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Editorial

Launch more and bigger tactical offensives

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) salutes the New People's Army (NPA) for the series of victorious military actions against fascist enemy forces these past few weeks. In a short period of time, the NPA launched up to 80 armed actions, seizing high-powered firearms and wiping out scores of enemy troops.

The military actions were the NPA's response to the CPP's call to intensify tactical offensives to punish the Arroyo regime and contribute to the Filipino people's struggle to put an end to its rotten, oppressive and fascist rule.

The Party expects that in the coming months, the NPA will be able to launch bigger, more numerous and more frequent tactical offensives. It is in a position to launch more intensive annihilative offensives against the Arroyo regime even as it advances revolutionary work in an all-sided way.

In the face of the Arroyo regime's extreme isolation and the people's disgust for it, it is timely for the NPA to intensify tactical offensives to deliver powerful

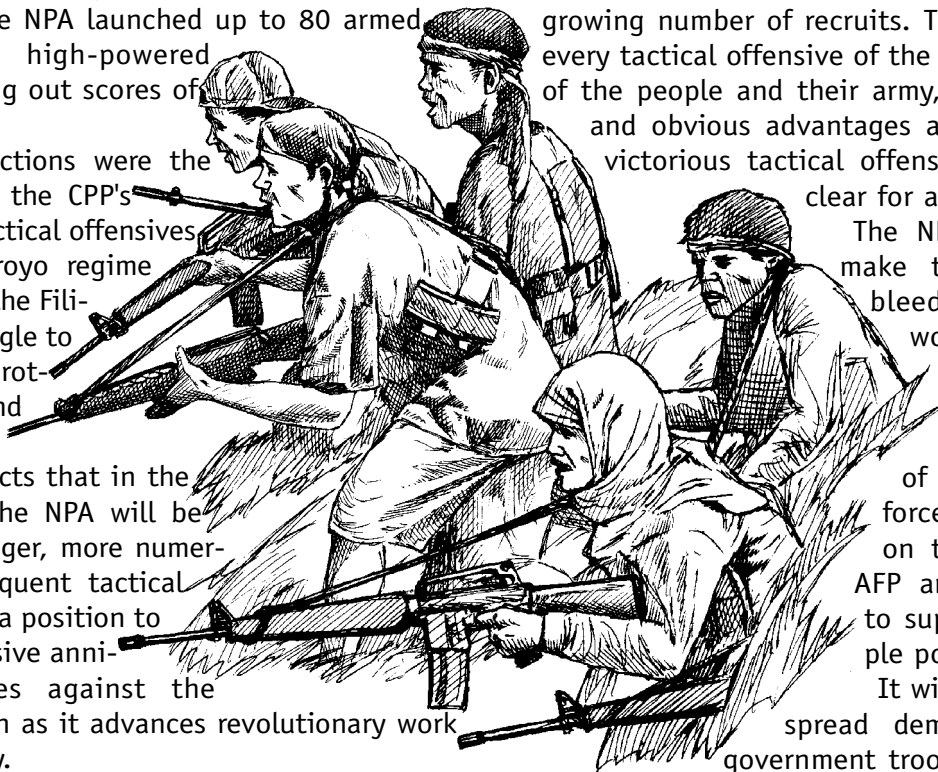
blows on the Arroyo regime and its mercenary troops. The regime is imposing ever more repressive measures, with open fascist rule becoming a growing possibility.

The Party reiterates its directive to the NPA to wipe out the weakest and most diehard fascist criminal forces of the AFP, PNP, CAGU and the fascist warlords, plunderers and most serious human rights violators. The NPA may use various guerrilla tactics such as luring the enemy into situations where the people's army is at a clear advantage, where the enemy exposes its weakest parts and where they are prone to commit big errors, aside from other creative tactics where the enemy becomes easy pickings.

The NPA needs to seize more weapons to arm the growing number of recruits. The people celebrate every tactical offensive of the NPA. With the unity of the people and their army, the political gains and obvious advantages achieved after every victorious tactical offensive of the NPA are clear for all to see.

The NPA will be able to make the Arroyo regime bleed from its many wounds as it intensifies its tactical offensives. It will reduce the capacity of the regime's armed forces to inflict violence on the people and the AFP and PNP's capability to suppress another people power uprising.

It will also intensify and spread demoralization among government troops long wracked by so many scandals involving major crimes, the regime's incessant lying and its repression of the people. The people's army, the democratic movement and mass



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activists must at the same time reach out to the growing numbers of discontented and newly conscientized officers and elements of the reactionary army. As a result, we expect a significant part of the government's armed forces to defy the unacceptable chain of command, side with a people in protest and link up and cooperate with the people's army.

Every victorious tactical offensive reduces the present regime and its puppet army's strength, contributes to the growth and strength of the NPA and the revolutionary movement nationwide and to the effort to advance people's war to the next higher sub-stage of the strategic defensive.

No amount of fascist repression can prevent the people from fighting the corrupt and plummeting Arroyo regime. Its desperate moves to save and perpetuate itself in power through intensified and more blatant fascist measures will only result in the further advance of people's war. The people are angered even more and are spurred to unite and wage resistance to put an end to the dying regime. **AB**



VICTORIOUS NPA OFFENSIVES

NPA ambushes notorious Philippine Army unit in Misamis Occidental

Five soldiers of the 15th Division Reconnaissance Coy (DRC) of the 101st Brigade were killed in an ambush by a 17-strong unit of the New People's Army (NPA) at around 11:30 a.m. of October 9 in Sitio Calunod, Bitibot, Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental. Among those killed was 1Lt. Arthur Gelotin, commanding officer of the 15th DRC. Four other soldiers were wounded.

The casualties were part of a group of 12 soldiers aboard a van traveling from their detachment in Barangay Masubong (five kilometers from Barangay Bitibot). The troopers regularly used the van in traveling between Masubong and Bitibot.

The NPA unit used two command-detonated land mines against the soldiers. The fighting lasted seven minutes before two enemy platoons arrived as rein-

forcements. The Red fighters were able to retreat safely.

The ambush was a punitive measure by the NPA on the 15th DRC. According to Regional Operational Command-WMR spokesperson Ka Mario Serrano, the 15th DRC is among the most notorious counter-revolutionary forces in the region. It led many of the raids against NPA camps in the last two years, is involved in RSOT operations and was responsible for annihilating a nine-person NPA team in Calamba, Misamis Occidental last July.

Unfortunately, three civilians inside the van were also caught in the crossfire during the Sapang Dalaga ambush. The Front Monterosa Command has apologized to the families of the deceased and promised to extend them whatever assistance it could. The NPA also called on the military not to allow civilians to ride in military vehicles and live in detachments as these are all legitimate military targets.

The ambush in Sapang Dalaga is but one of five NPA military actions against the 15th DRC since late September until October 15 that killed seven soldiers and wounded eleven more. On October 15, a four-person NPA team harassed a 13-man commando team of the 15th DRC in Purok 5, Barangay Siloy, Calamba, Misamis Occidental. A soldier was killed and two wounded in this harassment operation.

The 15th DRC has responded to the ambush with even more fascist violence. It has already summarily executed a peasant and tortured three other villagers in Barangay Bitibot. **AB**



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NPA attacks Philippine Army patrol base in Abra

The New People's Army (NPA) Agustin Begnalen Command launched a punitive raid against elements of the 41st IB "Charlie" Company and the 77th IB based at the Bituen Patrol Base in Barangay Lenneng, Baay-Licuan, Abra on October 12, killing a soldier and wounding two others.

Elements of the 41st IB, especially those based at the Bituen Patrol Base are responsible for a series of human rights violations in Barangay Lenneng and the nearby sitio of Libsong, as well as Sitio Balawang, Barangay Guinguinabang in adjacent Lacub town.

A platoon from Charlie Company led by Lt. Victor Leopoldo killed Francisco "Ama Luyong"

Tangbawan and abducted Junie Brillantes and Noriel Tuangin on August 14. The soldiers used Tangbawan and Brillantes as human shields in a firefight with the NPA. The soldiers later destroyed the masses' crops, stole their cattle and poultry and harassed and intimidated the barriofolk.

The soldiers also stopped a passenger jeep plying the Lacub-



Bangued route for several hours.

Both the people and even local government officials have long demanded the abusive military unit's expulsion from the area. **AB**

NPA seizes 8 firearms in Cebu raid

THE NPA seized four M14s and four M16s in an attack on the 78th IB detachment in Barangay Sumon, Tuburan, Cebu at around 5:20 p.m. on October 15. Also seized were 43 magazines, 830 rounds of M14 ammunition, 770 rounds of M16 ammunition, seven rifle grenades, three hand grenades and a VHF radio. Three soldiers were killed in the fighting. Among those killed was Sgt. Orlando Luna who headed the enemy special operations team based in the detachment. The soldiers were resting while the others were taking their afternoon snack when the NPA attacked.

NPA confiscates 4 M16s in Agusan del Sur

THE NPA seized four M16s, a shotgun and a VHF radio when an NPA platoon under the Julito Tiro Command assaulted the municipal hall and PNP station in Talacogon, Agusan del Sur at 7:15 p.m. on October 10.

The three policemen guarding the station were caught by surprise because the Red fighters were easily able to approach the station by riding a dump truck. They put up a fight but were overpowered in only 14 minutes.

A policeman was killed in the firefight. Another one who was wounded surrendered, while the third scampered from the scene of the fighting. The Red fighters did not sustain a single casualty and retreated safely.

Other military actions

The NPA seized seven firearms in ten military actions launched in various parts of the Philippines. Ten enemy troops were killed, including a lieutenant and at least seven soldiers were wounded in these armed actions.

Red fighters attacked a gold panning area in Macopa, Surigao del Sur on October 11, seizing two carbines, two caliber .45 pistols and a caliber .38 revolver.

That same day, six soldiers were killed and many others were wounded when a squad under the NPA Danilo Ben Command sniped a platoon of the 17th IB in Cabayu, Sto. Niño, Cagayan.

Meanwhile, on October 10, two members of the people's militia seized an M16 when they mingled with a large group of soldiers conducting operations in Lantad, Balingasag, Misamis Oriental.

An NPA unit sniped the 28th IB command post in Barangay Lawaan, Pantukan, Compostela Valley on October 8, killing a soldier.

The following day, a soldier was killed when Red fighters harassed the 29th IB "B" Coy detachment in Mabuhay, Bayugan, Agusan del Sur, according to initial reports.

On October 7, two separate NPA teams under the Reynaldo Piñon Command simultaneously sniped 45th IB troops inside their detachment and another squad of soldiers on patrol in San Jose, San

Continued on "Other military actions..." on page 4

Protests assail regime's violence

The Arroyo regime has been assailed no end for its worsening cruelty and violent dispersals of people's legitimate and peaceful protest actions.

Thus, bigger sections of the middle classes and even oppositionists from the ruling classes are spurred to unite with the toiling masses calling for Arroyo's ouster from power. Growing numbers of groups and personalities are going all out to oust her through a massive people's uprising. More and more elements from the government's armed forces stand ready to defy the present chain of command.

Barefaced violence against protest actions. Aside from the repressive "calibrated preemptive response" (CPR) and "no permit, no rally" policies, Arroyo has declared Malacañang's surroundings a "no rally zone." Various anti-Arroyo groups greeted these policies with intense, widespread and persistent criticism and defiance.

This October, different groups rallied in Mendiola almost daily despite these prohibitions. All of them were violently dispersed, except for a brief rally launched by a few of the "Hyatt 10's" representatives and colleagues and another

small group that laid a wreath before the statue of Joaquin "Chino" Roces, the late *Manila Times* publisher who had fought the Marcos dictatorship, joined rallies along Mendiola that were likewise brutally dispersed and after whom Mendiola Bridge was re-named. These two groups were nonetheless tightly cordoned by the police.

On October 11, the police rabidly attacked and drove away 15 leaders and members of the Movement of Concerned Citizens for Civil Liberties (MCCCL) who had been walking along the sidewalk towards Mendiola. This incident put the lie to PNP claims that rallies were being dispersed because they obstructed road traffic. It became clear that Arroyo's real policy is to prevent anyone opposing her rule to lay a foot on Mendiola.

Students and youth meanwhile challenged Arroyo's policy on October 12. The police beat up, chased, and dragged away the rallyists.



Some women demonstrators were even sexually molested. Many of the protesters were injured and arrested. Police brutality was evident in both video footages and photographs.

Over 300 student members of the Gloria Step Down! Movement (GSM) and the League of Filipino Students (LFS) marched on Morayta near Mendiola on October 13. The youth suddenly appeared from various directions. Failing to disperse them soon enough, the police bombarded the rallyists with water cannons. Those arrested were treated brutally and molested.

On October 14, church people and democratic organizations launched a "Procession for the Truth". Among the marchers were former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, Rep. Satur Ocampo and representatives of progressive parties, former government officials, bishops, and members of various organizations. As they negotiated with police to be allowed safe passage to Mendiola on the way to the San Beda Chapel, they were suddenly blasted with water cannons. Malacañang and officers of the Philippine National Police (PNP) insisted that it was the marchers who were to blame and

"Other military actions..." from page 3

Mariano, Isabela. The AFP sustained one dead and one wounded.

Prior to this, the NPA sniped over a hundred soldiers from the same battalion conducting operations on September 30, again killing a soldier and wounding another.

Red fighters, meanwhile, ambushed 68th IB troops conducting operations in Barangay Caagutayan, San Teodoro, Oriental Mindoro on October 2. Killed in the ambush was 2Lt. Nemar Llandero, the troop commander. Four soldiers were also wounded.

In the meantime, peasants gave to the NPA a firearm and military equipment that they had taken from an ambush site in Mat-i, Surigao City where Red guerrillas waylaid a group of policemen on September 30. The farmers gave the Red fighters an M16, 41 rifle grenades, six magazines and a pack.

AB

that it was justified to train the water cannons on the rallyists.

This brought on intense and widespread condemnation from various sectors, including leaders of the Catholic Church. Both incoming Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo and El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde, formerly a fierce Arroyo supporter, condemned the violent attack.

A number of former and current government officials and leaders of democratic organizations victimized by the brutal dispersal have also filed a complaint with the United Nations Commission on Human Rights over the Arroyo regime's intense human rights abuses. At the same time, a number of lawyers' groups have filed a case with the Supreme Court questioning the legality of Batas Pambansa 880 which Malacañang has repeatedly invoked to justify

its no permit-no rally policy.

Various groups have courageously shown that they would not be deterred by the Arroyo regime's multi-tiered fascist policies and measures. Such violence and intimidation have only succeeded in steeling the determination of ever growing numbers of people to oust Arroyo from power.

Gearing for a "state of national emergency." Plans by the Arroyo regime to declare "a state of national emergency" were exposed in the media in the second week of October. An executive order numbered 467 had reportedly been drafted to declare such an emergency in response to allegations that terrorism and destabilization were widespread.

The draft order grants Arroyo powers to arrest leaders of the opposition, mass leaders and even media people—all of them measures to reinforce Arroyo's rule.

EO 467's timely exposure has derailed Arroyo's plans to declare a "state of national emergency." Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has instead claimed that the executive order in question was merely a draft resulting from studies made by his office on what contingency measures to take to confront rising oil prices. To further squelch the exposé, Malacañang suddenly showed the public an entirely new order on land administration, claiming that this was the real EO 467.

Despite the derailment, the Arroyo regime nonetheless continues to prepare for the possible declaration of "a state of national emergency" or a martial law imposition. Arroyo officials have likewise disclosed that one other option would be to grant Arroyo emergency powers.

Arroyo has relentlessly branded her opponents as destabilizers and has not spared even those involved in investigating the scandals hounding her. Soon after, Arroyo did directly accuse senators currently conducting investigations of being part of a destabilization plot. It is a pretext that Arroyo could invoke to order the arrest of oppositionists and mass leaders.

The regime continues to build scenarios for such a declaration. There are consistent claims by the police about alleged terrorist plots to launch a series of bombings and foment other types of disorder. First to be mentioned were the so-called "September attacks," which later metamorphosed into alleged terror plans slated for October or November. Many sectors are certain that these alleged acts of terrorism would be launched by no less than Malacañang and the AFP, the same way Marcos' defense chief Juan Ponce Enrile staged a fake ambush on his person to provide a pretext for the declaration of martial law in 1972.

Most Filipinos want Arroyo's ouster

A growing number of Filipinos are sick and tired of the corrupt Arroyo regime. Contrary to Arroyo's claims that the people are tired of "unproductive" and inimical protest actions, Ibon Foundation's latest survey indicated that it is Gloria Arroyo that the people are tired of and not the protests against her. No matter what posturing Arroyo assumes, she could no longer defend her corruption and puppetry.

The vast majority (83%) of Ibon's respondents were dissatisfied with Arroyo's leadership. Up to 64% wanted Arroyo removed from power. Up to 42.5% of such respondents expressed their desire to have her ousted through people power—a huge leap from previous surveys where less than 10% favored an uprising as a means of unseating her. In the face of Arroyo's barefaced efforts to cling to power, the proportion of respondents who still hoped for her resignation dwindled to 29.6%.

Ibon also said the majority of those surveyed gave Arroyo a failing grade in the fight against corruption.

Corruption in the Philippines has grown worse, according to the latest survey of Transparency International (TI), an international agency that conducts studies on government corruption worldwide. The Philippines ranked 159th this year out of 177 countries surveyed, compared to 102nd last year. According to TI's rating, the lower the rank, the more widespread the corruption.

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People's March-Caravan for Land, Wages, Jobs and Rights

Peasants and their supporters firmly launched the Lakbayan ng Mamamayan para sa Lupa, Sahod, Trabaho at Karapatan (People's March-Caravan for Land, Wages, Jobs and Rights) amid Arroyo's intense violation of the people's right to assemble and express their sentiments and the police's fascist dispersals of demonstrators in Metro Manila. The march, which kicked off from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon was led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), the Gloria Step Down! Movement (GSM) and the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

The Lakbayan is an annual activity held to commemorate peasants' month every October. Peasants have traditionally launched mobilizations on this month to coincide with the anniversary of Presidential Decree 27, the Marcos regime's sham land reform program which was succeeded by the Aquino regime's equally sham Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. This October's Lakbayan was launched to expose and oppose the Arroyo regime's cruel blows on the people both in rural and urban areas. Among the issues the Lakbayan protested were land hunger

and extreme poverty in the countryside, unemployment in the cities, low wages for those who do hold jobs, and violations of human rights and militarization both in the countryside and cities.

The march began on October 16 in Quezon province with a thousand people from Laguna, Batangas, Quezon, Mindoro, Palawan and Rizal heading towards Metro Manila. Most of the marchers were members of the Kalipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid sa Timog Katagalugan (KASAMA-TK).

Meanwhile, demonstrators consisting mainly of peasants and na-

tional minorities from Pangasinan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan and Zambales traveled to Metro Manila on October 20.

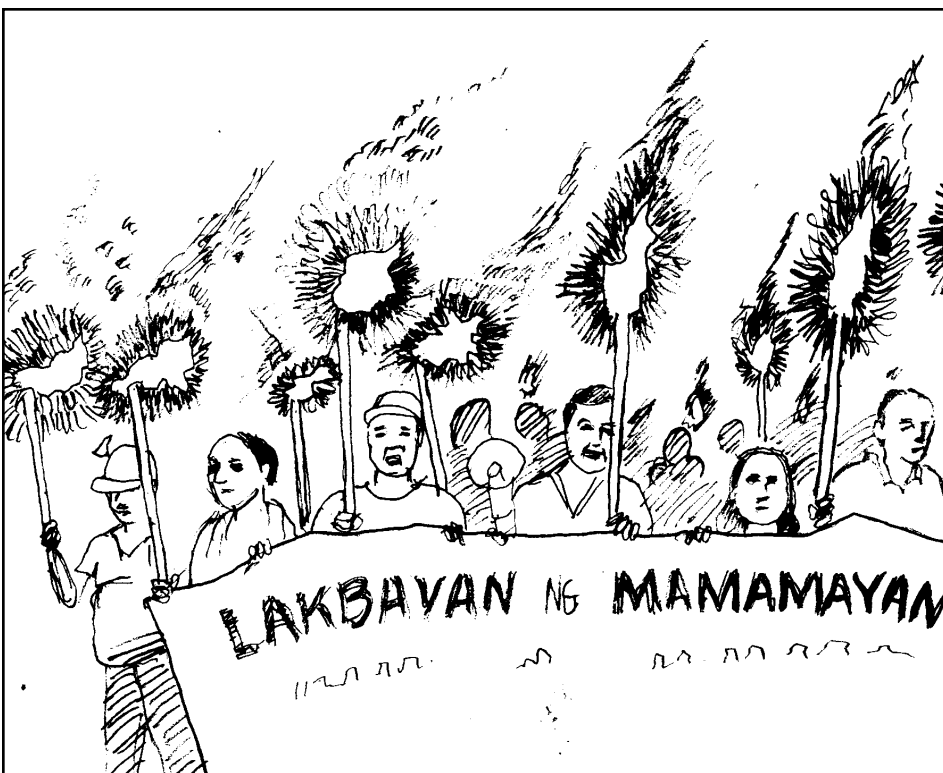
The rallyists asserted their right to protest despite being blocked several times by the police and military. They were able to assemble in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) and the Department of Agriculture (DA) on the night of October 20 where they assailed these agencies as instruments of the reactionary government in perpetuating the peasants' extreme suffering.

By October 21, up to 10,000 peasants, workers, church people, students, members of the opposition, anti-Arroyo forces and supporters marched towards Mendiola.

The enemy once again wove lies in an attempt to disrupt the Lakbayan. The day before, the AFP had accused Rep. Satur Ocampo of providing funds to the NPA to buy explosives. The PNP also relentlessly created an atmosphere of terror by harping on an alleged NPA plot to unleash violence during the march.

The military and the police ended up looking ridiculous. Their accusations against Ocampo turned out to be pure hogwash since the only piece of "evidence" in the AFP's hands was an alleged letter between two NPA units in Aurora stating that a certain "Ka Satur" had ordered bombings to be carried out in Metro Manila. During the actual march, it was three AFP personnel, and not NPA members, who were caught trying to infiltrate the rallyists' ranks and spy on the protesters.

AB



Unconcealable economic crisis

Gloria Arroyo may make daily claims that the economy is stable and on the verge of takeoff, but even her fiercest defenders can ill conceal the abundance of indicators that reflect the reality of economic decline.

Arroyo is hard-pressed obscuring the people's extreme suffering due to rampant unemployment, relentless price increases, ever heavier tax burdens and woefully inadequate wages and incomes. The people's widespread anger at the burdens and the cruelty wrought by the Arroyo regime lay at the core of their growing calls for an end to Arroyo's rule.

The Arroyo regime has sought to cover up massive poverty by doctoring statistics and issuing overstated economic projections, thus painting a portrait of a healthy and prospering economy. But these gross manipulations and exaggerated projections have dismayed even technocrats of imperialist institutions who have a different assessment of the economy.

Foreign capital infusion, which Arroyo hoped would salvage the country's dying industries, continues to come in trickles. Vital industries and economic sectors continue to collapse even as prices of all products and services persistently rise without letup. Restiveness hounds various sectors of society, especially the impoverished majority as their desperation about the economy heightens.

Depressed production levels. Industrial production, long limited and moving at a snail's pace, is on an inexorable decline. Manufacturing declined by 1.1% in the first half of the year compared to last year's figures. The production of machinery, electrical

machinery, lumber and wood products, basic metals, non-metallic mineral products and printing has gone down by at least 10%. As a result, net earnings in the manufacturing sector dropped 5.8% in July.

A worldwide slump has likewise caused electronics production to plummet from 33.8% in June to 20.5% in July. With over 60% of the country's exports consisting of semi-manufactured electronic spare parts, the Philippines is expected to suffer a P8.3 billion foreign trade deficit this year which is set to swell to P9.6 billion in 2006.

Excess capacity is widespread in industry. A National Statistics Office study revealed that only 33% of 100 factories surveyed use 70% of their maximum labor capacity.

From 2004 to July 2005, net earnings of beverage products, transportation equipment, various manufactures, shoes and garments and petroleum products fell 5.8%.

Widespread hunger. More and more Filipinos are going hungry. Growing numbers of families from the middle strata are being pushed to such desperate straits. They have been reduced to cutting back even on their food intake because there are no other basic needs left to skimp on.

An Asian Development Bank (ADB) study has revealed that 44.4% of Fi-

lipinos are unable to meet their basic needs and live in extreme poverty. Fifteen percent (15%) of them suffer from severe hunger or have experienced instances in the last three months when they had insufficient food.

One reason for this is spiraling food prices coupled with declining local food production and trade. The quantity of food and animals traded declined from 1.9 million tons in the first quarter of 2004 to 1.36 million tons in the first quarter of 2005. But the cost of items traded rose from P21.98 million to P25.25 million in the same period.

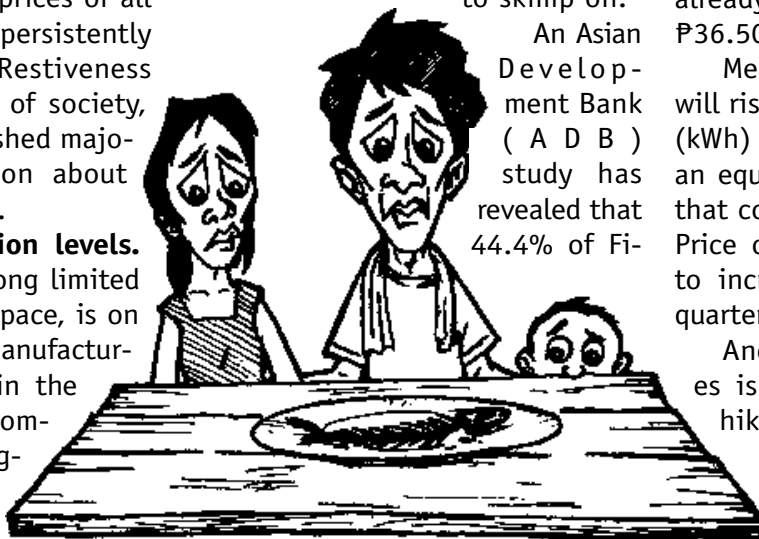
Spiraling prices. Incessant price increases have added to the hardships suffered by the vast majority of the people. Prices are bound to rise further once the 10% expanded value added tax for certain products is implemented beginning November 1.

Aside from the planned P2.50 average increase in the prices of petroleum products, oil companies will be adding P3.40 more once the EVAT is implemented on November 1. They will also be passing on an additional P30 in the price of every 11-kilogram tank of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). Oil prices, which have risen 21 times this year, have gone up by P11 per liter. Even without the EVAT, oil prices already ranged from P35.50 to P36.50 per liter.

Meanwhile, electricity charges will rise by P0.52 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) beginning in November—or an equivalent of P100 for a family that consumes 200 kWh per month. Price of other goods are expected to increase by 6-12% in the last quarter of the year.

Another round of price increases is expected once the EVAT is hiked to 12% in January 2006.

Worsening unemployment and deteriorating working conditions. The



country currently suffers from its highest unemployment rate ever. Arroyo is unable to obscure this fact despite her penchant for doctoring statistics. Even the ADB's conservative estimates place the number of unemployed workers at up to five million and the number of underemployed at 8.4 million or 26.1% of the labor force. Expected to add to this number are 200,000 workers in the garments industry

scheduled to lose their jobs in the next three years because of a slow-down in local production. The local garments industry has long been in distress due to relentless dumping of cheap textile and garments imports from China and the drop in Philippine garments exports to the US with the termination of the US garments quota for the country.

Insufficient wages and growing workers' grievances have led to a

32% rise in the number of strikes and lockouts this year. Strikes and other workers' actions are most often spurred by systematic attacks on labor rights, including the right to job security. The long-established practice among capitalists to lay off regular workers en masse and hire casuals and contractuels only to fire them after three to five months has worsened. **AB**

2006 government budget

Merely for debt service

The bulk of the Arroyo regime's proposed P1.053 trillion budget for 2006 has been allotted to service the government's worthless debts and defray the costs of Gloria Arroyo's political maneuvers to stay in power.

The regime's priorities obviously demonstrate that the much-vaunted benefits that the added funds from EVAT would be bringing to the people are nothing but lies.

One-third or P340 billion of the proposed budget has been allocated for interest payments. Another P383 billion has been automatically set aside to pay the principal. Arroyo has thus allocated up to P722 billion for debt service—or the equivalent of 75% of expected government tax and non-tax revenues! One other useless item in the budget is the P1.84 billion (or the equivalent of P5 million a day) allotted to pay for the loan that funded the construction of the anomalous Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) during Marcos' time.

Arroyo's budget also reflects her utter lack of compassion for the people. Compared to what she has set aside for debt service, what Arroyo has allocated for basic services amounts to loose change. The proposed budget allots a mere 14.76% for education (from 14.85% this year). The allocation for health expenditures has been reduced from 1.67% to 1.41%. Taken all together, the regime's

allotment for education, health, social security, housing and land distribution amounts to only P240 billion or 28% of the budget.

Arroyo has meanwhile bloated budgetary earmarks that she could use directly for her political maneuvers and her efforts to cling to power. They include the P2.85 billion added to her P8 billion pork barrel fund and the P2 billion intelligence fund that Sec. Eduardo Ermita has quickly admitted would be used to monitor and go after Arroyo's political opponents.

Another big anomaly is Arroyo's allocation of P46.8 billion "to heal the wounds from previous EDSA uprisings." In truth, the amount has been set aside to reverse and destroy the gains of previous people power exercises and prevent the resurgence of people's mobilizations against her regime.

The proposed budget has grown bigger due to Arroyo's insertions of provisions for an additional P8 billion kitty from which Malacañang could draw funds to bribe local government leaders; P5 billion for what has been dubbed "Kilos Asenso" (Action for Progress); and P3 billion for the so-called

"Kalayaan Barangay Program" (Freedom Village Program). These are in addition to the P166.5 billion Internal Revenue Allotment already allocated, which is P14.5 billion more than last year's allotment.

Arroyo will use these funds to continue buying the loyalty of agency and local government officials. Although the budget has yet to be passed by Congress, Arroyo has already announced its main features in a meeting of local government officials this month. For corrupt generals, Arroyo has added 18.7% to the proposed AFP budget.

To fund this enormous budget, the Arroyo regime is set to directly borrow at least P532 billion. The amount is exclusive of programmed government borrowing through the flotation of bonds and treasury notes. According to the Developmental Budget Coordinating Council, the government may need to borrow up to P1.35 trillion next year, or P300 billion more than the proposed budget.

Government debt is estimated to reach P3.79 trillion at the end of 2006. Total government debt currently stands at P3.657 trillion. If one were to include other government obligations such as debts of government corporations to the public and overseas, total government debt comes to P5.3 trillion. **AB**

Ata-Manobo declare *pangayaw* against dam and militarization

Leaders of the Ata-Manobo tribe recently declared a *pangayaw* or tribal war against the Talaingod Hydroelectric Project and rampant militarization and landgrabbing. The *pangayaw*, declared by Datu Gibang Apunga, aims to defend the lands of the Ata-Manobo and oppose widespread violations of their rights.

This, despite denials by the AFP, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the notorious mayor of Talaingod, Davao del Norte—Pilar Libayao—about the ongoing militarization and landgrabbing in the area.

The Ata-Manobo minorities have been suffering the blows of cruel military operations in their communities in Talaingod for three weeks now. Since October 4, the 73rd IB has continuously bombed the barrios of Buryan, Nabalabag, Sasu, Tibukag, Damulohan, Laskon, Tulay and Nasilaban, using airplanes, mortars and 105 mm cannons. The objective of these operations is to drive out the people from the area to pave the way for foreign mining companies.

Up to 120 Ata-Manobo families (or over 500 people), including 14 women who had just given birth have been forced to evacuate as a result of intense militarization. An infant has already died during his family's evacuation after exposure to extreme cold and hunger.

Since September, the 4th Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) under the 73rd IB has been launching an intensive psy-war campaign and has hamletted Sitio Nasilaban, Barangay Palma Gil in Talaingod. Hamletting involves forcibly concentrating people in settlements to enable the military to tightly monitor and control their movements. The main casualty is the people's livelihood since villagers are usually prohibited from

going to their swidden farms.

The RSOT held village meetings to compel the surrender of leaders of Salugpungan, a local organization of Ata-Manobo tribespeople defending their interests. One of the leaders whose surrender was being demanded was Datu Apunga.

The military targeted and intimidated Ata-Manobo minorities who would not be swayed with the sugar-coated promises, inducements, pressure and the RSOT's various other schemes such as fake surrenders and recruitment into paramilitary units in exchange for a few scoops of rice and cans of sardines. Those who did not attend the meetings called by the military, like Datu Apunga and other tribal leaders, were outrightly declared enemies of the reactionary government.

The Human Rights Committee of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP-HRC) has condemned militarization in Talaingod. It said the military's merciless attacks on civilians were outright violations of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) signed by both the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the NDFP.

The Pasaka Lumad Confederation, an organization of national minorities in Mindanao, has also condemned the Philippine Army's "clearing operations." The Lumad said that the military's real targets



are Ata-Manobo opposed to the large-scale landgrabbing that accompanies destructive "development projects" of the reactionary government in Talaingod.

The operations, they said, are aimed at weakening and crushing the determination of the minorities who have stood their ground against the seizure of their ancestral lands.

Before the militarization escalated, the Ata-Manobo had already repudiated claims by the NCIP that the P738 million Japan-funded Talaingod Hydroelectric Project would redound to their welfare. The minorities also opposed plans by Alsons (Alcantara & Sons) to conduct mining operations in the Pantaron Ranges. They formally declared their opposition to this project in a meeting called by the NCIP in July.

The military's "clearing operations" also provide protection to the Alsons' illegal cultivation of commercial trees, which violates the 1995 memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Ata-Manobo, then Talaingod mayor Jose Libayao (father of the current mayor), the Office of Southern Cultural Communities (NCIP's predecessor) and Alsons. The memoran-

dum calls for a ban on any Integrated Forestry Management (IFMA) project in Ata-Manobo lands. Alsos has brazenly violated the memorandum repeatedly because of the protection provided by the military.

Meanwhile, the Talaingod Hydroelectric Project, which is part the Arroyo government's "Philippine Energy Plan 2004-2013," will siphon off nearly all of the waters of the Kipaliko and Gabuyan rivers to generate electricity for five Davao del Norte towns. As a result, however, many residents of the affected areas will be forced to evacuate because the project will inundate Talaingod's lowlands. AB

Three more militant leaders murdered

Three more progressive leaders were murdered between September 30 and October 16.

Bayan Muna-Tarlac secretary-general Florante Collantes, 57, was killed in Barangay Tuec, Camiling, Tarlac on October 16. Collantes was standing in front of his store with his wife when two motorcycle-riding men gunned him down.

Prior to this, local Anakpawis party leader Dr. Ponciano Silva, 54, was murdered on October 12 in Unisan, Quezon. Silva, a dentist, was ambushed by unknown men around noontime in Barangay Kalilayan Ibaba in Unisan.

In Surigao del Sur, Bislig City Bayan Muna co-ordinator Vicky Samonte, 51, was killed while on her way home to Bliss Project, Barangay Mancarogo aboard a tricycle on September 30. She was mercilessly stabbed by an unknown assailant. Samonte, a teacher, was president of the Kilusang Mayo Uno-affiliated Andres Soriano College Employees Association. She was also a member of the National Council of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) at the time of her death.

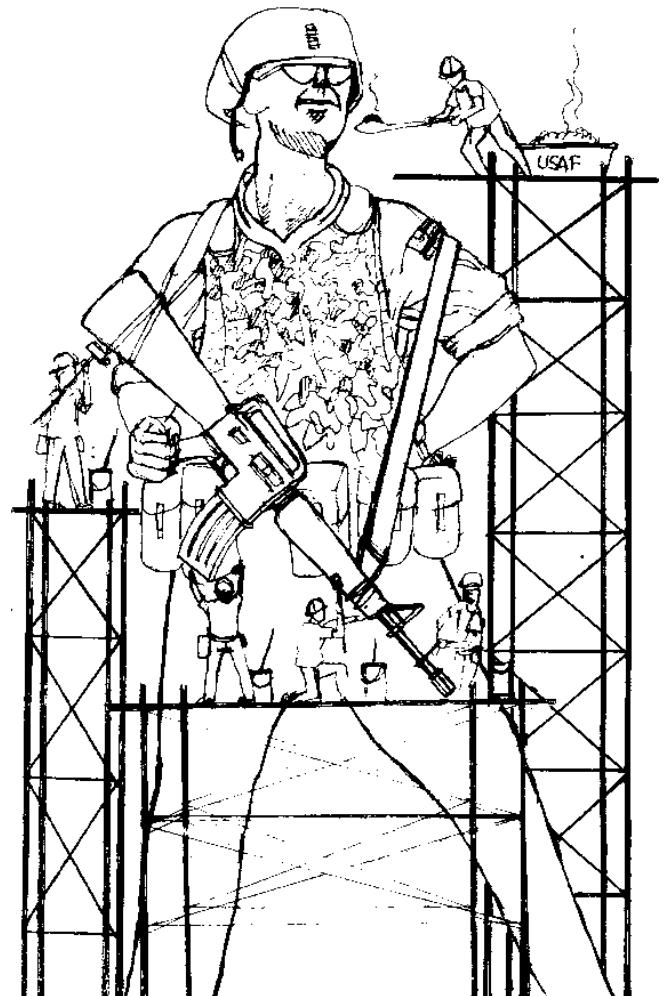
Meanwhile, at least a dozen men armed with M16 rifles burned down the Bayan Muna-Tarlac office in the early morning of October 18. The office located in Sitio Buno, Barangay Matatalaib, Tarlac City was doused with gasoline and ignited with a molotov cocktail hurled inside. BAYAN-Central Luzon chair Roman Polintan said they could think of no other suspect for the arson and the latest murders of militants in the region than the butcher Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan. Palparan is the newly appointed chief of the 7th Infantry Division based in Nueva Ecija. AB

The US' use and abuse of foreign workers in Iraq

Ang Bayan is publishing this article in response to readers' requests for clarifications on the CPP's view on foreign workers employed by the US military and by agencies and companies serving as instruments of US aggression and occupation in Iraq.

To sustain its occupation forces in Iraq, US imperialism maintains a policy of employing foreign civilian workers to perform "privatized war services" in support of US military forces. Its purpose is to make it look as though the US is reducing its military force, to cut down on costs and to focus its military troops on combat.

It is the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (Logcap) of the US Armed Forces that carries out





this policy to ensure that the US' regular military units can concentrate on combat. Logcap contracts private companies that provide foreign workers from different countries. Kellogg, Brown & Root (KBR) is the largest contractor that provides foreign civilian employees to support the war and the US' occupation forces in Iraq. It is owned by the Halliburton Company—US President George W. Bush's closest crony and the recipient of over \$10 billion worth of "reconstruction" contracts in the war-torn country.

KBR recruits foreign workers through layer upon layer of contractors. They include the Gulf Catering Co. based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and the Alargan Group based in Kuwait City. They are, in turn, contracted by Event Source, an American agency based in Salt Lake City in the US, which is a subcontractor of KBR in Houston, Texas. The workers are deceived into thinking they are being recruited to work in Riyadh or Kuwait. Once they are there, however, they are told that they are on their way to Iraq and brought there against their wishes.

There are as many as 25,000-30,000 foreign civilian workers employed in Iraq, including 6,000 Filipino workers. They come from 38 countries, mainly India, Pakistan and the Philippines.

The Arroyo regime had hoped to send up to 100,000 Filipino workers to Iraq as a reward for its fierce support for the US invasion. Arroyo even sent a high-level delegation to negotiate with private US companies for the large-scale recruitment of workers from the Philippines. But only up to 6,000 Filipinos were able to land jobs. Furthermore, Arroyo was forced to announce a "ban" on sending Fili-

pino workers to Iraq after the Filipino people demanded the prohibition in the face of Angelo dela Cruz's abduction by Iraqi resistance fighters in June 2004.

The ban, however, is merely for show. In reality, the smuggling of Filipino workers into Iraq continues, with the workers being coursed through the neighboring countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan.

The foreign workers employed by the US in Iraq are usually found in US military camps where they perform manual labor as cooks, drivers, carpenters, janitors, cargo loaders and couriers—support services previously performed by American soldiers. Some privatized services that are directly involved in combat—such as the interrogation of prisoners—are performed by private American "specialists."

Like other workers who go abroad because of the dearth of livelihood opportunities in their own countries, the foreign workers contracted by the US slave away just to be able to earn a living. US imperialism exploits the grave problem of unemployment and severe poverty in backward countries. The workers earn a measly \$800 a month compared to an American soldier's \$6,000 monthly salary.

Aside from the great risk that foreign workers from backward countries take to perform private war services in Iraq, they are also abused and made to work in subhuman conditions for 14-16 hours a day. Many of them have reported that they do not receive any overtime pay or are not granted days off.

They usually don't have enough food to eat and are sometimes fed spoilt food, so there are times

when they are forced to eat leftovers of American soldiers. While American soldiers drink clean, commercial bottled water, the workers drink contaminated water that is treated with chlorine and iced, supposedly to kill the microbes. They sleep under tents under extremely hot temperatures (up to 40°C or 104°F) and are not provided any protection against the physical dangers they face from gunfire and explosions.

Foreign civilian workers are exploited by the US to serve its repressive and cruel invasion and occupation of Iraq. Although their work does not directly involve them in combat, the services they perform serve the US' military interests in Iraq. Thus, they are oftentimes caught in the crossfire during attacks by Iraqi resistance groups fighting the US occupation of their country. In some instances, they are captured or subjected to other military actions by Iraqi rebel groups.

On the other hand, they also experience intense oppression in the hands of American soldiers and have expressed their anger and opposition in various ways. In one instance, foreign workers waged collective action to demand humane treatment, culminating in a strike of about 300 workers in the US' Camp Anaconda in Baghdad, Iraq. The strikers opposed their terrible living and working conditions. Faced with extreme cruelty, it was but just for them to take action to demand their rights and advance their welfare.

It is but just for foreign civilian workers employed by the US military and American companies in Iraq to organize themselves, oppose abuse and oppression, and militantly assert their class inter-

ests. It is the internationalist duty of the proletariat and the world's peoples to support their organizing and resistance efforts.

However, foreign workers in Iraq must also be made aware of the even worse exploitation, cruelty and oppression wrought by the US occupation and colonization of Iraq. It is the foremost internationalist duty of the revolutionary proletariat and anti-imperialist forces to show both the workers and the people of Iraq and the entire world the injustice of the US' invasion, control and domination of that country, and of all other countries occupied and oppressed by the imperialists.

Foreign workers in Iraq must also realize that far beyond the oppression they suffer in the form of low wages and subhuman working conditions, they are being used by the US superpower to oppress and enslave the Iraqi people. We must continue to expose to the entire world the oppression wrought by the US occupation on the Iraqi people and to call vigorously for the expulsion of US troops from Iraq.

We must vigorously raise the consciousness and level of resistance of foreign workers in Iraq and that of the workers and people of the world against the US military occupation of Iraq and other countries occupied and oppressed by the imperialists. It is the responsibility of the revolutionary proletariat and anti-imperialist forces to broaden support for the Iraqi people's struggle for national liberation from the clutches of US imperialism.

In this regard, it is the duty of revolutionaries to oppose the US military policy of recruiting foreign workers. We must organize and mobilize Filipino workers to oppose the reactionary state and its policies that worsen unemployment and push Filipinos to become contractual workers abroad. We must do all we can to raise the consciousness of workers in Iraq and encourage them to break free from their exploitation by the US' brutal colonial rule in Iraq. **AB**

Mass actions demand teachers' benefits, junking of Mining Act

VARIOUS teachers' organizations marched towards the Batasang Pambansa on October 7 to demand salary increases and the granting of benefits due them.

Employees of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), meanwhile, assailed the release of over P1 billion in GSIS funds to Arroyo allegedly for her social programs, even as they had yet to receive salary increases and as pension funds of retired government employees were in danger of being obliterated.

Different groups of national minorities and other people affected by the plunder of imperialist mining in the Philippines also picketed a three-day conference attended by mining companies and government agencies on October 11-13. They called for the junking of the Philippine Mining Act and demanded ownership and control over resources within their ancestral lands.

People's War Bulletin: News on the victories of armed struggle

THE *People's War Bulletin* (PWB), the New People's Army's (NPA) news service began publication in the first week of October. The PWB carries information about tactical offensives and other news from the field of armed struggle. It is published regularly in the Philippine Revolution Web Central (PRWC) managed by the CPP Information Bureau and sent to the mass media within and outside the country.

The PWB's objective is to serve as a reliable source of correct information on battles between the NPA and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and other armed groups of the reactionary state. The PWB's timely release has become urgent in the face of continuing distortions or coverups by the AFP high command and its spokespersons of information on armed encounters.

The PWB's initial round of press releases was a success due to vigorous and prompt dispatches by NPA units and operational commands at various levels. The reports are sent by email (to angbayan@yahoo.com) or through other means of communication. In the past weeks, the PWB became a source of information for mass media on the latest NPA tactical offensives.

The PWB is expected to become more dynamic as revolutionary armed struggle advances and as efforts to publicize the victories of the New People's Army likewise become more vigorous.