in Manila Eugene Martin. Also part of the USIP team were Nicholas Platt, Stephen Bosworth and James Weisner, all former US ambassadors to the Philippines.

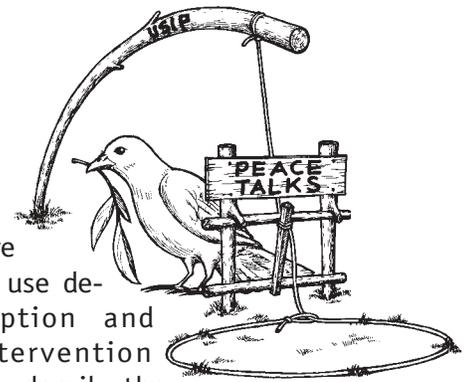
It is the USIP's particular objec-

tive to use deception and intervention to derail the MILF and pave the way for the eventual establishment of a US base in the region. The US congress has allotted a \$50 million budget for this and is likewise using the slated arrival of \$30 million in aid to entice the MILF into signing a final "peace agreement."

The USIP is an official agency of the US government. It was established by the US government in 1984 and it is the US president that appoints its board of directors. Its pro-imperialist, militarist and ultra-Right orientation is clear. It is currently headed by former Assistant Secretary of State and US ambassador to the Philippines Richard Solomon. Among the USIP's board of directors are the secretaries of the State and Defense Departments and the president of the US National Defense University. The rest come from intelligence agencies and their fronts, various branches of the US military and various imperialist and rightist institutions in the US.

The USIP was established during the Cold War as a US imperialist instrument for spreading "Low Intensity Conflict" (LIC) in areas where there are revolutionary struggles and expand US control and influence where there is no decisive US presence.

The US takes advantage of social turmoil and enters the scene pretending to be a peace broker in areas where it has previously had lit-



tle or no control or influence. This includes independent countries formerly under the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Islamic countries, several countries in Africa beset with unrest and other countries where European imperialists have greater control and influence.

The USIP sends "experts" who provide "advice" in the conduct of peace negotiations. Among the places where the USIP has trained its efforts are the Balkans, Angola, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Zaire, Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. It also advises the US government on how to facilitate its intervention and strengthen its control and influence in the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and other places where there are large concentrations of Muslims. One of its tactics is the "diplomacy of coercion," which is none other than the use of bully tactics on weak and puppet governments in exchange for aid and credit.

The Bush government used the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 to push further political intervention in independent countries and in countries where there are revolutionary or patriotic movements. In particular, it has set up the "Special Initiatives on the Muslim World" as part of, and attendant to, the "war against terror" to intervene in the political processes of Muslim countries. The USIP also plays the role of propagandist in behalf of US armed intervention and aggression. Among its latest projects are "researches" about the "justness" of US aggression in Afghanistan and Iraq and on the "reconstruction" being conducted by the US in these countries. AB

## Intensifying union struggle at SMC

"Crush IBM-SMC (Ilaw at Buklod ng Manggagawa-San Miguel Corporation) before the end of 2003" was the instruction Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco's gave to his men in the second half of 2002. Cojuangco's minions immediately began a comprehensive attack on unions affiliated with IBM, the federation of genuine, militant and patriotic unions in the San Miguel Group of Companies. Also among those under attack are the union in Cosmos Luzon (which Cojuangco purchased from the Concepcions in 2001) affiliated with NAFLU (National Federation of Labor Unions), another militant federation. IBM and NAFLU both belong to the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU).

The IBM plays a huge role in advancing the welfare of workers in one of the Philippines' largest and most profitable enterprises. In the last three years, the IBM led collective bargaining negotiations and other union struggles and attained meaningful benefits for the masses of workers. Some of the corporations under the San Miguel Group of Companies that almost simultaneously signed collective bargaining agreements (CBA) favorable to the workers are the SMC Brewery; Campo Carne; La Tondeña Distillers Inc. (now called Ginebra San Miguel Inc.) in Cabuyao, Laguna; Philippine Dairy Products Corporation (now called Magnolia Corp.); and Primepak.

Because of the IBM's uncompromising stance for the welfare of the workers, it is now being subjected to further attack. Seven unions under the IBM are now in the thick of intense struggles. These are the



unions in SMC Brewery in Metro Manila; Ginebra San Miguel Inc. in Cabuyao, Laguna, Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan and Lucena City; Campo Carne; Cosmos in Canlubang, Laguna; and Monterey. In addition, the San Miguel Group Cooperative is also feeling the heat. Altogether, over 4,600 workers are affected, including thousands of casuals.

The largest among them, the union in SMC Brewery in Metro Manila which encompasses more than 2,000 workers from the Polo Brewery, Glass and Metal Closure, Pandacan Complex and three large warehouses, is likewise suffering an all-sided attack from management. Every year since the last quarter of 2001, Reggie Regala, a yellow labor leader and a management stooge, has filed contrived cases against the union that include financial opportunism and non-compliance with certain technical requisites of the Bureau of Labor Relations. On this basis, Regala has been trying to raid the IBM-affiliated union and align it with the Association of Genuine Labor Organizations (AGLO) led by opportunist rene-

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# Ka Bert Olalia - a great hero of the working class

The 100th birth anniversary of Felixberto "Ka Bert" Olalia, an outstanding communist, militant unionist, veteran of the militant labor movement and founder of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), was commemorated on August 5.

The life of Ka Bert mirrored both the sufferings endured and the victories attained by the country's labor movement.

He was born to a poor family in Tarlac on August 5, 1903 and began to earn a living at the age of

16. He first found work at a shoe factory in Manila where he led the establishment of a union to fight for more humane working conditions for the workers. He established the Unión de Chineleros y Zapateros de Filipinos, one of the country's first industrial unions. He served as its secretary from 1920 to 1925 and as its president from 1925 to 1940.



Since the beginning, Ka Bert did not divorce his unionism from his participation in the overall democratic movement to uphold the interests and welfare of the greater majority of exploited and oppressed people. In 1939, he became the general secretary of the Katipunan ng mga Anakpawis sa Pilipinas where he joined  
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gades. The union has lost the series of cases filed against it, and even its appeals have been junked by the courts, which are on the take.

Meanwhile, because of successive attempts to destroy the union, the termination or forced retirement of 118 workers, and brazen violations of the CBA, the workers of SMC Brewery filed a notice of strike in March, which was blocked through an Assumption of Jurisdiction (AJ) order from DOLE in May. Although the SMC management is now using the AJ to thwart any moves on the part of IBM, the company refuses to be tied by the AJ and has gone ahead in firing an even greater number of workers.

In the case of the Ginebra San Miguel in Sta. Barbara, Pangasinan, the courts have turned out to be inutile when management disregarded the series of legal decisions favorable to the workers. Through a certification election held in September 2002, the workers succeeded in ousting the yellow Association of Labor Unions-TUCP as their bargaining agent. Management, however, has refused to recognize the new IBM-affiliated union and continues to foist on the workers the worthless "sweetheart" CBA forged by the company in collusion with the yellow leaders of ALU.

ALU has lost all the legal cases filed, from the DOLE all the way up to the Supreme Court. Due to management's continued disregard for the court decisions, a workers' strike erupted in January 2003. The DOLE issued an AJ after nine days. The workers have been defying the AJ for seven months now and the strike has been able to paralyze the production from time to time.

Although there is a rift between Gloria Arroyo and Cojuangco regarding control over the SMC and related

enterprises and they are now in a tussle in preparation for the 2004 elections, what remains striking with respect to the struggles taking place within the San Miguel Group of Companies is the continued collusion of Cojuangco with the Arroyo government in crushing militant unionism. Particularly in San Miguel, whoever prevails between Arroyo and Cojuangco will certainly benefit from IBM's demise or its replacement with a company union. Both Cojuangco and Arroyo believe that the destruction of militant unionism in SMC will be tantamount to the eventual destruction of the progressive labor center KMU.

In cahoots with Arroyo and Cojuangco in the attempt to destroy militant unionism are the federations controlled by the opportunist renegades. Cojuangco particularly favors the Alab-Katipunan led by RPA-ABB chief Nilo de la Cruz, as a replacement for IBM, because the RPA-ABB has already become his private army in Negros. However, Cojuangco opened up to other yellow federations after his own lawyers objected to his preference for the Alab-Katipunan. His lawyers were uncomfortable with the treachery displayed in the past by de la Cruz and the RPA-ABB.

The attempt to destroy IBM is but part of the intensifying pressures brought to bear on workers' ranks and the withdrawal of benefits won by the labor movement in a century of struggle.

Cojuangco and the Arroyo government's sinister plan to crush IBM and other genuine, militant and patriotic unions under the KMU must be thoroughly exposed and opposed by the people and other forces upholding the working class struggle and the struggle for democracy, freedom and social justice. **AB**

Crisanto Evangelista and other patriotic leaders fighting for independence against American colonialism.

When the Japanese imperialists invaded the Philippines, Ka Bert became the commander of the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon in the Manila Capital Region. After the Second World War, he became one of the founders of the Congress of Labor Organizations (CLO), then the largest and strongest federation. Among its affiliates were large unions in private companies and government offices such as Meralco, Nawasa, National Development Corporation, Manila Railroad and Railways and Engineering Island. He became the president of the Katipunan ng mga Kaisahang Manggagawa (KKM). During the first National Labor-Management Conference which took place in July 1951, he served as the representative of the labor sector.

The KKM was disbanded when Ka Bert was arrested in 1951 in a massive repression campaign against militant unionism. Also among those arrested and imprisoned was Ka Amado V. Hernandez.

When Ka Bert was released in 1954, he founded the Confederation of Labor in the Philippines.

He was arrested and imprisoned once more in 1956 on charges of rebellion. Despite state repression, he persevered in organizing the workers. Not long after his release, he established the National Federation of Labor Unions (NAFLU). He became vice chairman of the Katipunan ng Manggagawang Pilipino in 1959, vice president of the Lapiang Manggagawa in 1962 and chairman of the Malayang Samahang Magsasaka in 1964. He also became active in the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism in 1966.

When martial law was imposed in 1972, Ka Bert and militant unionism once more suffered the mailed fist tactics that illegalized all unions and strikes. Ka Bert was arrested in October 1972 and imprisoned for more than four months on charges of subversion. Despite this, he courageously stood for the welfare not only of workers but of all people yearning for freedom and democracy. He became part of the National Democratic Front Executive Committee in the early 1980s. Ka Bert also became a member of the reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines.

In 1980, after almost a decade

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of leading the militant labor movement's efforts to advance despite intense fascist terror, Ka Bert led the daring establishment of the KMU. Tens of thousands of workers and people from other sectors defied the restrictions imposed by the Marcos dictatorship and gathered at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City to ratify the establishment of the patriotic and militant labor center. Since then, the KMU has effectively led in strengthening and advancing the genuine, militant and patriotic labor movement in the Philippines.

The dictatorship was shaken by the courage and solidarity shown by organized labor and the struggling people. Not long afterward, the Marcos regime once

again attempted to strike at the militant labor movement. Ka Bert and other militant worker-leaders were arrested on August 13, 1982 on charges of sedition and subversion.

Despite his age and frail health, the regime kept Ka Bert in solitary confinement, which was too much for his delicate constitution. It worsened his heart ailment and he died of pulmonary complications on December 4, 1983, on the eighth month of his incarceration.

A day before he passed away, he managed to send a message to workers rallying at Plaza Miranda. Despite the frailty of his body, his message radiated his strong fighting spirit and his class hatred for his captors and the people's oppressors. Philippine society under the US-Marcos dictatorship, he said, was one large dungeon. The people are enslaved, exploited and destitute. The dogs and puppies owned by the dictator's daughter Irene Marcos, Ka Bert said, were more fortunate because they ate on time, received medical attention and even lived in a palace.

If Ka Bert were alive today, he would be at the forefront of the struggle of the working class and other exploited and oppressed people, especially in the face of unprecedented attacks by the state on their rights and welfare.

Almost all of the things that Ka Bert and the militant labor movement have fought for, such as the reduction of working hours from 12 to eight hours a day, the Magna Carta of Labor, the Women and Child Labor Law and the Minimum Wage Law, among others, have been junked by the puppet and reactionary state, that are instruments of foreign

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## NPA launches successive tactical offensives in August

EIGHTEEN soldiers were killed and at least five high-powered weapons seized in six successful tactical offensives launched by the NPA this August in various parts of the Philippines. Six soldiers were also wounded and five short arms confiscated, aside from other equipment.

**In Quezon.** Red fighters of the Apolonio Mendoza Command of the NPA attacked a Philippine Navy ship docked in Barangay Ungos, Real, Quezon and the nearby Philippine Coast Guard headquarters on August 19.

It was noontime when bullets suddenly rained on Patrol Fast Craft-352. Subsequently, the Coast Guard headquarters in Real, which was only 50 meters away from the naval station, was also attacked. The NPA confiscated an M60 light machine gun, a 9 mm, two .45s and two M16s.

Two soldiers were slain and five wounded in the raid, including the government's reinforcement troops.

**In Oriental and Occidental Mindoro.** Nearly two hours after the attack in Quezon, four elements of the 19th Special Forces Company were killed when a bomb was detonated under the jeep they were riding in Barangay Malitbog, Bongabong. Among those killed was 2Lt. Cayetano Curitana.

Two soldiers and a policeman were also killed in an NPA ambush in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro on August 20.

**In Davao Oriental.** Five troops of the Philippine Army 55th Engineering Brigade were killed in an ambush in Baganga, Davao Oriental on August 19. One more soldier was wounded in the ambush launched by the 2nd Pulang Bagani Company.

**In Catanduanes.** The NPA meted punishment on Chief Insp. Loreto Tablizo, deputy director of the provincial PNP. Tablizo had just stepped out of the cockpit in Barangay Valencia, Virac when he was ambushed by Red fighters.

**In Negros Occidental.** Three soldiers of the 11th IB, including an officer, were killed in an NPA ambush in Barangay Linuthangan, Canlaon City on August 6. Killed in the ambush were 1Lt. Geisson Regner, commanding officer of the 11th IB's Charlie Company, S/Sgt. Edwin Allen, detachment commander in Asay, La Castellana and another soldier. They were aboard a jeep headed towards Moises Padilla when they were ambushed. Seized were three M16s, a .45, cellphones, backpacks and boots.

## Treatment demanded for detainee's baby

THE Health Action for Human Rights and GABRIELA demanded that the AFP and the Arroyo regime immediately save the life of Baby Gabriela Llesis and free her mother Zenaida from imprisonment at the Bukidnon Provincial Rehabilitation Center.

Baby Gabriela was born on February 19 with a hole in her heart and a liver tumor. She is now bedridden together with her mother in a hospital in Cagayan de Oro, tightly guarded by many soldiers.

Zenaida Llesis was captured by the military on August 5, 2002 in a raid in Pangantugan, Bukidnon. She was imprisoned and denied medical attention despite the fact that she was pregnant with Baby Gabriela. Due to the intense pressure of military interrogation, Zenaida's health faltered, affecting the baby. Just a few days after Baby Gabriela was born, she and her mother who were both ailing, were brought to hospital.

## Arroyo couple's corruption bared

ON August 18, Sen. Panfilo Lacson exposed the Arroyo couple's massive corruption. The senator, who is himself a plunderer, detailed how the couple had amassed great wealth from illegal contributions and bribes. Lacson said the couple stashed over P200 million in the Lualhati Foundation and other dummy bank accounts and that Mike Arroyo uses the name "Jose Pidal" to conceal over P36 million in a bank account. Lacson identified close friends of the Arroyo family as well as Mike Arroyo's mistress Victoria Toh as "beneficiaries" of the ill-gotten wealth.

In addition, Lacson also named institutions and personalities who poured millions into Gloria Arroyo's campaign fund in 1998. Among them is the law firm Carpio, Villaraza and Cruz, from which hail not only many of the regime's

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capitalists and the local comprador-bourgeoisie.

On the centenary of Ka Bert's birth and two decades after his demise, his fighting spirit and his heritage vibrantly live on in the militant labor

movement that persists in the struggle of the working class for the immediate liberation of their class and the entire Filipino people from foreign and local exploitation and oppression and for socialism. AB

lawyers and judges, but also the present Ombudsman, Simeon Marcelo. Also included in the list is one Franklin Fuentabella, who has been implicated in the massive misuse of investors' funds in Multitel, the smuggler Lucio Co and former Estrada crony Mark Jimenez.

### **Campaign for non-payment of land rent launched in Cagayan Valley**

The Pambansang Kapisanan ng mga Magsasaka sa Pilipinas-Cagayan Valley (PKMP-CV) called on all those affected by tropical storm Harurot to fight for their right not to pay land rent. The peasants of Cagayan and Isabela sustained the greatest damage from Harurot which battered Northern Luzon and other parts of the country in July.

The campaign was initiated on August 5 to advance the demand for landlords and merchant usurers not to collect land rent and loan payments. The campaign is in accordance with the guidelines in the Revolutionary Guide to Land Reform which stipulates that when peasants sustain damage to 20% of their harvest, land rent for that year should no longer be paid. If the damage is 50% or higher, farmers should not pay land rent for two consecutive harvests.

### **Mining and logging in Samar opposed**

The people strongly oppose the resumption of mining activities in Samar island and the continued destruction of the environment. They expressed their opposition by launching a caravan of trucks, cars, jeeps and motorcycles on August 8 that hundreds of peasants and fisherfolk, youth, academics, members of non-governmental organizations, government officials and Catholic church leaders joined. The protesters shouted "No to Mining, Yes to SINP (Samar Island National Park)." The SINP concept calls for a stop to mining and logging activities to allow Samar to recover from the serious depletion of its natural wealth and the resultant environmental destruction.

The caravan paraded through three provinces before going to Catbalogan, the capital of Samar. The demonstrators demanded that President Arroyo put a stop to mining operations and hasten the proclamation of the Samar Island National Park.

### **Abimael Guzman wages hunger strike**

Abimael Guzman, the principal leader of the Sendero Luminoso, a revolutionary movement in Peru, is currently waging a hunger strike. Guzman has been fasting in his cell to oppose the reimposition of solitary confinement on himself and his wife, Elena Ipparaguirre.

Guzman and Ipparaguirre were illegally arrested and sentenced by a military court to life imprisonment in 1992. This May, Peru's highest court declared their trial "unconstitutional" and ordered their cases reopened.

### **US power in Iraq further shaken**

A yet unidentified group bombed the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq on August 19, killing 15 people on the spot and wounding over a hundred others. Among those killed was Sergio Vieira de Mello, the principal UN representative to Iraq. The bombing was the biggest blow to US imperialism's "reconstruction" efforts in Iraq.

Previous to this, Iraqis bombed an oil pipeline that served as the main conduit of oil from the city of Kirkuk in northern Iraq to Turkey. The pipeline had been operating for only three days since the US opened it. Forty percent of Iraq's overall oil production passes through the pipeline. It is clear that the intention is to put a complete stop to the flow of oil to refineries and other countries.

Oil is the key to the US occupation of Iraq. It has become more and more difficult for the US to control the country and benefit from its rich oil resources due to the people's extensive and intensive opposition. On average, one American soldier is killed every day by Iraqi forces in continued clashes with US forces.

### **Liberian president ousted**

At the instigation of US imperialism, Charles Taylor, president of Liberia (a country in western Africa), was ousted on August 11 due to widespread armed and unarmed opposition to his regime.

Taylor became president of Liberia in 1989 through a bloody coup d'état supported by the US. His fascist rule was marked by a continuous civil war that culminated in bloody fighting in Monrovia, the country's capital, this August. The US immediately sent military forces to the country to ensure Taylor's retreat and install its newest puppet in Liberia.