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Editorial

Take advantage of the US-Arroyo regime's political crisis

The exposé of audio tapes pointing to Gloria Arroyo's direct involvement in, and collusion with, COMELEC officials to perpetrate electoral fraud during the 2004 polls is exacerbating the US-Arroyo regime's political crisis. This is by far the biggest in a series of scandals of the regime's own making. The scandal has greatly angered the people and is now shaking the regime to its very foundations. Its outbreak occurred almost at the same time as revelations on the Arroyo family's direct involvement in jueteng (an illegal numbers game).

The Arroyo regime is now at the brink of collapse. Already extremely isolated from the people, it is isolating itself even more in its attempt to dodge the scandals. More and more people are taking a stand, determined to take action to push for the ouster of the rotten, puppet and fascist Arroyo regime.

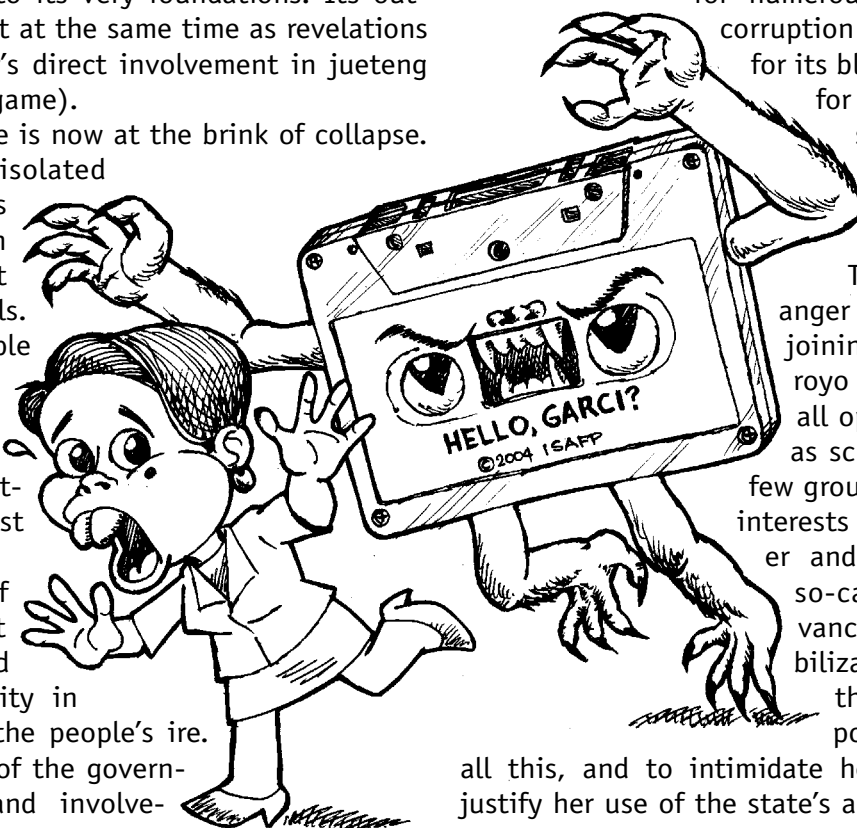
The exposure of Arroyo's involvement in electoral fraud and her family's complicity in jueteng are fueling the people's ire. The clear disclosure of the government's rottenness and involve-

ment in electoral fraud is serving as a valuable lesson for the people on the worthlessness of elections under the reactionary state and political system.

Long before all this, the people's had already been seething in anger against the Arroyo regime for its pro-imperialist and oppressive economic policies that have intensified the people's poverty and suffering, for numerous cases of large-scale corruption and other anomalies, for its blind puppetry to the US, for fascist attacks and the suppression of democratic forces and a people waging resistance.

To deflect the people's anger and prevent them from joining demonstrations, Arroyo misrepresents any and all opposition to her regime as schemes hatched up by a few groups motivated by selfish interests that wish to seize power and derail the economy's so-called impending advance. Arroyo cries "destabilization" to make it appear that nothing more than a power struggle is behind

all this, and to intimidate her political opponents, justify her use of the state's armed forces and ration-



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alize the suppression of demonstrations.

But her schemes have failed to prevent the people from forging ranks and taking action to assert Arroyo's ouster from Malacañang. It has become ever clearer to them that their economic and political grievances can never be redressed and their demands for immediate relief can never be realized as long as Arroyo remains in power. It is Arroyo's stubborn insistence on clinging to power that is the biggest obstacle to implementing just wage and salary increases; junking the oil deregulation law and achieving a rollback in the prices of petroleum products; reducing electricity and water costs, tuition fees and the prices of other basic needs; rescinding the order to hike taxes; ceasing the servicing of foreign debts; increasing the budget for education, health and other social services; ending the repression of democratic organizations and parties; putting a stop to killings and militarization in many parts of the country; rectifying electoral fraud and other poll anomalies; and realizing the people's other demands and aspira-

tions.

The present political crisis is reflective of the intense crisis wracking the entire ruling system. It proceeds from the continuing isolation of the ruling reactionary clique, which has done nothing but plunge the people into the quagmire of extreme poverty and intense oppression under the semi-colonial and semifeudal system. It likewise proceeds from the intensifying contradictions among reactionary politicians due to greatly reduced benefits from bureaucratic corruption and the Arroyo clique's lust for power and plunder.

The intense political crisis currently rocking the Arroyo regime is part of the ruling system's continuing crisis that resulted in the overthrow of the Estrada regime in 2001 and the Marcos dictatorship in 1986. It is a crisis that is once more rapidly coming to a head. There are emerging factors and forces that are converging to form a powerful current of anti-Arroyo protests. The overthrow of the regime through huge street demonstrations and legal processes in conjunction with the appropriate utilization of the armed forces has

become a distinct possibility.

The end of the US-Arroyo regime draws nearer. It may happen in the next stages of the continuing political battle. In the face of such scandals and protests, the Arroyo regime will become a lame duck the longer it stays in power.

The revolutionary movement must take advantage of the present political crisis by propagating the program for a people's democratic revolution and the victories painstakingly achieved in the coming years. Conditions are excellent for inculcating in the minds of millions of Filipinos that only with the advance of the people's democratic revolution can they be freed from the graft-ridden and corrupt government and the semicolonial and semifeudal system.

Even before the explosion of the crisis currently rocking the Arroyo regime, the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) had already instructed the revolutionary forces to advance the people's democratic revolution to the next higher stage of people's war and hasten the downfall of the ruling regime. In the face of the immense political turmoil rocking the ruling system, the revolutionary forces must thoroughly take advantage of this excellent situation and opportunity for the revolutionary movement's further and all-sided advance.

The revolutionary forces must pull all stops to arouse, organize and mobilize the masses against the present regime. They must take advantage of the excellent opportunity to broaden the united front, further deepen rifts within the ranks of the enemy and overthrow the worst ruling elements from power. The formation of a broad mass movement and anti-Arroyo united front and its support for an agenda advocating the people's most urgent demands is the key to



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mobilizing them to oust Arroyo.

The current situation opens opportunities for more rapidly expanding the revolutionary forces and the revolutionary mass organizations several times over. We must excel in sweeping methods of propaganda and organizing, including launching broad legal and open actions, while diligently ensuring plans for consolidation.

Various forces in their numbers are now gravitating towards an anti-Arroyo united front. They include, among others, the democratic and pro-people organizations, religious groups, the political opposition and disgruntled military forces.

The New People's Army (NPA) is expanding its area of operations and strengthening the revolutionary mass organizations. It must launch more tactical offensives that it is capable of winning against the AFP and other armed forces of the state.

With the intensification of armed struggle, the NPA is able to contribute greatly to the Arroyo regime's weakening and ouster. It can take advantage of the worsening chaos and rifts within the AFP and overextend and draw away the reactionary armed forces from centers of mass actions. The victories of the armed struggle further inspire the people to advance their struggle against the corrupt, puppet and fascist regime.

For the Filipino people, the current crisis rocking the Arroyo regime is a fine thing. It provides them the opportunity to advance their most urgent demands. It opens up the possibility for people's war to achieve new levels of concrete gains and brings it even closer to complete victory. AB

Jueteng and electoral fraud

The hardest blows to hit Gloria Arroyo's regime

After almost two weeks of public hearings in the senate, a witness came forward on June 8 with direct knowledge of the involvement of Gloria Arroyo's son, Rep. Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, and her brother-in-law, Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, in the jueteng payola scandal.

The witness Sandra Cam, who admitted involvement in jueteng operations, disclosed that she delivered P500,000 each to Iggy and Mikey on the 22nd of each month as their share of the takings from the illegal numbers game in Bicol. Their share, said Cam, was collected by Chief Superintendent Restito Mosqueda, the region's former police chief.

Before Cam emerged, the group Crusade Against Jueteng led by Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Pangasinan had already presented a number of witnesses who testified that Arroyo's relatives were taking jueteng bribes.

Cam averred that from September 2004 to March 2005, Mosqueda continually provided the bribe money to the Arroyos. She said this formed part of the conditions for Mosqueda's appointment as the region's police director. Cam added that she was chosen to deliver the bribe money because she was a friend of Mosqueda's.

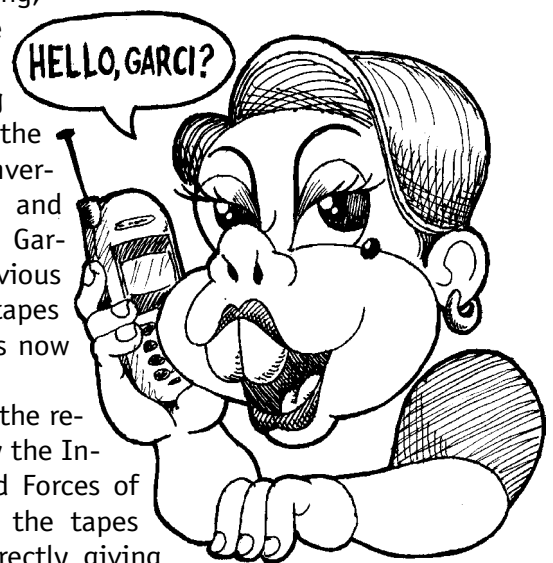
From August 2004, Cam collected P100,000 a week from jueteng lords in Sorsogon, P250,000 a week from Albay, P350,000 a week from Camarines Norte and P187,000 a week from Camarines Sur. This meant an annual collection of over P40 million from these four provinces alone.

On June 10, Atty. Samuel Ong, a former deputy director of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) came forward, saying that he was in possession of the original tape recordings of conversations between Gloria Arroyo and COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano on cheating in the previous national elections. It is these tapes that are at the heart of what is now known as "Gloriagate.*"

Ong said the four tapes are the result of wiretapping activities by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP). From the tapes can be heard Gloria Arroyo directly giving detailed and firm instructions to COMELEC officials to manipulate the canvass and have her win by at least a million votes.

Aside from the president's, the voices of Sen. Robert Barbers and other administration stalwarts could also be heard from the tapes, talking about schemes to commit fraud in the vote canvass.

Ong received the tapes from T/Sgt. Vidal Doble, an ISAFP agent who sought refuge along with him at the San Carlos Seminary in Makati City to expose the anomaly.



Malacañang grew frantic over the scandals' disclosure.

The ISAFP immediately seized Doble's wife and children to force the agent to recant his testimony. Under the ISAFP's custody, Doble immediately denied that he had a role in the tapes' exposé. The regime now wants the public to believe that Doble was abducted by Ong and did not go to the San Carlos Seminary on his own volition. Following Malacañang's mangled script, Doble has been implicating just about anyone to misrepresent the whole episode as nothing but the handiwork of the regime's opponents. At first, the police claimed that Doble testified that he was paid by former Rep. Oscar Orbos to expose the tapes. When this allegation failed to hold, the police then pointed to Joseph Estrada's mistress Laarni Enriquez as the source of the tapes to make it appear that the exposé was a scheme hatched by the former president.

A reenactment conducted by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group for the media on how Doble purportedly got the tapes was ludicrous for its inconsistencies with the agent's first sworn statement.

The regime was likewise in a bind as to what it should charge Ong with. If it charges him with violating the anti-wiretapping law, this would necessitate an admission from the president and the others involved that the voices in the tapes were indeed theirs. If it charges him with kidnapping, several witnesses, including the bishops who provided Ong and Doble sanctuary, would be able to belie the accusation. In the end, the former NBI official was charged with inciting to sedition.

The regime continues to look for ways to discredit Ong and other witnesses who have testified on the other scandals. The NBI now alleges that Sandra Cam and Ong have been longtime acquaintances to establish its theory that this is all part of a conspiracy to discredit the Arroyo government.

Meanwhile, Justice Sec. Raul Gonzales is in danger of being swamped by the sheer number of people he wants to file charges against. His hitlist includes anyone in possession of a CD copy of Arroyo and Garcillano's taped conversations. The CDs are extremely popular and can now be bought in the sidewalks of Metro Manila and many other cities. The controversial recordings are also downloadable from the internet. Gonzales claims that even those who use the popular "Hello Garci?" ringtone in their cellphones may be held liable.

The voices in the tapes are undoubtedly those of Arroyo, Garcillano and their other co-conspirators. Is it any wonder that Garcillano has made himself scarce and his whereabouts are unknown. Gloria Arroyo has meanwhile refused to comment on the issue. Her silence further convinces the majority of the veracity of the tapes' contents. Even Arroyo's own partymates and allies are convinced that the president's silence has placed the regime in grave danger.

Malacañang is doing all it can to suppress evidence on these crimes and dodge the blows from these explosive scandals. But it has been hit so hard, it could hardly make a move.

With the Arroyo government's iniquity coming to light, the people's pent up anger is on the verge of exploding. **AB**

**Likening it to the "Watergate Scandal" in the US in 1974 that resulted from disclosures that the Republican Party illegally conducted surveillance on the headquarters of its rival Democratic Party in relation to the forthcoming presidential elections. The scandal compelled then US President Richard Nixon to resign.*

Anti-Arroyo protests expand

People's protests to oust Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from power have gradually expanded since the jueteng and "Gloria-gate" scandals broke out.

Some 10,000 people in Manila and another 20,000 in Bacolod City joined mass actions on June 11 to mark a National Day of Mourning. The protests were organized by four Catholic bishops affiliated with the Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya (KME). Aside from assailing Arroyo's involvement in electoral fraud during last year's polls, they also bewailed the Arroyo regime's economic policies that have wrought suffering on the people.

Students, teachers, researchers, employees and administrators at the University of the Philippines strongly against the present government founded on lies and fraud also formed the UP Alliance Working for Arroyo's Removal (UP-AWARE) on June 16. The alliance called for Arroyo's removal through "resignation, impeachment or ouster." According to former UP president Francisco Nemenzo, one of UP-AWARE's convenors, the only way to get rid of the current graft-ridden and elite-led government is through extra-constitutional means.

A protest rally by progressive legislators and sectoral organizations followed on June 17 in front of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) national office. "Don't obstruct the truth!" read some placards, referring to Arroyo and Commis-

sioner Virgilio Garcillano's continued efforts to dodge the scandal that has since been dubbed "Gloria-gate". "Gloria, step down now!" read other placards.

With the stench of the Arroyo administration's misdeeds spreading all over, formerly staunch allies and supporters have now started distancing themselves from the regime. On June 17, representatives of 20 so-called "civil society" groups such as Code-NGO as well as business and religious organizations, and even some partymates and members of Arroyo's government issued a joint statement calling on Arroyo to speak up on disclosures of fraud in the last elections. They also said that if the voice on the tape was indeed Arroyo's, she must resign along with Vice President Noli de Castro and the COMELEC commissioners.

Many creative forms of protest have also emerged. Compact discs with Arroyo and Garcillano's taped conversations cost ₱5 apiece and are selling like hotcakes all over Manila and other towns. The "Hello Garci?" ringtone which mocks Arroyo is now in vogue. Said TXTPower, an advocacy group for cellphone users, these are expressions of the people's widespread disgust



for the regime. Various versions of the ringtone and an assortment of jokes and sarcastic remarks against the Arroyo regime can be downloaded from TXTPower's website, which now enjoys great popularity.

In an effort to depict herself as a president still firmly in control of government, Arroyo flew to Hong Kong on June 20 to entice foreign capitalists to invest in the Philippines. She was, however, met with protests by Filipino migrants led by United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-HK). The protesters rallied in front of Arroyo's hotel and called for her ouster.

Also on June 20, BAYAN, religious groups and the pro-Estrada camp formed a coalition to demand Arroyo's ouster. The newly formed coalition will lead a protest action on June 24. Another protest action by a group of retired generals led by Gen. Fortunato Abat is set for June 25.

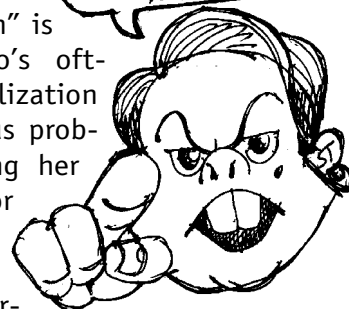
AB

"Destabilization"

"Destabilization" is

Gloria Arroyo's oft-used rationalization for the serious problems besetting her regime and for every major action taken against it. Arroyo now dismisses the dissemination of the Gloriagate audio tapes containing conversations between her, COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and other co-conspirators of Malacañang on

DESTABILISASYON 'YAN!



perpetrating fraud in last year's election as part of a "destabilization plot."

The Gloriagate scandal came out immediately after Archbishop Oscar Cruz and other witnesses exposed the involvement of Gloria Arroyo's husband, son and brother-in-law in illegal jueteng operations—which constitutes still another "destabilization plot," claims the Arroyo camp.

Such rationalizations are an attempt to deflect the growing discontent and condemnation that have resulted from the scandals. At the same time, they justify the repression and intimidation of persons who have been courageous enough to expose the corruption and criminal involvement of Arroyo's family and her regime's officials. Investigations that are underway are thwarted. The Arroyo clique is maneuvering to misrepresent the exposés as the handiwork of ousted president Joseph Estrada and the regime's other political opponents.

There is nothing new about the Arroyo regime's tactics. Since Arroyo's ascension to power, the regime has habitually invoked the slogan of "destabilization" to refute any and all actions that question its legitimacy and continued rule. This was how the regime depicted the mass action launched by hundreds of thousands of urban poor in front of

Malacañang on May 1, 2001 and how it justified the use of force against the rallyists.

"Destabilization" was also the term Malacañang used on the protest action launched by soldiers and junior AFP officers at the Oakwood Hotel in August 2003. It alleged that the mutineers were merely prodded by the regime's power-hungry opponents. It sought to conceal the legitimate issues put forward by the protesters, frighten the people about these actions' allegedly negative effects on the economy and their livelihoods, and tell its political rivals that it will do everything to remain in power.

After two attempts to oust her from power, the term "destabilization" now encompasses all developments that have a negative effect on Arroyo's reputation and standing. In 2003, Arroyo branded the series of bank holdups in Metro Manila as part of a "destabilization plot." The kidnappings of Filipino-Chinese businessmen that same year was also alleged to be a "destabilization plot."

Whether or not there are immediate threats to its rule, the regime openly uses the "destabilization" bogey to justify the use of excessive military and police force to suppress the people's rights to free assembly and expression. It violently suppressed a demonstration in June 2004 against electoral fraud and forcibly dispersed demonstrators in July 2004 demanding the withdrawal of Filipino troops from Iraq. In December 2004, Arroyo mobilized several military and police battalions to prevent thousands of people from joining the funeral march of Fernando Poe Jr., Arroyo's closest rival in the last election, allegedly because of "destabilization" plans. Arroyo once again re-

vived the specter of "destabilization" in May 2005 to suppress a mass action by thousands of workers on Labor Day.

The regime's frequent resort to the destabilization threat brings to the fore its terrible dread at the thought of the poor taking to the streets especially together with Arroyo's reactionary political opponents and disgruntled government and military forces. Arroyo knows too well that if the various issues and scandals hounding its rule are allowed to prosper and gain momentum, it would only take the slightest push to drive her out of power.

No amount of justifications, maneuvers and threats from the regime will be able to prevent the emergence of earth-shaking scandals resulting from the disgruntlement of its cohorts in the plunder of the public treasury and the perpetration of criminal operations. Due to the Arroyo family's greed and selfishness and those of its most favored cronies, there can be no stopping the growing number of anomalies exposed by its political rivals and even by its own people as well as others who are privy to or have discovered them. Each and every exposé and especially, a compilation of these anomalies already serve to ignite the people's anger. "Gloriagate" which exposed electoral fraud, is the worst scandal to hit the regime to date.

By admitting to a growing

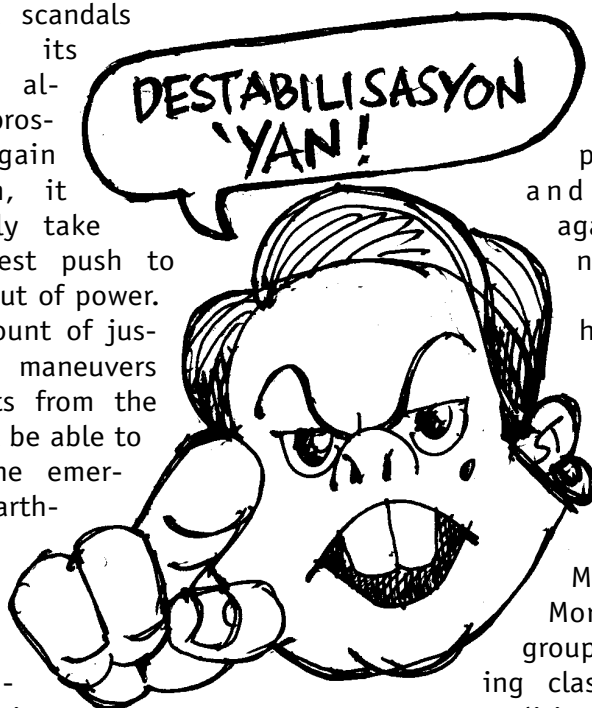
number of "destabilization plots," Arroyo also underscores the many serious issues against her and the fact that her regime is extremely unstable and is on an inexorable decline. Both Arroyo and her political rivals are aware that her rule is founded on narrow and shaky ground and that her regime is able to perpetuate itself only by buying the loyalty of equally greedy officials in the civil and military bu-

reaucracy, by deceiving and intimidating the people, and by employing violence and repression against its opponents.

As Arroyo's hold on power falters, there will be growing threats from her political rivals to seize Malacañang.

More and more groups from the ruling classes and other sectors traditionally allied with the government have either explicitly expressed their disappointment with the regime or openly called for its ouster. The list includes retired and active military officers, officials of the Catholic Church, nationalist businessmen, and even a significant section from the social-democrats who have previously been fierce supporters of the regime.

But the biggest source of destabilization is none other than the Arroyo regime's own actions. In forcibly implementing the most severe antipeople policies and measures, it incites the people to rise up and work for its ouster. **AB**



Palparan—the regime's rabid fascist dog

The Arroyo regime deployed the notorious butcher of Mindoro, Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan in Eastern Visayas, hoping that he could replicate in his new post what the regime believes Palparan had earlier achieved—the destruction of the revolutionary movement in Mindoro.

The Arroyo regime is mistaken if it thinks that fascist brutality can annihilate the revolutionary forces in Eastern Visayas. As it had done in Mindoro, the regime's armed forces in Eastern Visayas now concentrate on attacking unarmed people and mass leaders and activists of the open democratic movement. Meanwhile, the NPA continues to reap victories in its battles against the reactionary AFP in Eastern Visayas and recruitment into the NPA has stepped up. The grim terror unleashed by Palparan in both city and countryside has become the most effective recruiter of Red fighters in the region.

Since the latter part of the 1970s, Eastern Visayas has achieved many brilliant revolutionary victories, especially in building the Party and the people's army, advancing agrarian revolution, expanding and raising the level of mass organizations and establishing local organs of revolutionary political power. The regime seeks to destroy these longstanding victories and is deathly afraid of the revolutionary movement's continued growth in the region.

Because it cannot crush the revolutionary movement through

sheer military force, the regime is now applying the counterrevolutionary tactic of "draining the sea to catch the fish." This means that the reactionary armed forces would now be attacking and committing fascist acts against the people in the hope of depriving the revolutionary forces of their mass base.

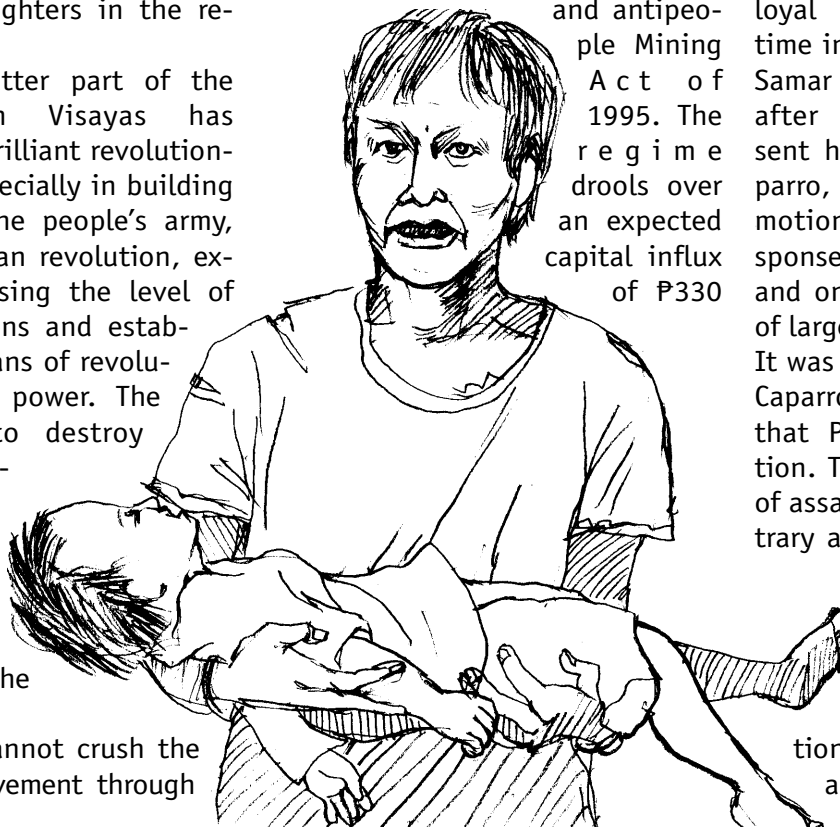
The reactionary ruling classes are particularly interested in safeguarding their economic interests in the region. Eastern Visayas is expected to be one of the focal points of a number of "development projects". In particular, the region is one of the areas that are rich in natural resources, especially mineral resources. Among the big mining companies that the regime has signed contracts with are Bauxite Resources, Inc. and Alumina Mining of the Philippines, Inc. These companies have been given free rein after the Supreme Court upheld the pro-imperialist

and antipeople Mining Act of 1995. The regime drools over an expected capital influx of P330

billion from the mining companies. Eastern Visayas is of particular value to the regime, especially since many mining companies have shown interest in its resource-rich lands. Most of these resources, however, are in areas where the revolutionary movement maintains a strong presence. This is another reason why the regime has given the likes of Palparan the special task of crushing the revolutionary movement in the region.

Palparan was designated commanding general of the 8th ID on February 10, 2005. Palparan's record has been marked by the unbridled use of the most brutal and most heinous means of dealing with the democratic and revolutionary forces. Thus, whenever the regime has plans to crush the revolutionary movement in a particular area through brutal means, it deploys Palparan to that area.

As one of the fascist regime's loyal lapdogs, Palparan lost no time in unleashing fascist terror in Samar and Leyte. Barely eight days after his deployment, Palparan sent his men to kill Fr. Allan Caparro, vice-chairperson of the Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR) in Eastern Visayas and one of the leading opponents of large-scale mining in the region. It was a warning to persons like Fr. Caparro who uphold human rights, that Palparan brooks no opposition. This was followed by a series of assassinations, abductions, arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, beatings, torture and harassment of the masses in the countryside and of known leaders and members of democratic organizations in the provinces of Samar and Leyte.



Human rights violations in Eastern Visayas grew by 500% in the five months Palparan has stayed in the region, compared to the total number of violations the previous year.

After successive crimes against the people of Eastern Visayas, Palparan had the gall to launch a program to build up the 8th ID's image called "Kamay, Ngiti, Bati" ("Handshakes, Smiles, Greetings").

Palparan is not fooling anyone with these tactics. Wherever he goes, he is hounded by the people's strong condemnation and fierce opposition to his brutality.

The regime has rewarded Palparan with two successive promotions in exchange for his brazen violations of human rights. Malacañang is doing all it can to make sure that Palparan's promotion to major general makes it through the Commission on Appointments. It is Arroyo's reward to her most reliable fascist agent in Eastern Visayas. AB

The butcher has failed

The AFP's claim that Gen. Palparan's fascist brutality has crushed the revolutionary movement in Mindoro is hogwash. The revolutionary forces in the island suffered setbacks and hardships but in the main, Gen. Palparan failed to even cripple the revolutionary movement in Mindoro.

A successful NPA tactical offensive in Barangay Ligang, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro on February 18, 2005 where two soldiers were killed and five were wounded is proof that the revolutionary movement in Mindoro is very much alive and well and remains relatively strong.

The unarmed people of Mindoro sustained the most severe blows from Palparan's efforts to stop them from supporting the revolutionary movement. Many leaders, mass activists and ordinary folk were killed, abducted, tortured and intimidated by his troops. Entire communities were bombed, forcibly evacuated and terrorized by open and covert henchmen of the butcher of Mindoro. AB

Even children?

On May 3, the military abused three children in Matuguinao, Western Samar. Soldiers were looking for their parents and when they could not find them, the abusive troops turned on the children, burning their genitals with cigarettes.

Meanwhile, on March 31, 34th IB troops abducted Nonario and Rina Fabella and their children Liza, 8; Marissa, 7; Charisse, 5; and Kulot, 3. Rina is a member of the Advocates for Women's Action, Rights and Empowerment (AWARE), an organization allied with GABRIELA. AB

The Number One landgrabber in Cagayan Valley



The reactionary government is the leading landgrabber in Cagayan Valley. It cedes lands confiscated from peasants to gigantic corporations, bourgeois compradors and landlords or gives them free rein to use these lands.

Over one million hectares are currently being seized from peasants to pave the way for government projects and programs and those of its foreign monopoly-capitalist and comprador-bourgeois cohorts. The extent of land seizures in Cagayan Valley in the 17 years that the bogus Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) has been in force is unparalleled in the region's history.

When the government seizes land from the peasantry, it makes no distinction between titled or untitled

lands. One of the most common means of landgrabbing in Cagayan Valley is the cancellation of Certificates of Land Title (CLT) and Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) already issued to the peasants. This is the case in Hacienda Sta. Isabel and Hacienda San Antonio, Hacienda Maluno, Hacienda Nuesa and other estates in Isabela; and Hacienda Madrigal, Hacienda Hawkins, the Arranz Estate, the Pallagao Estate and many other haciendas and farmlands in Cagayan.

Hundreds of thousands of hectares have been seized despite the fact that the peasants had already paid tens of thousands of pesos in amortization for several decades. The government seizes such lands to benefit projects like Eduardo “Danding” Cojuangco’s Cassava Plantation. The Cojuangco project covers 21 towns of Isabela, 10 towns in Cagayan, three towns in Quirino and two towns in Nueva Vizcaya.

The reactionary government has likewise been colluding with gigantic multinational corporations in seizing land from 10,000 peasant families for the Coal Mine and Coal-Fired Power Plant project that covers 64,000 hectares in the towns of Cauayan, Benito Soliven and Naguilian in Isabela. Meanwhile, 26,000 hectares in Gonzaga and Sta. Ana towns in northern Cagayan are in danger of being forcibly taken over by the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (CEZA). The disputed area had long been declared idle and abandoned by the Bureau of Lands, prompting Ilocano peasants and minorities from Ifugao, Bontoc, Benguet and Abra to open settlements and clear and farm the land since the 1970s. CEZA wants to exploit the town’s fertile soil, rich fishing grounds and other resources.

Swindling the peasants to seize their land is big business in Cagayan Valley. In several clusters of barrios in Central Isabela, for example, syndicates in collusion with the Department of Land Reform (DLR), the Land Bank and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) use the CARP’s voluntary offer to sell (VOS) provision to inveigle peasants into paying to have their lands surveyed and titled—lands they have long been tilling. Each hectare is priced at ₱30,000 and



peasants have to pay ₱500 every harvest season for 30 years. Peasants who refuse to cooperate are threatened with confiscation. Those unable to sustain the amortizations suffer foreclosure. The foreclosed land is then given to local and foreign businessmen. Researches reveal that the syndicates, the DLR, the DENR and the Land Bank rake in up to ₱502,000 per lot from survey payments and sham land titling.

Meanwhile, outsiders as well as government agencies are claiming 15,303 hectares of the 30,000-hectare Sandoval Estate in Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya. Aside

from the Sandoval family and three other families that are claiming a total of 3,892 hectares, the following agencies of the reactionary government have likewise staked their respective claims: Philcacao (4,000 hectares), Bureau of Lands (1,750 hectares) and the Bureau of Forest Development (5,661 hectares). The families laying claim to the lands hold fake land titles obtained in collusion with the reactionary courts.

In many more instances, lands are reassessed and overvalued and the peasants ordered to pay higher amortization directly to the landlords. The peasants are purposely given a hard time to coerce them into going along with the wishes of the government and rapacious landlords and comprador-bourgeoisie. One glaring example is Isabela’s Mallig Plains where there are 64,597 hectares that Danding Cojuangco wants planted to cassava.

Over 65% (1.7 million hectares) of the region’s total of 2.6 million hectares are also being forcibly classified as forest land even if they have long been tilled and developed by the peasants. The lands are subjected to schemes like the Community-Based Forest Management, Integrated Socialized Forestry and other government projects whose avowed aim is reforestation but whose real objective is to seize the peasants’ lands.

Aside from landgrabbing by the government, parcels of peasant land are being seized as payment for debts that have piled up due to spiraling production costs. Due to the absence of government support, merchant-usurers are able to seize the lands that millions of peasant families in the region depend on for a living. **AB**

US terrorism

It is not in the interest of US imperialism to ease the chaos and violence in Iraq or any other part of the world. In truth, it is the US that incites and initiates disorder and violence to justify its intervention and occupation, reinforce the puppet state's dependence on the US' military and political support, and prevent the advance of genuine anti-imperialist and democratic movements.

In 2002, the Bush regime used the terrorist attacks on the US as a pretext to establish the Proactive, Preemptive Operations Group (P2OG), a secret army of operatives from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the US military. It is "proactive" because its orientation is not defensive but active target identification and the instigation of conflicts; and it is "pre-emptive" because of its orientation to "beat the enemy to the draw" before it can attack or even poise for an attack. Directly headed by US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the P2OG carries out covert military operations, intelligence, deception and disinformation to fuel intensifying chaos and violence worldwide.

Researches reveal that the P2OG's task is to sow violence, such as assassinations and sabotage to provoke groups labeled as "terrorist" to carry out retaliatory actions. The P2OG's operations are made out as "terrorist operations" against innocent civilians. Aside from discrediting its opponents, the US also uses the violence and chaos generated by such tactics to further terrorize the people and justify intervention by US forces and the use of repression.

US analysts liken the P2OG's operations to the decades of vio-

lence sown by Operation Gladio since 1952. The US and NATO allegedly designed Operation Gladio to set up armed organizations to resist possible attacks by the Soviet Union on Western Europe. In truth, Gladio's main objective was to fund small, fanatical anti-communist groups that would carry out bombings which would later be blamed on leftist groups. This way, they terrorize the people and prevent the leftist groups from gaining more political power. The most glaring example of Operation Gladio's work is a train bombing in Italy in 1980 that killed 85 people. The bombing was immediately blamed on "leftist elements" but a subsequent investigation into the matter revealed that it was the handiwork of an ultra-Rightist group under Operation Gladio.

A covert US operation against Cuba in 1963 called "Operation Northwoods" was essentially the same as Operation Gladio. Under "Operation Northwoods," the US committed bombings, organized small vigilante groups, killed innocent civilians and perpetrated all sorts of heinous tactics to justify the invasion of Cuba.

By 1970, "terrorist attacks" that were blamed on "communists and socialists" became part of the US Army manual. At this time, US and NATO operatives carried out terrorist attacks and planted evidence to convince Western Euro-

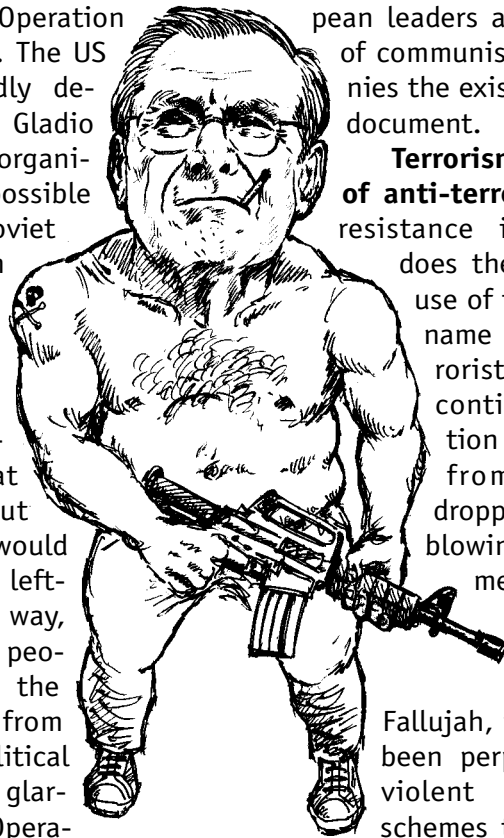
pean leaders about the "evils of communism." The US denies the existence of such a document.

Terrorism in the name of anti-terrorism. As Iraqi resistance intensifies, so does the US' unbridled use of terrorism in the name of the anti-terrorist war and its continued occupation of Iraq. Aside from mercilessly dropping bombs and blowing up establishments in suspected Iraqi guerrilla bases as it had done in

Fallujah, the US has also been perpetrating dirty, violent and brutal schemes to intensify inter-ethnic conflicts in Iraq. American troops have been secretly planting bombs in vehicles of unsuspecting Iraqi civilians and detonating them in heavily populated areas. The bombings have been blamed on Iraqi guerrillas to discredit anti-US forces and sow discord among civilian supporters of the armed struggle. Likewise, the US authorities have been carrying out various measures to magnify differences between ethnic groups in Iraq.

In the Philippines, the involvement of covert US operatives has been revealed several times in the terrorist bombings of public places that were committed in collusion with the US' puppets in the reactionary army.

The most glaring example is Michael Meiring, a US special agent stationed in Davao in 2002. Meiring's main role was to provide



training and funding for a series of bombings in Mindanao to justify the continuing presence of US military troops in the island. Meiring's role in these terroristic activities was revealed when a bomb he was assembling accidentally blew up inside his hotel room in May 2002. After the exposé, he was quickly whisked out of the country by agents from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Before this, a series of bombings took place in Mindanao. A bomb exploded in General Santos City on April 21, 2002, killing 15 people. There were also bombings in Cotabato and Manila, which were claimed by the Indigenous Peoples' Federal Army, an unknown group without any connections to the armed groups in Mindanao. Its name began to appear in December 2004 at about the same time as Meiring's latest entry into the country.

Also at the instigation of the US, the Arroyo government carried out bombings so it could blame them on "terrorists" and justify its repressive policies. Implicated in these bombings are Gen. Angelo Reyes who was then the Secretary of Defense and Gen. Victor Corpus, then chief of the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP). Among the operations that they were involved in was the Sasa Wharf bombing in Davao City in 2003 and the February 14, 2005 bombings in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos. AB

Bush and Blair's secrets bared

Lies made by the Bush regime and its co-conspirator the Blair regime of the United Kingdom on their invasion of Iraq have long been refuted. This month, however, the minutes of a secret meeting between Prime Minister Tony Blair and his advisers were disclosed, detailing the planned invasion and the military tactics to be employed by the US eight months before the actual attack on Iraq.

The document clearly shows that Bush and Blair intentionally doctored the "evidence" against Iraq. Together, they systematically wove lies to terrorize the world's peoples and justify the invasion.

The documents moreover reveal that Blair received a report in July 2002 stating that the US was determined to wage war to overthrow Saddam Hussein's government and to use terrorism and the issue of the weapons of mass destruction to justify it. In this regard, the US was still reportedly putting together the information to be marshaled for justifying the policy of waging war and that the US did not have the patience to submit itself to United Nations processes.

The disclosure of this document has prompted stronger calls from the British for Blair's ouster. AB

NPA seizes 7 M16s in Ilocos Sur ambush

NPA Red fighters seized seven M16 rifles in a successful ambush on troops of the 50th IB's "C" Coy at the historic Bessang Pass in Barangay Malaya, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur on June 13.

The guerrillas quickly prepared the ambush upon receiving information that soldiers aboard a 6X6 truck had arrived to conduct clearing operations in the area.

In a statement, the Alfredo Cesar Command (NPA-Ilocos Sur) said that the tactical offensive was a punitive measure on the 50th IB for its serious crimes against the people of Cervantes and Quirino towns. The enthusiastic support of the people from these towns contributed to the success of the ambush.

Nine fascist soldiers were killed in the fighting and three were wounded, including 2Lt. Emmanuel Latay, the commander of the unit that carried out the operation.

Lepanto Mines workers' strike continues

SEVERAL workers were injured when the Benguet PNP attempted to breach the picket line of striking workers of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company (LCMC) in Mankayan, Benguet on June 20. The LCMC is the country's largest gold mining company.

The company has started recruiting new workers to replace the strikers. Meanwhile, the strike continues to paralyze the company's operations. The Lepanto Employees Union (LEU) is demanding a minimum P29 increase in the daily wage in the first and second years and P33 in the third year as well as other regular benefits and the reinstatement of terminated union leaders.

The workers refused to accept the company's counter-offer of P21 and the P25 raise in the first year pushed by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

The company claims that it is losing money. KMU-Cordillera, however, said the company made P2.573 million in 2003 and has pending applications to expand its operations on to another 240,000 hectares.

The workers are determined to fight for their interests and continue their strike until they receive just wages and benefits and succeed in having their union leaders reinstated.