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Frustrate the Arroyo regime's mounting fascism

The Arroyo regime has stepped up its repression and fascist violence with the sinister objective of thwarting and silencing the Filipino people's growing clamor to end the much-detested regime. It has arbitrarily banned street demonstrations through its so-called "calibrated preemptive response." In true dictatorial fashion, Arroyo has muzzled her own officials through Executive Order 464. She is now rushing to complete the ingredients for outright fascist rule by hurrying up the passage of the

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Terrorism Bill (ATB) whose provisions are tantamount to martial law.

Arroyo has resurrected the fascist beast that lorded it over during the Marcos dictatorship in order to assail and terrorize the people. She tramples on human rights, civil liberties and democratic processes. She invokes the rule of law only to violate it. All this she has done in the hope of silencing the people and preventing them from rising.

Arroyo already acts like a dictator. Like Marcos, she has the majority of congressmen under her thumb after buying their loyalty. She used them to kill the impeachment process and stop congressional investigations on fraud in the last elections. Now she is using the rubberstamp Congress to speed up the ratification of the Anti-Terrorism Bill.

In an act of desperation, Arroyo, the would-be dictator wants to have complete control over all government and military officials. She regards them as automatons, robots that would only move in accordance with her wishes. Those who disobey her orders are threatened with dismissal and penalized.

Arroyo's worsening fascist measures are an indication of just how desperate she is and how tenuously she clings to power. Faced with the severe crisis battering the ruling system, Arroyo can no longer rule in the old way. She must use barefaced fascist violence to force the people to submit to her authority.

The people will never allow



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this to happen. They bear with them the starkly evident lessons from the Marcos dictatorship that any arrogant tyrant can be overthrown by a people firmly united in militant struggle. Marcos was not able to rule indefinitely despite his far stronger hold on the military. Arroyo will last even less longer in the face of a severely demoralized and fractious AFP and PNP, and opposition from a significant number of military and police officers and personnel.

As we have witnessed in the last several days, the people will vigorously and repeatedly challenge the fascist suppression of their freedom to launch protest actions. The Arroyo regime's intensifying fascism has caused widespread anger among the people. Arroyo's dictatorial ways will come to naught the moment the people's seething anger explodes like a volcano against her fascism and the sufferings she has imposed on the people.

Now more than ever is the time for the New People's Army (NPA) to intensify its tactical offensives. The Filipino people celebrate the NPA's victorious

offensives these last few weeks. They are inspired to intensify their struggles.

Due to the NPA's tactical offensives, the Arroyo regime is reeling from many big and small wounds that are sure to grow in number. These offensives wreak chaos, demoralization and fractiousness within the AFP and PNP. They are fitting punishment for an extremely cruel regime. Through these offensives, the most diehard fascist criminals are punished and the people are able to realize revolutionary justice. The NPA also draws fascist forces towards arenas of battle in the countryside, leaving people to more freely wage open protests in cities and town centers.

Like Marcos' martial law, Arroyo's current fascist measures will further stoke and spread the flames of revolutionary armed struggle. They expose to the people the fascist character that lies at the core of the reactionary state. They teach the oppressed and the exploited classes that they have no other recourse but to bear arms and advance the armed revolution. **AB**

NPA armed actions in Mindanao

Eighteen soldiers, policemen, CAFGU elements and abusive guards were killed in 24 armed actions of the New People's Army (NPA) from September 20-October 3 in Mindanao.

At least 13 enemy troops were wounded, according to the latest reports from National Democratic Front of the Philippines-Mindanao spokesperson Jorge "Ka Oris" Madlos. Seized were an M14, an M16 and four shotguns. The frequency of NPA armed actions in the island during this period grew from one or two per week to one to two per day, said Ka Oris.

The tactical offensives included 18 sniping and harassment operations against Philippine Army battalion detachments and company headquarters, command posts and detachments; two disarming operations; a special operation to destroy two towers used for the 4th ID's signal intelligence and communications; a special sparrow operation against a diehard intelligence operative; a punitive operation against an informer; and a disarming operation by a member of the people's militia against a Philippine Army-CAFGU detachment.

The principal targets were the reactionary government's armed forces loathed by the masses and notorious for violating human rights and involvement in criminal activities against the people and the revolutionary movement. Thus, 20 out of the 24 armed actions were against the Philippine Army and the CAFGU, and only two were against forces of the Philippine

	
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NPA punishes diehard counterrevolutionary

The Ka Paking Guimbaolibot Red Partisan Brigade meted punishment on September 30 on one of the worst enemies of the masses and the revolutionary forces in Compostela Valley.

Sgt. Marcial "Jun" Colot, a rabid operative of the Philippine Army Intelligence and Security Unit (ISU) in Region XI was proved in the people's court to have committed serious crimes against the people and was meted the death penalty. The punishment was carried out in Trento, Agusan del Sur. Seized from Colot was a .45 caliber pistol.

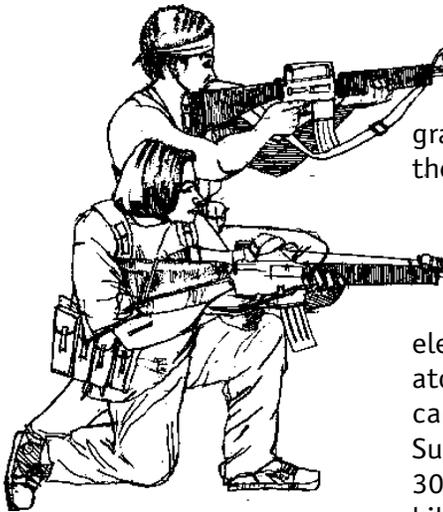
Colot was punished because for his long list of blood debts and crimes against the masses and the revolutionary movement. As the ISU's main operative, he actively led a criminal group of intelligence agents in perpetrating summary executions, torture, abduction, extortion and harassment against revolutionary mass organizations.

He played a big role in the brutal massacre of the Mawab Four in August 1999. The so-called Mawab Four include Party cadre Godofredo "Ka Paking" Guimbaolibot; Red fighter Rolando Jubahib; and two civilians.

Colot also played a major role in the abduction, torture and murder of the Maco Four—youth activists Marjorie Reynoso, Lito Doydoy, Ramon Ragase and Jonathan Venaro—on September 19, 2003.

He was likewise responsible for the 2001 slaying of Tatay Loloy, a peasant leader in Sitio Lower Buay, Barangay Baylo, Monkayo. That year, Colot directed attacks against NPA guerrilla units in the barangays of Paslan and Baylo.

Sergeant Colot is the fifth operative of the ISU and the Intelligence Service of the AFP in the Southern Mindanao Region found guilty by the people's court and punished by the NPA. **AB**



National Police (PNP). Another security unit involved in land-grabbing was targeted by the NPA.

Following are details of some of these armed actions:

The NPA ambushed elements of the PNP riding atop an armored personnel carrier (APC) in Mat-i, Surigao City on September 30. Four policemen were killed, including one who

was run over by the APC when he jumped out to avoid the gunfire. Four policemen were also wounded in the ambush.

Meanwhile, three enemy forces were killed in an NPA attack on an AFP-CAFGU detachment in San Pedro, Lianga, Surigao del Sur on September 24. The Red fighters were able to retreat safely after a 15-minute gun battle.

That same day, Red guerrillas conducted a harassment operation on the 30th IB encampment in Barangay Mahaba, Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, killing two soldiers.

The NPA in the North Central Mindanao Region, meanwhile, ambushed abusive guards of the Ozamis Agricultural Development Inc. (OADI) Farms on board a vehicle in the afternoon of September 20 in San Jose, Quezon, Bukidnon. OADI Farms owner Pablo Lobregat (a relative of the Lobregats, one of the biggest landlords in the Zamboanga peninsula) is a notorious landgrabber. Four guards were killed in the ambush. Seized from them were an M16 rifle and four shotguns. The NPA launched the offensive in response to a longstanding demand of the Lumad minorities in the area whose lands were seized by OADI.

Meantime, one more firearm was added to the NPA's arsenal when a people's militia member seized an M14 from an AFP detachment in Barangay Mahayhay, San Luis, Agusan del Sur on September 20.

A four-man NPA team under the Eking Balacuit Command also destroyed the big antenna discs of the 4th ID's communication towers in Ginalaban, Salay, Misamis Oriental on September 25. The communication towers, which are very important to AFP intelligence and communications, are only about 300 meters away from the detachment of the 9th IB whose task it is to guard it. It was nightfall when the commando operation began and it was daybreak when the NPAs fired their M14s and Garands at the discs. The enemy did not return fire. **AB**



M60 seized, 8 soldiers killed in NPA offensives in Isabela

Eight soldiers were killed and an undetermined number wounded in two assaults by the New People's Army (NPA) on government troops conducting operations in the last week of September in Echague, Isabela.

According to latest reports from the NPA Benito Tesorio Command in Southern Isabela, seven soldiers were confirmed dead and an undetermined number wounded when NPA guerrillas attacked a platoon of soldiers from

the 45th IB resting in Barangay San Carlos on September 24. Among those killed was the enemy forces' commanding officer, 1Lt. Jerry Fernandez. The Red fighters seized an M60 machine gun and an M14.

Another soldier, Cpl. Norly Osorio was killed in an earlier NPA assault in Barangay Madadian on September 22. Osorio was part of a two platoon-contingent from the 54th IB conducting operations in the area. The NPA seized an M16

and retreated without suffering a single casualty.

The two tactical offensives were launched in response to the Communist Party central leadership's call to seize the initiative and intensify tactical offensives amid the US-Arroyo regime's worsening crisis.

They also form part of the NPA's counter-offensive against continuing and intensifying AFP operations that victimize civilians in Southern Isabela. **AB**

NPA military actions in Bicol

Thirty-eight successful coordinated military actions were launched by the New People's Army (NPA) in Bicol from September 28 to October 1. Fifteen soldiers were killed and another 15 were wounded in these armed actions. There were no casualties on the NPA side.

According to the Romulo Jallores Command, the coordinated military campaign succeeded because of the Bicolano people's widespread support for the NPA. The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) were completely taken aback by the Red fighters' surprise attacks. The Philippine Army's 9th Infantry "Orgullo" Division, on the other hand, has been forced to conceal its defeats in the hands of the NPA in Bicol. AFP 9th ID spokesperson Col. Serafin Raymundo takes the lead in spreading lies about the real outcome of battles between the NPA and the AFP.

The AFP, says Raymundo, has not sustained any casualties. Many NPA guerrillas, on the other hand, have either died or been wounded, he claims. The opposite is true.

Contrary to the AFP's bragging, two soldiers from the 42nd IB were

wounded when their unit attempted to attack an NPA unit in Bicalen, Presentacion, Camarines Sur on July 12. The wounded were identified as Corporal Salaun and Corporal Pascual of the 42nd IB Bravo Company. After two days, another soldier was wounded when the NPA sniped at incoming reinforcements. Raving mad and confused, the military indiscriminately fired in various directions, but not a single Red fighter was injured.

Extremely embarrassed by the incident, the military sought to get even. Soldiers dug up graves in a cemetery in nearby Barangay Maligaya, Caramoan, Camarines Sur and declared that all bodies buried without coffins were those of NPA members. It was these cadavers that were later presented to the public as NPA casualties.

Meanwhile, Red fighters killed four soldiers last August when the 7th Scout Ranger Company tried to encircle an NPA squad in Barangay Agpay, Guinobatan, Albay.

Also last August, an NPA team sniped at the unsuspecting enemy while troops from the 2nd IB "C" Company were conducting operations in Barangay Pawa, Matnog,

Sorsogon. The company commander was killed with a single shot. Another soldier was also wounded.

The AFP has likewise been making the NPA the scapegoat for crimes committed by elements of the 9th ID. In one incident, the NPA was blamed for the summary killing of Pfc Gilbert Halcon, one of their personnel, in Gubat, Sorsogon last August. Halcon was the military's triggerman in the killing of civilians suspected of supporting the revolutionary movement. He was also involved in a series of holdups in the province. Since Halcon's crimes had become public knowledge and his superior officers could no longer cover up for them, he was summarily executed by a fellow soldier.

In another incident in Bicol, at least five soldiers deserted the AFP due to intense demoralization. Three of them from the 42nd IB "A" Coy based in Garchitorena, Camarines Sur went AWOL in August. Before this, another soldier from the 65th IB "A" Coy and another CAFGU element from the 4th Sorsogon CAA Company of the Philippine Army 22nd Infantry Cadre Battalion deserted in July. **AB**

Arroyo implements series of repressive policies

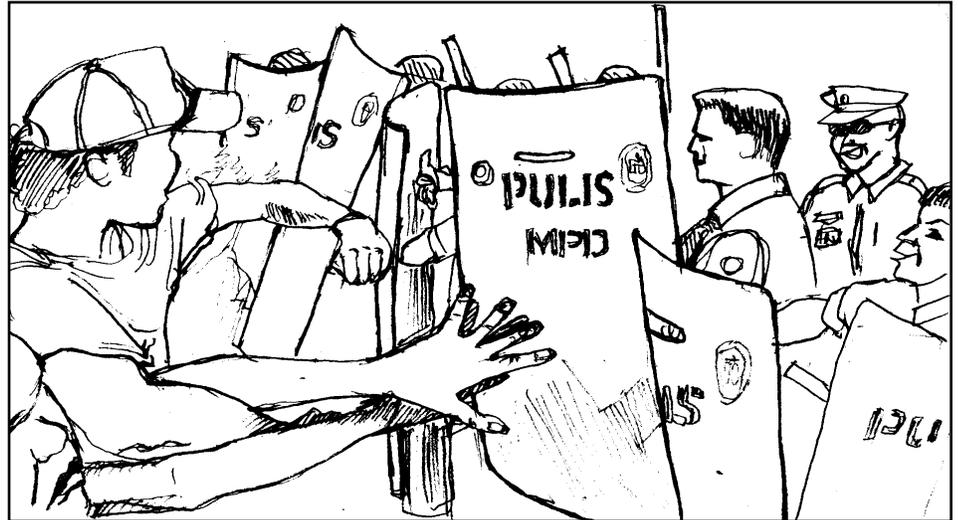
When Gloria Arroyo and her minions in congress put an end to the impeachment process last month, it pushed the people and the opposition to take to the streets to oust her.

Arroyo has been bending reactionary laws in the most barefaced manner to serve her narrow interests and suppress all those who oppose her. Among her legal maneuvers are the "calibrated preemptive response" (CPR), Executive Order 464 and the Anti-Terrorism Bill (ATB) being rushed through Congress. Their objective is to stop and crush the surging mass movement to oust the Arroyo regime.

These laws and schemes are completely violative of the people's basic civil liberties. They all contravene even the reactionary government's own constitution.

Arroyo, however, insists on pushing them so she could justify the use of violence and repression against those opposed to her rule and have everything she wants.

CPR. Malacañang arrogantly declared the "calibrated preemptive response" (CPR) policy on September 21, the 33rd anniversary of the declaration of martial law no less. It was Executive Secretary Ignacio Bunye who announced that henceforth, the government would be enforcing the "no permit-no rally" policy. Its aim was to control and systematically suppress the people's basic civil liberties of free assembly and free expression. It also authorized the police not only to arrest activists actually conducting a rally but also those suspected of planning to



lead or attend protest actions the regime regards "illegal."

The police violently dispersed rallyists in the name of CPR. On October 4, elements of the Western Police District brutally dispersed demonstrators outside Malacañang. Among those injured were church people, members of democratic organizations, and even representatives of progressive parties.

Instead of retreating, protesters launched mass actions again the following day. Again, the police brutalized participants of the rally dubbed "Walk for Democracy" led by human rights advocacy groups. Another rally held in Mendiola Bridge that same day was also violently dispersed, with many demonstrators arrested and an even bigger number injured. Even in front of media, the police gave no thought to inflicting violence and using excessive force, and even attacked an elderly woman and rallyists who had already retreated or had already fallen to the ground.

On October 6, members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan

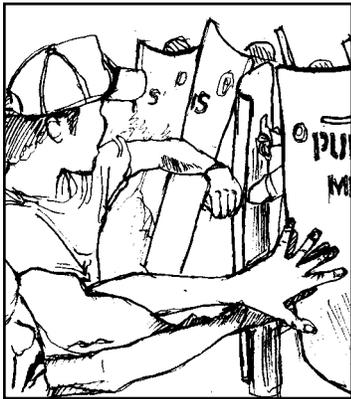
(BAYAN) and the Gloria Step Down Movement (GSM) went ahead with a march towards Mendiola despite the refusal of Manila's local government to grant them a permit for a rally. They had barely begun their march when police threatened to disperse them. The police barricaded the streets to prevent them from entering Mendiola.

Even Arroyo's minions in the PNP were hard-pressed defending the violence and the worsening brutality involved in breaking up rallies. Nevertheless, the regime has maintained the mailed fist policy of using force against "illegal" demonstrations. Secretary Ermita himself praised the police actions on October 5 on the worn-out excuse that the "police were merely taking care of the rights of the majority who oppose disruptive demonstrations".

The people rage in anger at the police violence inflicted daily on legitimate and peaceful protests. Despite all this police brutality, they will persistently defy the regime's fascist measures and assert their legitimate rights until

they eventually oust Arroyo from power. In the following days and weeks, bigger and more frequent protest actions will be launched at the very gates of Malacañang.

Executive Order 464. As an indication of Malacañang's desperation to stem the disclosure of additional evidence implicating Gloria Arroyo and her husband Mike in rampant fraud during the 2004 elections, Arroyo hurriedly issued Executive Order (EO) 464 on September 28, explicitly forbidding any official from the executive branch to testify before Congress and the Senate. Covered by the gag order are high-ranking cabinet officials and officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and national security agencies.



EO 464 sought to prevent Gen. Francisco Gudani and Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan from testifying in a Senate investigation on the "Hello, Garci?" tapes, but failed to stop them from disclosing how they witnessed the massive fraud perpetrated by the Arroyo camp in Mindanao in last year's polls. The military is now invoking the two officers' violation of EO 464 to punish them.

Aside from preventing Gudani and Balutan from testifying, EO 464's broader objective is to prevent more officials from the various government agencies from testifying on cases filed against Arroyo and her regime. Malacañang is using as pretext the Senate's alleged maltreatment of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales after he refused to answer many key questions from the senators on the contract he signed with Venable LLP.

EO 464 was also subsequently used in a desperate attempt to prevent witnesses from testifying on the anomalous North Rail Project contract the regime had entered into. Despite this, several professors of the UP College of Law still testified during a Senate investigation to divulge the anomalies they had uncovered in the project.

Efren Gonzales, an Assistant Government Corporate Counsel who had knowledge about the project was also prevented from showing up at the hearing by his boss, but he went ahead and testified anyway. His office was padlocked as a result and he has been made to explain why he attended the meeting without the President's permission.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Trade and the National Economic Development Authority also boycotted the Senate hearing on the controversial use of P2.8 billion funds entrusted to the departments for fertilizer subsidies to peasants. But Malacañang was unable to stop representatives of the Commission on Audit, who testified with representatives of peasant groups.

Even a Senate hearing on the proliferation of billboards along public thoroughfares was boycotted by four leading members of Arroyo's cabinet who were involved in it—namely, MMDA Chairman Bayani Fernando, DPWH Sec. Hermongenes Ebdane, DILG Sec. Angelo Reyes and DOT Sec. Leandro Mendoza.

But some of Arroyo's key people are strongly opposed EO 464, including newly resigned

Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo. Although he cited health problems as the reason for his resignation, the truth is that Marcelo could no longer stomach Arroyo's insistence on an out of court settlement of the cases filed against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez. One particular case involved Perez' receipt of a P2 million bribe from IMPSA (Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima), the Argentine company that was granted the contract to rehabilitate the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan (CBK) power plant complex in Laguna. Arroyo is likewise involved in this case.

Anti-Terrorism Bill (ATB). Arroyo has once again been speeding up the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Bill (ATB) pending in Congress despite all the criticism she has received for her anti-democratic and antipeople measures. She has exploited the terror resulting from the Bali, Indonesia bombing on October 2 to justify the so-called need for harsher legislation and for Arroyo's "war against terror" to become effective.

The Justice Committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee of Congress hurriedly approved the bill on October 4, but with many additional provisions that are explicitly anti-democratic and antipeople. "Inciting to terrorism" was made a new crime. It covers "speeches, statements, writings, flags and the like that aim to incite terrorism". In the new ATB version, simply holding a rally may be construed as "terrorism."

In addition, the ATB completely distorts the meaning of "terrorism" by including even threats to individuals—a very far cry from the real definition, which is the systematic use of force against the civilian population to achieve political or ideological ends. Thus,

the ATB is being strongly assailed by legal experts who say that it strains to encompass crimes already covered by law, but imposes heavier penalties on them because of the "terrorist" category.

The committee version submitted to the plenary has provisions on joining organizations considered "terrorist," longer detention periods without charges for suspects, the extradition and deportation of suspected terrorists, and the criminalization of people's legitimate mass actions and resistance.

Arroyo's minions in the current Congress merely inserted these provisions into the original bill sponsored by Rep. Roilo Golez in the previous Congress. As a result, Golez has withdrawn his support for the bill.

There are no provisions in the present bill on state terrorism and terrorist actions of the police and the military who are the country's number one terrorists. The proposed law seeks to legalize warrantless searches and seizures and other attacks on the people's civil liberties.

Arroyo's pressure on her political opponents. Arroyo has been putting the squeeze on her political opponents, using whatever weapon she could use against them. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago serves as Arroyo's conscious tool in the Senate to harass Sen. Franklin Drilon and former Pres. Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino by accusing them of plotting a coup d'état and assassination attempt against Arroyo but without providing any evidence aside from some hearsay information.

Arroyo's latest repressive step was to order the arrest and detention of Bro. Eddie Villanueva on an old estafa case. Villanueva heads the Jesus Is Lord Movement and is one of Arroyo's leading critics. She has also ordered the arrest of Samuel Ong, the former National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) official who exposed the "Hello, Garci?" tapes. Ong was charged with inciting to sedition. The regime has likewise revived old cases against Dinky Soliman and Vicky Garchitorea, who both resigned from Arroyo's cabinet.

Arroyo dreadfully fears the people's growing clamor to put an end her antipeople, anti-democratic, pro-imperialist and fascist regime. Thus, she and her minions are using all available means—legal and illegal, overt and covert—to tighten their grip on power. But these measures can only further incite the people and spur them even more to take action and wage resistance. **AB**

Restive soldiers

The testimony of two high-ranking officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on the massive fraud perpetrated by Gloria Arroyo and her husband Mike in the last election is a new blow to the tottering regime.

Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani confirmed the role played by COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in the fraudulent elections conducted by the Arroyo camp in Lanao del Sur. He likewise confirmed that he was removed as commander of the 1st Marine Brigade and Task Force Ranao, made to take a vacation and "play golf" because he refused to be part of Arroyo and Garcillano's cheating machinery in his area of responsibility and use the military forces under his command for that purpose. Gudani also disclosed that Mike Arroyo personally brought and distributed P500 million to Mindanao to ensure his wife's victory. He said that he witnessed the cheating "from beginning to end" and the involvement of many military officials.

Meantime, Lt. Col. Alexander Balutan, who then headed the 7th Marine Battalion under General Gudani's Marine Brigade testified that then Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko ordered Gudani and himself to support electoral fraud in Mindanao. Kyamko ordered them to "follow the chain of command" and to "loosen up security for the election". Both Gudani and Balutan, however, refused to have anything to do with the cheating.

On the day the two military officers were to testify at the Senate, Arroyo released the repressive Executive Order 464 to prevent them from divulging what they knew. No less than AFP chief Gen. Generoso Senga declared that since they committed an "illegal" act by disobeying the chain of command, they deserved to



be charged and tried in a court-martial. They were immediately removed from their posts at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA). A scheduled ceremony at the PMA to honor Gudani upon his retirement from the AFP on October 4 was cancelled, and all retirement benefits due him withheld.

Gudani and Balutan were aware of the regime's desperate attempts to muzzle them and other soldiers and officers who wanted to break away from the corrupt Arroyo regime. But they were undeterred, and their determination to oppose the regime has been steeled in spite of Malacañang's retaliatory acts.

Various sectors of society, including groups of retired generals and high-ranking AFP officers as well as rebel organizations of younger officers and enlisted personnel have roundly criticized the regime's repressiveness and intimidating tactics. At least 10 more AFP officers are ready to testify in the Senate to confirm Gudani and Balutan's revelations, according to Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former general.

More and more groups within the AFP are just waiting for the right time to openly withdraw support and make their move to overthrow Arroyo. At least 46 retired generals have openly supported Gudani and Balutan for their exposés. A greater number of junior officers have stated their readiness to disobey the chain of command, claiming that 70% of soldiers in the AFP are ready to act to oust the regime.

The revolutionary movement welcomes Gudani and Balutan's courageous act. In a statement, CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal affirmed the revolutionary movement's readiness to form an alliance and cooperate with all AFP elements desirous of genuine or revolutionary social change. Any soldier or officer suppressed by the regime may enter or seek refuge in any guerrilla front.

US control in charter change

Arroyo has no qualms about auctioning off the country's sovereignty in exchange for her continued hold on power. She implores the US to intervene in the Philippines' internal affairs, even in changing the reactionary government's constitution to mold it more to the US' liking.

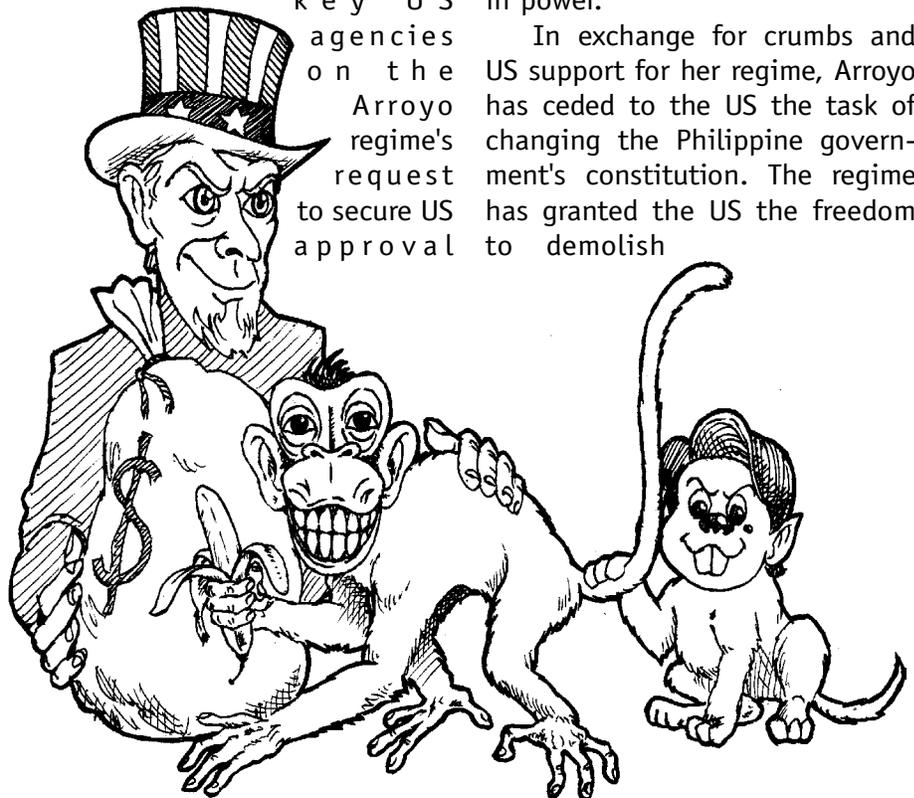
This desperate measure is but the latest in a long list of significant reasons why Gloria Arroyo must be ousted from power and be tried for her crimes against the people.

As recently as mid-September, newspaper reports revealed that Arroyo secretly entered into an agreement on July 25 with Venable LLP, one of the US' leading lobbying firms. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales signed a contract with Venable to make arrangements with the US Congress and other

and funding for charter change in the Philippines. Venable was to be paid up to \$75,000 (P4.2 million) a month or P50.4 million a year for its services. The amount excludes expenses for among others, travel, telephone, fax and copying and payment for the professional services of the company's top executives which comes to \$720 (P40,320) an hour. Including all these other additional expenses, the government would actually be shelling out twice the stated figure of P50.4 million.

Charter change is Arroyo's desperate move to divert the public's attention, derail people's mass actions to oust her, and remain in power in the face of the people's intensifying hatred for her. She hopes to change the form of government towards a parliamentary and federal system so she could use it to perpetuate herself in power.

In exchange for crumbs and US support for her regime, Arroyo has ceded to the US the task of changing the Philippine government's constitution. The regime has granted the US the freedom to demolish



any remaining provision defending the country's sovereignty, thus abolishing all obstacles to foreign land ownership and imperialist plunder of the Philippines' industries and natural wealth.

Venable LLP is but one of the foreign companies that Arroyo has secretly contracted for her various schemes to remain in power.

Arroyo has likewise arranged through Venable additional loans and aid from the US to raise the capability of the Philippine military and police. In particular, Arroyo now needs more military aid from the US to fight the revolutionary movement, suppress the people's resistance and tighten her grip on the military and police, especially since money is the only thing that binds her and the worst and most corrupt AFP and PNP officers.

Intervention. The contract with Venable is but Arroyo's latest treasonous act in collusion with foreign companies and agencies. When she had just assumed power in 2001, Arroyo cooperated with Agile Philippines, a US entity that actively intervenes in drafting laws for almost all important matters relating to the country's economy and finance. Agile Philippines is funded by USAID.

Arroyo's gravest act of treachery consists of allowing the US to use the entire Philippines as a military base, letting American combat troops enter freely through any part of the country, and opening the country's airports, seaports and territory for use in US military operations—all this without the necessity of a formal treaty, permanent structures, and defined areas.

Venable LLP is but one of the foreign companies that Arroyo has secretly contracted for her various schemes to remain in power. Since she became President, Arroyo has

spent \$3.7 million or P208 million for contracts with eight foreign companies and specialists.

Four of these contracts are still in effect and still being paid for by

government. The other contracts that Arroyo entered into are geared towards strengthening "US-Philippine relations," luring in foreign capitalists by portraying an illusion of political and economic stability in the country, and other services whose direct beneficiaries are Arroyo, her minions and local businessman-allies. Like Venable, these companies are used by the US to intervene in Philippine economic and political affairs.

Arroyo is ready to squander money for her own benefit. Even as the country is mired ever deeper in a severe economic crisis, as the Arroyo regime stands in the way of a just increase in workers' wages and government employees' salaries, as the government's budget deficit continues to swell and the regime calls on the people to tighten their belts, it shamelessly throws away huge sums of money and signs multi-million peso contracts with foreign companies to deodorize its image and secure favors from the US.

Twisted tongue. Arroyo entered into a contract with Venable through her loyal confidant and US intelligence agent National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales. If Arroyo and Gonzales had not really kept the contract secret even from other members of Arroyo's cabinet, other members of the National Security Council which includes Gonzales, from the president's legal counsel, from the Department of Foreign Affairs and

the Philippine embassy in the US, then others who were aware of the contract were merely playing dumb.

To keep Arroyo from being directly implicated, Gonzales assumed all responsibility for entering into the anomalous contract. But he became tongue-tied in his attempt to avoid giving direct answers to the questions asked during the Senate investigation on September 21.

Gonzales stubbornly refused to answer key questions on the funds for the contract, including the source of the funding. The funds were allegedly sourced from private individuals whose names he refused to disclose, as President Arroyo was supposedly the only one who knew their identities.

The senators berated Gonzales for feigning ignorance and lying, declared him in contempt and ordered him detained for his refusal to give clear answers to their questions. He thereby staged an attack of hypertension, with Malacañang even colluding with his doctor to make it appear that he needed an immediate heart operation, but not before he is released by the Senate. Malacañang has since used the incident to portray Gonzales as a victim of abuse and oppression by the senators.

The exposé has forced Malacañang to cancel the Venable contract. But it is still obliged to pay for Venable's expenses while the contract was in force and could no longer have payments for the first three months refunded.

Meanwhile, Arroyo has exploited Gonzales' drama at the Senate as a pretext for issuing Executive Order 464 disallowing any official of the executive branch of government, the military or the police from testifying without the president's permission. AB

Arroyo feigns pro-peasant stance

Gloria Arroyo will use anything and do everything just to be able to remain in power. In a bid to pressure Corazon Cojuangco-Aquino, who has supported the call for Arroyo's resignation since July, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has recommended the abrogation of the stock distribution option (SDO) contract between the peasants of Hacienda Luisita and the Cojuangco family due to the latter's gross violations of its provisions.

The DAR was obliged to issue the recommendation as it could not deny the justness of the struggle being waged by the peasants and farm workers of Hacienda Luisita. The recommendation provides a possible legal basis to further advance the long-standing struggle to junk the SDO in its entirety and subject Hacienda Luisita to genuine land reform.

However, the Hacienda Luisita peasants and farm workers themselves doubt whether this would have any meaningful impact on their long-standing struggle for genuine land reform. They have grasped the need for arduous struggle and sacrifice to realize the implementation of genuine land reform in the hacienda.

They know full well that Arroyo and the Cojuangcos conspired to uphold the SDO in Hacienda Luisita. Arroyo's hands are likewise stained with the blood of peasants and farm workers massacred at the hacienda picketline in November 2004 and the unbridled intimidation and wanton violence that has been inflicted on the strikers and their supporters.

Thus, they are aware that Arroyo is merely exploiting their just struggle to pressure Corazon



Aquino and divide the broad anti-Arroyo united front. The final decision on the HLI case rests with the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council (PARC) which Arroyo directly heads. The PARC's decision will expectedly be determined not by the justness of the peasants and farm workers' struggle but by the political horsetrading and struggle between Arroyo on the one hand and Aquino and the Cojuangcos on the other. Gloria Arroyo does not have the slightest interest in resolving the issue of Hacienda Luisita in favor of the peasants.

Contrary to the peasants' long-standing clamor to junk the SDO scheme, the DAR's recommendation actually upholds it. It merely targets the HLI and its "contractual violations". Arroyo is very care-

ful not to question the SDO itself because big landlords with huge landholdings have evaded the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and maintained their lands through this scheme.

Lands covered by the SDO scheme include more than 300 hectares owned by Mike Arroyo's family in Negros and hundreds of thousands of hectares owned by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco in Negros and Isabela that are all under the SDO-like "corporative scheme". Arroyo persists in granting favors to Danding to continue receiving his political support and prevent him from ending up like his cousin Corazon Aquino who has sided with the opposition.

This is not the first time that Arroyo used the peasant masses for her own benefit. A recent exposé unveiled an anomaly involving ₱2.8 billion of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (Bountiful Golden Harvest) fund allocated for fertilizer subsidies to peasants. Instead of using them to purchase fertilizer, the funds were diverted to bogus non-governmental organizations controlled by National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales and other Malacañang minions, and used for Arroyo's campaigning in 2004. **AB**

Palparan's opening salvo of fascist violence in Central Luzon

THE butcher Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan did not waste any time before unleashing fascist violence in his new area of assignment—Central Luzon.

Seven mass leaders and activists in Central Luzon have already been killed since September 1, right after he was appointed chief of the 7th ID based in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. The first victim of summary execution was a leader of the Pinag-isang Samahan ng



Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide (PISTON) killed in Norzagaray, Bulacan after a massive transport stoppage in the region on September 12. Jose Levimar Rieza and two Aeta activists from Orani and Abucay in Bataan were also killed.

The latest victims are two Anakpawis members in Nueva Ecija and a Bayan Muna (BM) coordinator in Tarlac. Rolando Mariano, BM coordinator of Gerona, Tarlac, was killed October 7 in the nearby town of Victoria. Armando Javier Jr. was killed in his house in Barangay Sta. Clara, Cuyapo on the night of October 2. Two hours earlier, Cecilia Esteban was abducted from her house in Barangay Lennec, Guimba and was found lifeless in the same town on October 5.

Palparan was implicated in 199 cases of murder, frustrated murder, torture, beatings and arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians and human rights advocates when he was deployed as chief of the 8th ID in Eastern Visayas from February to August 2005. He was transferred to Central Luzon after the people of Eastern Visayas demanded his expulsion from the region.

Prior to this, the human rights watchdog KARAPATAN recorded 326 cases of human rights violations in Oriental Mindoro during Palparan's term as chief of the 204th Infantry Brigade from 2001 to 2004.

Because of his bloody record of suppressing militant and progressive forces and suspected supporters of the revolutionary movement, Gloria Arroyo continues to reward Palparan with medals and promotions. AB

Thousands accompany slain labor leader to final resting place

TWO thousand workers, friends and supporters from Cavite, Quezon, Batangas, Rizal and Metro Manila descended on Calamba, Laguna on September 29 to accompany the remains of slain labor leader Diosdado "Ka Fort" Fortuna, 50, to his final resting place.

Workers and allies in the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon, Bicol, Cebu, Davao and other parts of Mindanao also launched simultaneous protest actions. Prior to this, the remains of Ka Fort lay in state at the University of the Philippines in Quezon City. Supporters had planned to march with the coffin towards Mendiola to demand justice for the veteran unionist. Police, however, blocked the march before reaching Mendiola.

Ka Fort was shot to death near his house in Barangay Paciano

Rizal, Calamba on the afternoon of September 22 by armed men suspected to be military elements. He had just come from the Nestlé-Filipro picketline in Cabuyao, Laguna, whose workers are on their third year of strike. Ka Fort is the second president of the Union of Filipro Employees-Drug and Food Alliance (UFE-DFA) to be killed. He replaced Mel Roxas who was killed in 1989.

The workers strongly condemned Ka Fort's murder. They also denounced the Arroyo administration's silence, particular that of Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas.

Meanwhile, activists attending a huge anti-war rally in Washington, DC on September 24 signed a petition letter condemning Ka Fort's murder. One of the signatories was multi-awarded American actress Jessica Lange.

Five peasant leaders arrested in Negros Occidental

THE Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) strongly denounced the arrest of five officers and two members of the organization at a 12th IB checkpoint in Barangay Camingawan, Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental on September 30. Arrested were KMP consultant Morito Dionson; KMP organizers Marilou and Abraham Villanueva; KMP-Amihan organizer Charity Villar; Teatro Obrero organizer Danny Dayanan; and their companions Jermie Gelegan and Rico Abrasaldo.

They were arbitrarily implicated in an NPA attack on a military detachment in Barangay Haba, Candoni in the same province. According to reports, the soldiers poked their guns at the victims, blindfolded them and ordered them to lie flat on the ground. Dionson

was separated from the group and forced to ride a van towards an unknown destination.

The military freed the five captives on October 5 after a habeas corpus petition was filed by the latter's lawyers at the Kabankalan Regional Trial Court (RTC). Several hours later, however, they were imprisoned at the Bacolod City Provincial Jail after six different criminal cases were filed against them at the Ilog-Candoni Municipal Trial Court and the Kabankalan RTC.

According to KMP and KARAPATAN-Negros, the victims came from a KMP meeting in Dumaguete City and were on their way back to Bacolod when they were stopped at the checkpoint and abducted. KMP has filed a case in court demanding their release.

GRP suspends JASIG anew

THE National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) strongly denounced the Arroyo regime's arbitrary suspension of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG) which provides immunity from arrest to all negotiating panel members, consultants and staff. NDFP negotiating panel chair Luis G. Jalandoni said that the suspension violates the processes stipulated in the agreement. If the regime wants to nullify the JASIG,

which is tantamount to junking the peace talks altogether, said Jalandoni, it must wait 30 days. The regime's threat to immediately arrest any member, consultant or staff of the NDFP panel only shows its treachery and utter disregard for the agreements and the peace negotiations, he said.

Meantime, the Arroyo regime continues to distort the results of last month's informal talks to justify its baseless suspension of the

JASIG. The GRP claims that the JASIG suspension is in response to the NDFP's continued refusal to resume negotiations.

Jalandoni once again clarified that the NDFP has never turned its back on the peace negotiations, but merely postponed the formal talks last month to give the GRP time to implement previous agreements. The NDFP remains open and ready to resume formal peace negotiations.

US abuses, detains and deports Gen. Jarque and wife

US Immigration, the Homeland Security Unit and local police abused and treated (ret.) Gen. Raymundo Jarque and his wife like animals on September 22.

The Jarque couple had planned on visiting their daughter and other relatives in the US and seek medical treatment for Mrs. Xenia Jarque. However, they were taken into custody by US Immigration agents moments after they disembarked from their plane in Dallas, Texas. They were subjected to a

lengthy interrogation before being detained. They were separated from each other, stripped of their clothing and made to wear prisoners' garb. They were not allowed to bathe, and Mrs. Jarque was not allowed to take her medication. They were not allowed to talk to their relatives or attorney for an entire day and were only able to do so shortly before the US deported them.

The NDFP strongly condemned the abusive actions taken by the

US against the Jarques. Said NDFP peace panel chair Comrade Luis Jalandoni, the US arbitrarily branded Gen. Jarque a terrorist, and as such, treated him and his wife like animals. This was done despite the fact that "at no time has either of them committed any crime against the US or any of its citizens in the US or in any part of the world."

The NDFP likewise condemned the Arroyo regime for colluding with the US and allowing US intervention in Philippine affairs.