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Editorial

Arroyo's condemnation of political killings is sheer hypocrisy

In the face of widespread local and international condemnation, Gloria Arroyo has been desperately trying to distance herself from the relentless killings of activists and other forces fighting her regime.

She has assailed extrajudicial executions in her State of the Nation Address before Congress in a vain attempt to wash her blood-stained hands. But in a move that reeked of sheer hypocrisy, she refused to condemn the state's armed forces who are behind the killings and has instead commended her most rabid butcher Gen. Jovito Palparan, the man responsible for the wave of military terror.

Obviously, Arroyo has no plans of ending the widespread killings. In a frantic bid to cover up her involvement and those of her key officials in the AFP and PNP, she has rehashed an old lie: that the extrajudicial killings are part of an ongoing purge within the ranks of the revolutionary forces.

The sham investigations she has ordered will have predictable results. The regime is prepared to sacrifice a few lowly military and police personnel, notorious criminals in its employ and even the innocent to mask and save the real criminals and gain a sem-

blance of credibility in the face of massive local and international opprobrium. Arroyo's directive to the police to resolve ten cases of political killings in ten weeks is nothing but empty, deceptive braggadocio. Her regime will go through the motions of investigating not to end the killings but to cover up the fact that the extrajudicial executions are part and parcel its national security policy. The people are well aware that no less than Arroyo and her Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) planned this murderous campaign and ordered its implementation by their most rabid generals and fascist forces.

The military and police have long been stating that the CPP and NPA comprise the main threats to state security, contradicting their boastful claims that their "all-out war" has crushed the revolutionary forces. The fact is that the NPA has been striking forceful blows against the military and police.

Being blind to the movements of the NPA, the AFP and PNP have cravenly turned their guns on unarmed activists who resolutely use legal means to fight the corrupt, puppet and fascist Arroyo regime.

Urban mass leaders and activists are the primary targets of dirty operations aimed at "neutralizing the Left." In fascist language, "neutralization" means killing or maiming a targeted individual or putting an end to his activities through force or



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deception.

Consequently, various counter-measures have been arrayed against the legal democratic movement, especially so-called "leading CPP personalities in Metro Manila." Vigilante groups, including those directly controlled by Malacañang are being organized by the AFP-PNP and fascist generals to abduct and kill activists, and sabotage and bomb offices, facilities and homes of members of the open and legal democratic movement in Manila and nearby areas.

Malacañang plans to bus in participants for anti-communist rallies that will be arrayed against big anti-Arroyo rallies. The regime likewise plans to launch a psywar and propaganda campaign to gussy up Gloria Arroyo's sordid image and subvert the anticipated widespread protests against the regime's intensified all-out war.

Before the year's end, the fascist regime will be putting out posters of wanted personalities, using funds from Arroyo's gigantic pork barrel to provide bounties for their capture.

All these moves are designed

to prevent progressive parties from winning any more victories in the coming elections and to totally exclude them from the electoral arena.

Arroyo and her militarist hatchet men, however, are totally incapable of realizing that despite their bloody five-year campaign against the legal democratic movement, the people's resistance has persisted and intensified. The killings have not caused fear. They incite a fervent determination to persist with the struggle and see justice done. Arroyo has inadvertently increased the number of people desiring to take up arms and advance armed struggle.

These bloody intrigues and repression will end only with the people's overthrow of the Arroyo regime. Justice can only be served after Arroyo and her key officials are booted from office and punished. It is the duty of all Party cadres and members, all NPA commanders and fighters and other revolutionary forces to exert every effort to hasten the overthrow of the fascist Arroyo regime and win more victories to further advance people's war. AB

Protests and condemnation

There is heightening local and international protest against the US-sponsored Arroyo regime's systematic and widespread killings of activists, media personnel and ordinary civilians.

The families of nine missing activists and revolutionaries filed last August 3 five separate petitions for a writ of habeas corpus. The families of Prudencio and Celina Palma-Calubid, Rogelio and Angel Calubad, Roland Porter, Leopoldo Ancheta, Ariel Beloy, Gloria Soco and Philip Limjoco have asked the Supreme Court to compel the Arroyo government and the AFP and PNP high command to present their loved ones before the court. The victims were abducted in separate incidents between May 6 and June 26.

The parents of missing UP students Sherlyn Capadan and Karen Empeño filed a similar petition last July 19. Last August 1, the Supreme Court ordered the AFP to produce both students before the court and explain the reasons for their detention. The AFP, however, denies having custody of the missing activists and has idiotically insinuated that both victims might have joined the NPA.

In the Philippines

An Ibon Foundation survey from June 28 to July 7 reveals that about 67% of Filipinos believe that hatchet men of the Arroyo regime are responsible for the killings of activists. A huge majority (93%) are calling on the Arroyo regime to stop the killings.

Last August 7, more than 7,000 people attended the three-kilometer funeral procession for Alyce Claver, a Bayan Muna coordinator

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killed last July 30 in Tabuk, Kalinga. Clinics and hospitals in Kalinga closed last August 1 as a sign of protest against the ambush staged against the Clavers. More than 150 doctors in Kalinga gathered in Tabuk to demand justice for the couple. The Health Alliance for Democracy and Health Action for Human Rights held a protest action last August 4 in front of the Department of Health.

Earlier, Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto, known to be close to Gloria Arroyo, condemned what he called a very low regard for human rights in Central Luzon.

Abroad

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) censured Arroyo for her lack of a concrete plan to stop political killings in the country. The AHRC reacted to Arroyo's State of the Nation Address last July 24 where she came up with a patently insincere condemnation of extrajudicial killings.

In Canada, the Philippine Women's Center, SIK-LAB (an organization of migrant Filipinos), Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance, Philippine Network for Justice and Peace and Community Alliance for Social Justice condemned the Arroyo regime's bloody record and rampant violations of human rights.

The United Church of Canada (UCC) called for a separate United Nations (UN) investigation in the Philippines. The UCC asked the UN to assign the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary and Arbitrary Executions to conduct an investigation of political killings and abductions in the Philippines.

The International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM), a group of Dutch and Belgian judges, submitted their investigation report on the killing of judges and lawyers in the Philippines to the Philippine Embassy in The Hague, The Netherlands last July 24. The IFFM said 10 judges and 13 lawyers in the Philippines have been killed under the Arroyo regime.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Peace Mission (HKHRPM), a group of 11 writers, lawyers, church workers and researchers, conducted a separate fact-finding mission in Central Luzon last July 26-27. The group condemned the increasing violations of human rights in the region and the continued incarceration of Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran.

The Commission on Human Rights, a government agency, has warned that the Philippines might be blacklisted at the UN for its failure to submit reports on the human rights situation in the country and the measures that have been taken to improve it.

Arroyo regime intensifies violations of human rights

The Arroyo regime continues with its relentless campaign of political killings and abductions. Karapatan's latest report reveals that 720 persons have fallen victim to political killings since Arroyo assumed power in 2001.

August 3. Elements of the 9th ID killed Isaias Sta. Rosa, a member of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP-Albay). Sta. Rosa was shot outside his house in Barangay Malubago, Daraga, Albay at about 9 p.m.

August 1. Suspected elements of the 69th IB seized Magnolia Poultry Dressing Plant union official Benigno Mateo outside the factory in Barangay Quebiawan, San Fernando, Pampanga. Mateo is the 60th union member abducted since 2001.

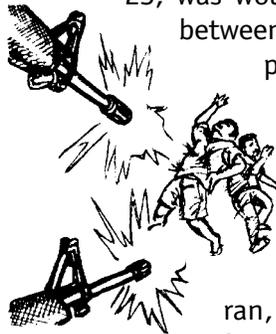
Armed men likewise shot dead Alfredo Vendinil, Jr., 34, in front of his house in Barangay Cordero, Lupao, Nueva Ecija. The military suspected Vendinil of sympathizing with the revolutionary movement.

First week of August. Searchers found the body of missing hors de combat Red fighter Delfin Cariño. Cariño, 23, was wounded and captured in an encounter between the NPA and the military in Sallapadan, Abra on July 7. Military authorities refused for weeks to entertain queries from his family and friends about his whereabouts and denied having him in custody.

July 31. Two death squad elements killed Rei Mon "Ambo" Guran, 21, at about 6:15 a.m. in Bulan, Sorsogon. Guran, spokesperson for the League of Filipino Students in Bicol, was shot aboard a bus. The killers immediately alighted and made their getaway on a motorcycle.

About 30 minutes after the Guran murder, killers in Bulanao, Tabuk, Kalinga peppered with M16 and .45 cal bullets the van driven by Dr. Constancio "Chandu" Claver, with his wife Alyce and daughter Cassandra on board. Alyce, 42, a Bayan Muna coordinator, died after five hours in the hospital. Dr. Claver, chairman of Bayan Muna-Kalinga, was seriously injured. Their daughter suffered slight injuries.

July 30. Bayan Muna member Mario Florendo was killed inside his house in Barangay Paritas, Lupao, Nue-





va Ecija at about 4 a.m.

July 27. A plan to assassinate Fr. Eleuterio Revollido of the Philippine Independent Church has been uncovered. Reverend Revollido, who chairs Bayan-Pangasinan has been under surveillance by elements of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency since last year. Armed men had earlier killed Mariano Sepnio, Bayan-Pangasinan vice chair last March 9, and Jose Doton, Bayan-Pangasinan secretary general last May 16.

July 26. Three elements of the 8th IB killed Bayan Muna member and Misamis Oriental Farmers Association secretary general Ernesto Ladica, 43, in Barangay Looc, Salay, Misamis Oriental. Ladica was drinking coffee in his house at about 6:30 p.m. when fired upon by his assailants. Three bullets struck Ladica's back and neck. The killers fled aboard two motorcycles in the direction of Cagayan de Oro City.

July 24. Masked men in fatigue uniforms abducted Ernesto Santiago from his home in Sitio Tulikan, Barangay Dulong Malabon, Pulilan, Bulacan. Santiago is coordinator for the Koalisyon Kontra Polusyon (KKP). For the past ten years, KKP has been opposing the dumping of formalin into local irrigation dikes by Tyson Chicken Dressing Plant, Foster Chicken Dressing Plant, Robsen's Fruit Juice Co. and PM Metal Smelting Co. The toxic chemical pollutes the irrigation waters that flow through ricefields and fishponds. Santiago remains missing.

July 23. Soldiers of the 53rd Recon Coy killed Robert Balagat, 27, in Barangay Mocag, Baggao, Cagayan. His three companions Raymund Castro, Juliet and Janice Padilyo were wounded. Soldiers claimed that the victims were caught in the crossfire during a misencounter between two military units. The survivors denied the soldiers' claim.

That same day, 77th IB troops and CAFGU elements shot and killed Eloy Galang while he was pass-

ing a military checkpoint in Gagabutan, Rizal, Cagayan. The local CAFGU are also armed goons of Rizal Mayor Raul dela Cruz.

July 22. Three men shot Charlie Daylo in Poon Bakit Resort, Purok 4, Barangay Calapandayan, Subic, Zambales. Daylo, 38, is the leader of Aeta minorities in San Felipe, Zambales. He is the provincial vice chairman of the National Commission on Indigenous Filipinos and a former provincial coordinator for Anakpawis.

July 21. Armed men shot and seriously wounded Benjamin Luzano at about 3 p.m. in the Ilagan, Isabela town market. Luzano is the barangay captain of San Victoria, Ilagan and a member of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. The assassination attempt on Luzano came a day after the killing of Isabela Bayan Muna leader Madonna Castillo.

On the evening of the same day, Arnel Guevara, 41, was shot inside his house in Mexico, Pampanga. Guevara was a member of the Aguman Da Reng Maglalautang Capampangan, an allied organization of the KMP. The three killers fled immediately after the incident.

July 20. Military personnel arrested labor leader Lowie Sanggalang inside his house in Barangay Quebiawan, City of San Fernando, Pampanga. He was brought to the 69th IB headquarters in Mexico, Pampanga for detention and interrogation. He is still incarcerated.

That same day, four activists—Charlie Sinuto, 47; Philip dela Cruz, 44; Tessie Abellera, 54, and her son Rodel, 26—were abducted in Barangay Parista, Lupao, Nueva Ecija. The Abelleras were forced to board a van with plate number XGB804. The victims remain missing.

July 6. Suspected military elements killed Karapatan member Julie Jacob in Daraga, Albay.

June 18. Members of a death squad killed Eugenio Estes in San Isidro, Lupao, Nueva Ecija. Estes was an activist and barangay chairman of the same place. **AB**

GRP rejects joint investigative body

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales has rejected an NDFP proposal to form a joint ad hoc committee to investigate the growing number of political killings and abductions of activists.

NDFP Human Rights Committee chair Ka Fidel Agcaoili made the proposal in a letter to Atty. Sedfrey Candelaria, his counterpart in the GRP peace panel. The NDFP proposed the appointment to the ad hoc commit-

tee of observers nominated by both parties to the Joint Monitoring Committee that ensures the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. The NDFP nominees are Bishop Tomas Millamena of the Philippine Independent Church and Marie Hilao-Enriquez of Karapatan, while the GRP nominees are Mercedes Contreras-Danenber and Aileen Bacalso.

To ensure the committee's objectivity, Agcaoili further proposed that representatives from the Royal Norwegian Government (which serves as Third Party Facilitator in the GRP-NDFP peace talks) and the International Committee of the Red Cross be allowed to sit in as observers.

Gonzales agreed to allow a foreign fact-finding team into the country, but he refused to let the NDFP play a role in it. **AB**

Growing support for impeachment

There is growing support for the impeachment case against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

A Pulse Asia survey revealed that 57% of its respondents the past month said that the impeachment case must push through. This contradicts claims by the regime's sycophants that the people are "fed up" or not interested in the case. Even those who claim to have lost interest in the case say so only because they were certain that it would be blocked by Arroyo's allies in Congress.

Meanwhile, four other impeachment complaints were consecutively filed in Congress from July 24-27.

On the day of the State of the Nation Address last July 24, 13 retired generals and colonels filed the fifth impeachment complaint endorsed by South Cotabato Rep. Darlyn Antonio-Custodio.

The sixth impeachment complaint was filed last July 25 by members of the party list group Citizen's Battle Against Corruption (CIBAC) and Bangon Pilipinas Movement. The complaint was signed by 1,092 individuals and endorsed by CIBAC Rep. Joel Villanueva.

On July 26, the seventh impeachment complaint was filed by about 200 individuals from eight progres-

sive organizations affiliated with Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan). This complaint was endorsed by the "Batasan 5"—Deputy Minority Leader Satur Ocampo and Reps. Teodoro Casiño, Rafael Mariano, Liza Maza and Joel Virador.

The Black and White Movement and the Hyatt 10 filed last July 27 the eighth impeachment complaint which was endorsed by four members of the Liberal Party—Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, Bukidnon Rep. Nereus Acosta, Batanes Rep. Henedina Abad and Cagayan Rep. Manuel Mamba.

All impeachment complaints covered Arroyo's involvement in electoral fraud, corruption, the killings of leaders and members of legal organizations and media and her exercise of dictatorial powers.

Even before conducting a study of the complaints, however, House Speaker Jose de Venecia, Majority Floor Leader Prospero Nograles, Rep. Simeon Datumanong and other Arroyo sycophants in Congress said that the impeachment stands no chance of moving forward. The opposition decried plans by pro-Arroyo congressmen to junk the impeachment case in two weeks. AB

Protest actions during Arroyo's sixth SONA

Neither the thousands of policemen and soldiers nor the ferocity of Typhoon Glenda failed to stop more than 10,000 people, including peasants from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon from pouring out into the streets on the day of Gloria Arroyo's State of the Nation Address at the Batasan Complex last July 24. They proclaimed the true state of the nation in a program along Common-

wealth Avenue, Quezon City. Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and its affiliate organizations led the protest action. Other anti-Arroyo groups were also represented. They took to the streets with the "Batasan 5" and several other party list representatives. Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona also attended the rally.

To dramatize their contempt for the fascist and fake president, rallyists burned a 13-foot effigy of Arroyo dressed to look like Hitler, fascist dictator of Germany during the Second World War. They likened Arroyo to Hitler due to her fascist policies,

including her all-out war that has wrought harm to large numbers of people.

Meanwhile, Bayan and the Arroyo Resign Movement led more than 8,000 people in marches and rallies in various parts of the Visayas. More than 3,000 attended a rally in Davao City. Rallies in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, General Santos and Baguio also strongly condemned the Arroyo regime's all-out war.

Protest actions were also held overseas. Bayan-USA and its affiliate organizations launched protest actions in New York, Washington DC, Seattle, San Diego and Los Angeles. Siklab and the British Columbia Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines held protest actions in the cities of Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal in Canada. AB



Deepening unrest in the military

Unrest in the military continues to deepen despite the capture last July of several leaders of an anti-Arroyo faction in the AFP. Many military elements continue to reject Arroyo's authority as commander-in-chief.

It is Arroyo's maneuvers no less than have intensified protests in the AFP. Three high-ranking officers of the Philippine Marines—Col. Orlando de Leon, Lt. Col. Armando Bañez and Lt. Col. Custodio Parcon—resigned their posts last July because they could no longer tolerate corruption and favoritism in the AFP. In particular, they took umbrage at Arroyo's appointment of Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon as AFP chief of staff and Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon as Southcom chief. Both generals have been implicated in massive electoral fraud in 2004.

The sheer number of officers that have been charged in court shows the breadth of disgruntlement in the AFP and Arroyo's extreme isolation from her military forces. Up to 38 high-ranking officers of the Army and Marines were charged last July 29 in relation to the February 24 attempted coup. Twenty-five of them are high-ranking officers of the First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSRR) under former unit

commander Brig. Gen Danilo Lim and 13 are Philippine Marine officers under Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, 1st Marine Brigade Commander Col. Ariel Querubin and Lt. Col Achilles Segumalian.

Lim and other officers from the FSRR are being held in a prison in Tanay, Rizal purposely built to house military rebels. Major General Miranda and Colonel Querubin and other Marine elements are under the custody of Navy Flag Officer Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga.



Intense torture

Meanwhile, a lawyer for the imprisoned anti-Arroyo officers has revealed details of the severe torture his clients are undergoing. Atty. Ru-el Pulido said his clients are kept in solitary confinement, subjected to intrigues, tortured with very loud music and prohibited from talking to each other, their relatives and lawyers. They are denied any rest to weaken their bodies and resolve. They are likewise denied access to newspapers, radios and television. Pulido, however, said that despite the torture and divide-and-rule tactics being used against the anti-Arroyo officers, their fighting spirit remains high. **AB**

Planned intensification of tactical offensives in Northeastern Mindanao

Ang Bayan interviewed National Democratic Front-Northeastern Mindanao spokesperson Ka Maria Malaya on the preparations undertaken and the victories achieved in launching the latest series of tactical offensives in the region. The NPA regional command in Northeastern Mindanao covers four provinces—Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Agusan del Sur and Agusan del Norte.

Since 2005, the New People's Army (NPA) in Northeastern Mindanao has been systematically and relentlessly launching armed actions against the US-Arroyo regime's armed minions.

According to Ka Maria Malaya, a major factor in their victorious armed actions is the regional Party and NPA leadership's careful planning and the people's army's metic-

ulous implementation of these plans.

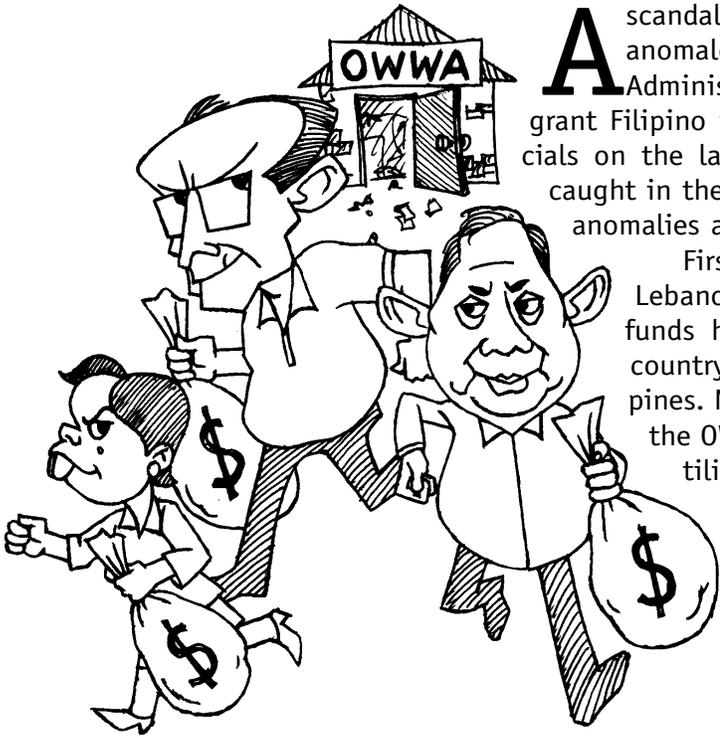
"Red commanders in the region were meeting when we received word from the Central Committee about the call to intensify tactical offensives as the New People's Army's contribution to efforts to oust the Arroyo regime and to strengthen the armed revolution," said Ka Maria. The call was issued



in September 2005. In response, the regional leadership launched a campaign to explain to all Red

Continued on "Planned..." on page 7

Embezzling the migrant workers' fund



A scandal has erupted regarding the reactionary government's anomalous management of OWWA (Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration) funds allocated to ensure the welfare of migrant Filipino workers. It was the bickering among government officials on the lack of funds to spend for the evacuation of Filipinos caught in the middle of the war in Lebanon that bared the series of anomalies at the OWWA.

First to sound the alarm was Philippine ambassador to Lebanon Al Francis Bichara who declared on July 23 that funds had dried up for imperilled Filipinos in the war-torn country and that no fresh infusions had come from the Philippines. No one could account for the whereabouts of \$2 million the OWWA claims to have released upon the outbreak of hostilities in Lebanon on July 14.

Most of the OWWA's funds comes from the \$25 (equivalent to ₱1,275 at an exchange rate of ₱50:\$1) fee charged every Filipino who leaves the country as a contract worker. With an average of 3,000 workers leaving the Philippines daily, the

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"Planned..." from page 6

commanders and fighters and the people living within guerrilla zones the need to launch tactical offensives.

Said Ka Maria, plans to launch armed actions were drafted by the regional leadership, which led the way in the actual implementation of the Central Committee's call. Even as initiatives at the lower levels were given full play, the regional leadership closely guided, monitored and assisted NPA units. Thus, the long-drawn problem of conservatism in military work and other tasks that had been besetting the NPA in the region was gradually rectified and overcome.

All NPA units were tasked to identify targets and make the necessary preparations to attack so that an assault could be staged whenever the need arises. "NPA units were obliged to comply the moment the regional command gave orders for simultaneous at-

tacks on the enemy," said Ka Maria. This divided the enemy's attention and prevented the concentration of big AFP formations in any one area or front. This likewise promptly derailed the enemy's plans in the region and deprived it of initiative.

Cooperation between the regional operational command and units at the guerrilla front level was tightened. "One of the areas of cooperation was intelligence work. Military cadres at the higher levels directly assisted units in their planning," said Ka Maria. A month after, the NPA launched one of the biggest military offensives in the region, overrunning a Philippine Army-CAFGU detachment in Tandawan, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur on October 28, 2005.

Ka Maria said that the closely paced tactical offensives in the region were a big help to the comrades, who were able to accumulate a wealth of experience in launching tactical offensives and gained strength militarily to advance the

revolution. "The entire NPA force achieved a higher level of military confidence," she said.

The NPA was likewise able to seize many firearms, inflict serious casualties on enemy personnel and destroy enemy equipment. "This has worsened demoralization within the military," added Ka Maria.

Ka Maria assured that intensive tactical offensives would continue in the region. Red commanders have been holding regular meetings to assess the military situation and draft resolutions in accordance with the policies and directives of the CPP Military Commission and the region's military command.

Along with the call to intensify tactical offensives, the regional Party leadership has also called on all units and forces of the Party, the NPA and the revolutionary movement to further develop their skills at combining and coordinating the advance of armed struggle, mass base building and the conduct of agrarian revolution. **AB**

OWWA has been able to collect almost P1.5 billion annually. The overall fund reportedly came to P8.1 billion as of December 2004. But now that the lives of about 34,000 Filipino workers in Lebanon are in danger, there are no funds for their repatriation.

Where's the money?

The OWWA's funds are collectively owned by all migrant Filipino workers. It is they who have the sole authority to decide how these funds should be spent. The money, however, has been stolen by the powers that be.

In 2004, Gloria Arroyo used the P553.58 million Medicare Fund for migrant workers to bankroll her electoral campaign. The idea was hatched by then Philhealth president Francisco Duque III who proposed to Arroyo in 2003 the transfer of control of the Medicare Fund to his agency. In his proposal, Duque told the president that the transfer would play a significant role in the 2004 polls. Duque was appointed Department of Health secretary after the elections.

The funds were used in the distribution of free Philhealth cards to buy votes for the president. Prior to this, the OWWA had already been rejecting requests from hundreds of migrant workers wanting to avail of their health benefits. By 2004, the OWWA had completely stopped paying for the workers' medical expenses.

In April 2003, the government issued \$293,500 to Ambassador Roy Cimatu ostensibly for the mass evacuation of Filipinos caught in the middle of the US invasion of Iraq. No evacuations took place, but no one wants to admit where the funds ended up.

Under Pres. Fidel Ramos, P664 million in OWWA funds were spent

for an anomalous housing project at Smokey Mountain contracted to R-II Builders owned by construction magnate Reghis Romero.

In 2003, the Home Guarantee Corporation (HGC) settled the fracas caused by the Smokey Mountain project by signing an agreement with OWWA that it would reimburse the latter for P1.07 billion. To date, however, the company has paid OWWA only P500 million.

As far back as 1983, P200 million in OWWA funds had already been used in an anomalous investment in Landoil Resources Corp. owned by House Speaker Jose de Venecia and in Greater Manila Corp. Up to now, however, Landoil has not returned the funds to OWWA.

The Commission on Audit has reported that as of December 2005, up to P144 million in cash advances at the OWWA have yet to be liquidated.

New EO 464

Malacañang has no plans whatsoever to shed light on the controversy regarding the missing OWWA funds.

The Palace has in fact issued new directives stipulating conditions under which government officials may attend Congressional investigations and what questions they may refuse to answer. The directives are contained in Memorandum Circular 108, a more refined version of Executive Order 464 earlier issued by Malacañang to cover up issues hounding Arroyo on electoral fraud in the 2004 polls. EO 464 has been declared illegal by the Supreme Court. Despite the Senate's assertions that government officials summoned to attend hearings were obliged to attend and were not required to comply with Malacañang's conditionalities, the Palace continues to bar the attendance of officials it wishes to

protect.

The new directive is dated July 27—although it was actually drafted only after a Senate hearing on the OWWA fund anomalies on July 30 that was boycotted by OWWA, DOLE and DFA officials who claimed they were busy with the evacuation of Filipinos from Lebanon. The new memorandum was issued to counter the senators' threats that they would order the arrest of officials who refuse to attend investigations.

Filipino workers in Lebanon are now in a pitiful state. Since the outbreak of hostilities, only a little more than 2,000 out of a total of 30,000 have come home. Thousands more are in cramped evacuation centers.

In the direst straits are domestic helpers who have been locked up by their employers and barred from returning to the Philippines. Many of them have been forced to escape by jumping from windows, with some sustaining fractures and other injuries and others dying from the fall.

Meanwhile, the powerful who have plundered the funds of Filipino migrant workers have never had it so good.



Massacre in Lebanon

Fifty-nine Lebanese civilians composed of 34 children, 12 women and elderly and disabled folk were killed in the city of Qana in southern Lebanon in the early morning of July 30 after the building where they sought refuge was bombed by the Israelis.

The Israelis purposely bombed the building, claiming it was being used as a launching site for Hezbollah rockets into Israel. Not a single Hezbollah casualty and no trace of a rocket-launching, however, were found in the site in the aftermath of the bombing.

The Qana massacre is the second to hit the city. More than a hundred were likewise killed in 1996 in Qana when Israel bombarded with cannon fire the United Nations (UN) headquarters where hundreds of Lebanese civilians had sought refuge.

The victims in Qana are among impoverished civilians who do not own vehicles or could not afford gasoline and could not escape the Israeli bombings. Only 10% of the population has remained in Qana.

The people of Lebanon and those of other countries have roundly condemned the massacre in Qana and US support for Israel. Five thousand demonstrators spontaneously massed in Beirut and stormed the UN's headquarters to protest the UN's inutility to stop the Israeli attacks and denounce US support for Israel.

The demonstrators also stormed the US embassy to condemn the Bush regime for its criminal support for Israel's aggression. In the last week of July, two civilian Boeing 747 jets traveled from Texas, USA to Tel Aviv, Israel to deliver weapons that included "bunker-busting" bombs. Israel receives almost \$2 billion in military aid annually from the US. The US has continually refused to call on Israel to put a stop to its attacks on Lebanon.

In fact, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in Israel and en route to Lebanon when the massacre in Qana took place. The bombings have prompted the Lebanese government to announce its refusal to talk with Rice unless a ceasefire was in place.

Intense protests have forced Israel to declare a 48-hour suspension in its bombing raids in southern Lebanon. But only a few hours into its declaration, Israel resumed the bombings and the incursion of its troops into Lebanese territory.

Meanwhile, the Organization of Islamic Confer-



ence (OIC) held a special meeting on August 3 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The OIC pushed for an immediate ceasefire and pledged to send peace-keeping troops to southern Lebanon.

The Lebanese government has reported that up to 900 Lebanese have been killed, most of them civilians. Three thousand have been injured and a million have evacuated due to the bombings. Most of the country's important civilian infrastructure has been destroyed, including roads and bridges used by evacuees. Water and power facilities and gasoline depots have likewise been bombed. The seas around Lebanon have also been severely damaged due to massive oil spills caused by Israeli bombings of oil tankers docked at the port of Beirut in the first week of hostilities.

Four United Nations observers were likewise killed on July 25 when Israel bombed their post in the town of Khiam in southeastern Lebanon.

On the other hand, up to 68 Israelis have been killed in the war, including 27 civilians.

Continued bombing of Palestine. Even as Israel rained bombs on Lebanon, it has also been relentlessly bombarding Gaza City in Palestine. Up to 23 Palestinians have been killed due to aerial bombing and artillery fire by Israeli troops last July 26 in Jebaliya in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. Among those killed was a woman and her five-month-old baby when their house suffered a direct hit by Israeli artillery.

More than 150 Palestinians have been killed, most of them civilians, as a result of Israeli bombing raids and attacks on Palestine since June 25. **AB**



Collapse of the Doha Round

The Doha Round finally collapsed after the Group of 6 (the US, European Union, Japan, Australia, India and Brazil) suspended the general assembly slated last July 26. The Group of 6 serves as a preparatory committee, with its ministers meeting earlier to ensure a smoother flow during the general assembly. The general assembly was scrapped, however, when the US and the European Union (EU) refused even as early as the preparatory meetings to reduce tariffs, subsidies and other measures designed to protect their agricultural sectors and markets. On the other hand, they persistently demanded that backward countries completely dismantle all measures protective of their own economies.

The Doha Round refers to a series of annual negotiations among member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) that began in November 2001 in Doha, capital of Qatar. Subsequent meetings have since been held in different countries. The negotiations aim at achieving unity on the implementation of the WTO objective of achieving full trade liberalization in agriculture through the eradication of all tariffs and subsidies in WTO member countries. Under the slogan of "free market globalization," the US has bribed and connived with ruling compadors and landlords in semicolonies and backward countries to

implement the WTO objective. What was to be the fifth round of negotiations last July 26 did not come to pass due to the intense contradictions that have long been emerging between imperialist and backward countries, and likewise among the imperialist countries themselves.

Even as the EU and US insist on complete liberalization in semicolonies and backward countries, they have been jealously guarding their own industries, agriculture and markets. Both the US and the EU obstinately refuse to comply with the policy to remove or even reduce protective tariffs and subsidies. Their refusal to implement the programs they have been ramming down the throats of semicolonies and backward countries is the main reason behind the Doha Round's collapse. There has not been the slightest reduction in up to \$300 billion worth of subsidies provided by imperialist powers to their own industries and agriculture. In the EU, for instance, the agricultural sectors of member countries enjoy

up to \$100 billion in subsidies, while the US provides more than \$40 billion in agricultural subsidies.

The US and EU are likewise still dissatisfied with the huge concessions they have already managed to wring out of the semicolonies and backward countries, and want even more. They demand greater access to the other sectors of industry, and to the agriculture and services of backward countries. Most countries have refused to accede, including India and Brazil, especially since the issue does not form part of the Doha Round agenda. Their refusal was an added factor in the talks' collapse.

While there are puppet governments like that of the Philippines that obsequiously kowtow to the imperialists, many other backward and impoverished nations continue to contend with WTO policies. Mass movements likewise continue to launch protest actions against the WTO and its policy of imperialist "globalization."

The march towards disastrous liberalization has been checked for now with the Doha Round's collapse. If anything, the collapse has further brought to the fore the EU and US' overriding greed and desire to put their interests above all as they trample on the welfare of the majority of the world's peoples. The "globalization" slogan brandished by the WTO has been further exposed as an instrument used by imperialists to plunder the industries, agriculture, services, markets and natural resources of backward countries. The Doha Round's collapse signals the continuing disintegration and impending downfall of the WTO as a conduit for impe-



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NPA seizes four rifles in Isabela raid

MEMBERS of the New People's Army Reynaldo Piñon Command seized four rifles, communications equipment and documents in a raid on a substation of the Philippine National Police in Barangay Maligaya, Cauayan, Isabela on July 21. Two M16s and two M14s were confiscated in the attack.

NPA raids military detachment in Surigao del Sur

NPA guerrillas under Front 14 raided a detachment of the 23rd IB-CAFGU in Sitio Maputi, Barangay Doña Carmen, Tagbina, Surigao del Sur on the morning of August 1. The NPA seized all the firearms in the detachment, according to initial reports.

Red fighters under Front 19 had also meted punishment on CAFGU member and death squad element Dodong Gallego who operates in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur. Gallego, who was meted punishment on July 15, was responsible for the murder of farmer Melanio Evangelista in Unidad, Cagwait, Surigao del Sur on February 17.

NPA punishes 12th IB officer in Capiz

PARTISANS of the NPA Nonito Aguirre Sr. Command meted punishment on Capt. Abelardo Motia of the 12th IB. Motia, who was punished on August 5 in Barangay Ongol Ilaya, Dumarao, Capiz, led the 12th IB's civil-military operations. The NPA seized his .45 cal pistol.

Oil products overpriced—Ibon

OIL companies overpriced their products by as much as P0.83 per liter from January to July this year, according to an Ibon Foundation study. Ibon said the amount comes over and above the already high prices of petroleum products dictated by giant oil monopolies. Oil companies thus earned P1.28 billion or P6 million per day in the last six months.

Petron Corp. earned the biggest income among the oil companies (P488.70 million). Next in line were Pilipinas Shell which earned an additional P411.52 million, Chevron (formerly Caltex) Philippines that raked in P202.24 million and new players like Total that earned P177.54 million.

Despite all this, oil companies plan to raise prices of petroleum products this August. Shell and Petron have announced a hike in gasoline prices of up to P2/liter and of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) of P0.50/kilo or P5.50 per 11-kilogram tank.

Sison's rights violated—AI-Europe

AMNESTY International (AI)-Europe has declared that Comrade Jose Ma. Sison's inclusion in the "terrorist list" violates his basic rights including his right to be presumed innocent unless proven guilty as well as his rights to due process and to defend himself. AI-Europe expressed this opinion in its reaction to a document entitled "European Commission Green Paper on the Presumption of Innocence."

AI-Europe concurred with the position taken by the European Network of Independent Experts in 2003 that freezing the assets of persons on the "terrorist list" violates their right to be presumed innocent as such a measure was based on a presumption of guilt and goes against Article 6 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights. AI-Europe also cited the EU Council's consistent denial of Sison's request to examine documents on which his inclusion in the "terrorist list" was based, saying this violates his right to defend himself.

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rialist policies.

The toiling masses worldwide are completely elated with the Doha Round's collapse. They are aware that it can only bring good to the oppressed countries and peoples of the world. They view it as a challenge to step up their struggle against imperialist rule, oppression and plunder.

But the imperialist powers have

many other means at their disposal, including bilateral and regional agreements to impose their interests and policies on various countries and peoples worldwide. More than 76% of countries the world over are covered by bilateral and regional agreements with the US, among them the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, Middle East Free Trade Initiative, Free Trade of the Americas and the North

American Free Trade Agreement. The US and EU have further strengthened these agreements now that the WTO has temporarily failed.

The US also resorts to both overt and covert political methods to impose its imperialist rule. It has demonstrated in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan that it will not hesitate to wage bloody attacks and occupy countries that refuse to submit to its control. **AB**