

**ANG****Bayan**

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## Editorial

# The Arroyo regime's inevitable collapse

**A**n intensifying and deepening crisis plagues the US-Arroyo regime. It was first seen during the explosive mass protests of June 2005 after the "Hello Garci" tape revealed massive cheating during the 2004 elections and the Arroyo family's involvement in jueteng and other anomalies. The crisis reached new heights when Arroyo declared a State of National Emergency last February followed by a declaration of all-out war that caused violent attacks against suspected revolutionary bases in the countryside and the democratic mass movement and political opposition.

Arroyo remains in power through the use of various deceptive and violent schemes and maneuvers. But this only worsens the crisis and exacerbates calls to overthrow her rotten, scheming, puppet and brutal regime. The regime isolates itself even more, fueling the people's fury and their determination to fight back.

Arroyo abuses her power by using dictatorial measures in a mad dash to suppress the truth, cover up her crimes, defend herself and strike fear in her enemies. She manipulates the current reactionary constitution, laws and processes and even brazenly tramples upon the Supreme Court's decisions. Through massive bribery, control over the majority in Congress and an absolute disregard for due process, Arroyo and her congressional lackeys easily scrapped

the second impeachment case last July. She continues to ban government and military officials from attending Senate and Congressional investigations.

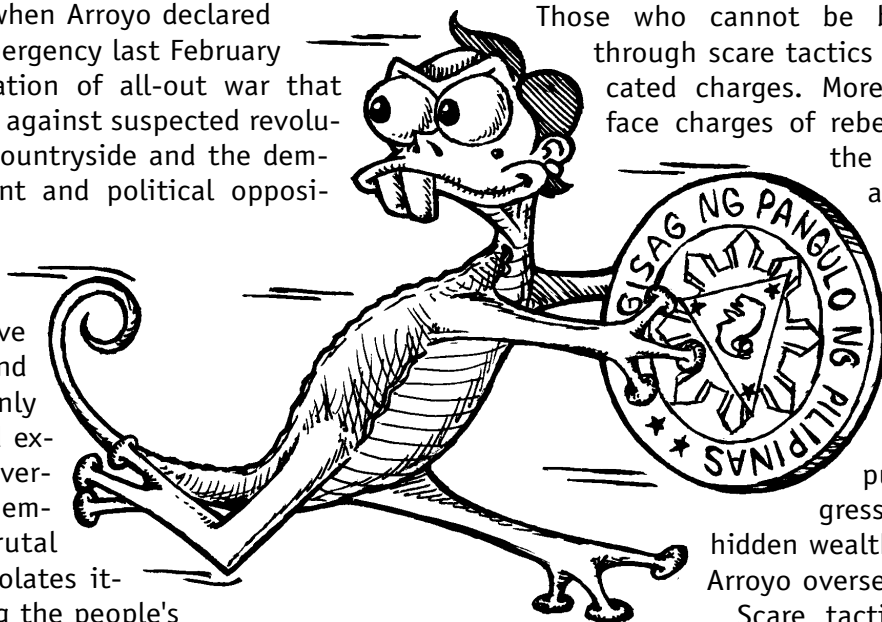
Arroyo has no qualms in using her power and privilege to bribe congressmen, local officials, military officers, judges and even church personalities.

Those who cannot be bribed are coerced through scare tactics and a slew of fabricated charges. More than 200 persons face charges of rebellion in relation to the protest actions and alleged coup attempt last February.

Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano has been charged with libel and threatened with disbarment and expulsion from Congress for revealing the hidden wealth of Mike and Gloria Arroyo overseas.

Scare tactics are being used against critical members of media, including 42 journalists whom the Arroyo family has charged with libel since 2004 for revealing the family's hidden wealth, corruption and involvement in smuggling and other crimes.

The staunchest opponents of the Arroyo regime are silenced with violence. Oplan Bantay Laya, launched when Arroyo assumed power in 2001, has claimed the lives of more than 750 activists, lawyers, clergy, journalists and ordinary citizens through the



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death squads run by the AFP and directed by Malacañang's Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS).

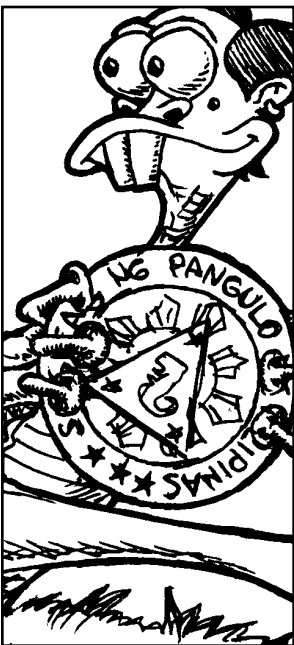
Fascist propaganda goes hand in glove with fascist violence. Fascist attacks are often accompanied and justified by many dirty psywar tactics, slander and anti-communist hysterics to portray progressive organizations and alliances as "communist fronts" and "enemies of the state." Moreover, fascist propagandists try to shift the blame on the revolutionary movement or the victims themselves. The regime formed the Melo Commission to perform a sham investigation, eventually clear Arroyo and the AFP and blame the NPA and the revolutionary movement for the killings.

In the midst of growing unrest and her increasing isolation, Arroyo is fast-tracking several "strategic" steps to consolidate her hold on power.

The regime is rushing the immediate implementation of charter change or Cha-cha, which is designed to ensure that Arroyo and her lackeys remain in power until 2010 and even beyond, curtail civ-

il and political rights and attract US backing in exchange for greater access and control over the Philippines' territory, economy, politics and military. Arroyo and her lackeys are blatantly trampling on all existing laws in pursuit of a constituent assembly or a people's initiative to change the constitution.

Malacañang is preparing to cheat in next year's election—as it did in 2004—to ensure its control of the majority in Congress, Senate and local governments. Arroyo is going all-out in using government funds and resources, including those in government-controlled banks, financial agencies and corporations to bribe politicians and buy their loyalty. The regime is maneuvering to remove opposition officials from their positions before the upcoming elections. It has already suspended Pasay City Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad and plans to take ac-




tion against Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Gloria Arroyo flaunts her hold on power. But each time Arroyo abuses her power and privilege, she reveals all the more the rotten, unpatriotic, antipeople and anti-democratic nature of her regime, exacerbates her isolation, intensifies the people's anger and presents her regime as a sharp and weakened target of the

people's struggle.

As was the case during the Marcos dictatorship, Arroyo's blatant misuse of state power to deceive, abuse, terrorize and oppress the people and her shameless bid to stay in power are pushing millions of people to oppose her regime. While she bans her officials from testifying before investigations, the more her lies are exposed and the more people clamor for the truth. The more people she bribes, the greater the exposure of her regime's rottenness. The more she steals, the more she is hated by the impoverished masses. The more she terrorizes, abducts, imprisons and kills, the more people quest for justice and freedom, gain courage and realize the absolute necessity to overthrow her despised regime and the system it represents.

Despite the Marcos dictatorship's strong control of the military, it failed to defeat the revolutionary movement and the Filipino people's struggle until it was overthrown in February 1986. Arroyo wields weaker control over the fractious military and many are disgruntled by her regime. She cannot stop the advance of the



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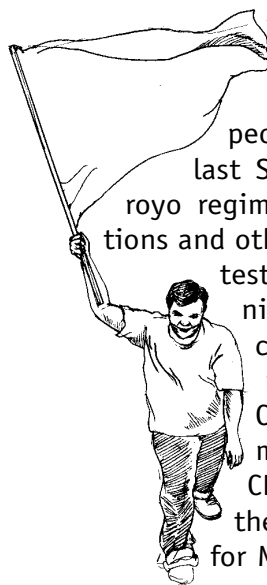
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revolutionary movement and deny victory to the people's struggle. The greatest factor favoring the Filipino people is the presence of an unconquerable democratic mass movement that courageously and tirelessly exposes and opposes the fascism, rottenness and puppetry of the Arroyo regime and a strong and determined revolutionary force that is breaking down the armed forces of the Arroyo regime.

The revolutionary forces and the broad masses yearn for the immediate overthrow of the Arroyo regime and gain for the country justice and progress at the soonest time. While the US-Arroyo regime prolongs its hold on power, more people realize the need to act and overthrow this rotten and brutal regime. The longer the regime remains in power, the more it is unable to maintain its precarious balancing act. On the other hand, the revolutionary and progressive forces gain more time and opportunity to intensify their efforts to educate, organize, consolidate and mobilize greater numbers towards the righteous path of struggle for true freedom, democracy, peace and progress.

AB

## Lakbayan



A caravan of more than 1,000 people marched from Calamba, Laguna last September 18 to condemn the Arroyo regime's systematic political assassinations and other violations of human rights. Protesters will converge in Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila on September 21 to commemorate the declaration of martial law. Last September 19 in Central Luzon, more than 1,000 members and supporters of BAYAN-CL aboard 15 vehicles departed from the City of San Fernando, Pampanga for Manila.

Overseas, members and supporters of the International League of Peoples' Struggle and BAYAN-USA in key cities of the US mainland, in Honolulu and in Canada, Hongkong, Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Australia and Belgium will stage vigils and rallies in front of Philippine embassies to commemorate the International Day of Protest against Political Repression in the Philippines on September 21.

AB

## She ought to be ashamed

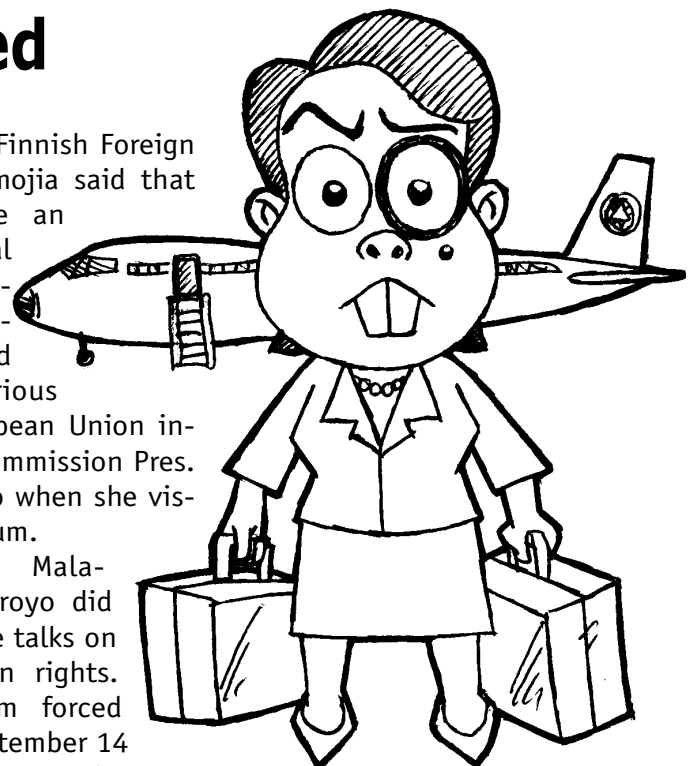
**W**ith hands bloody from the hundreds of victims of her regime's political killings, Gloria Arroyo shamelessly traveled to Finland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Cuba and Hawaii from September 8-17. In each place she visited, she was met by protesting migrant Filipinos and various leaders who criticized her regime's dismal human rights record.

Arroyo failed to evade the issue of the abduction and killing of progressive activists and other political opponents of her government. She went to Europe to entice foreign investors, but European leaders were more interested in voicing their concern over widespread violations of human rights in the Philippines.

In a message to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Finland

last September 13, Finnish Foreign Minister Erikki Toumojia said that Finland would like an end to the political killings in the Philippines. A similar message was delivered to Arroyo by various leaders of the European Union including European Commission Pres. Jose Manuel Barroso when she visited Brussels, Belgium.

Contrary to Malacañang's claims, Arroyo did not willingly initiate talks on the issue of human rights. Widespread criticism forced her to meet last September 14 with Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan who voiced her lack of confidence in the Melo Commission's investigation. Khan read to Arroyo from the interna-



tional guide to make investigative commissions truly independent, credible and victim-oriented.

In a desperate attempt to side-

track the issue of killings and human rights violations, Arroyo grudgingly invited members of the European Union, UN Human Rights Commission and other human rights advocates to observe the investigations in the Philippines. But Arroyo will have a hard time convincing anyone given the farcical investigations being conducted by the Melo Commission.

**Protest actions.** Arroyo was met by protests wherever she went.

In Belgium, Filipinos and their Belgian friends held a rally in front of the European Commission building condemning Arroyo. Two members of the Belgian parliament who attended the rally and spoke before the crowd called on Belgians to help defend human rights and democracy in the Philippines.

In the UK, Filipinos set up a picket in front of the building where Arroyo was staying. In the evening, they held a prayer vigil for all victims of the regime.

In Hawaii, Filipino migrants led by Anakbayan-Honolulu met Arroyo with a protest action. They condemned Arroyo's hypocritical concern for migrant Filipinos while she systematically killed their countrymen.

**NAM.** From Europe, Arroyo proceeded to Havana, Cuba to attend the assembly of the 118 member nations of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) last September 16. Arroyo stood out like a sore thumb among NAM members comprising countries advocating independence from any foreign power. Contrary to Arroyo's pro-US stand, NAM expressed support for Iran's right to develop nuclear energy and condemned Israel's illegal policy and its attacks against Palestine. Arroyo left before NAM could finalize these resolutions. AB



## Unremitting gross violations of human rights

**T**he state's armed minions continue with their almost daily spree of killing, abduction, torture, illegal arrest and detention and other gross violations of human rights. The list of these latest atrocities follows:

**September 16.** Eleven masked men wearing combat boots shot and killed peasant leader and Del Gallego, Camarines Sur Anakpawis municipal coordinator Christopher Lunar, 31. He was cleaning his yard in Barangay Sta. Rita II, Del Gallego when his assailants surrounded him. Lunar is the 33rd Anakpawis member killed by the Arroyo regime's death squads.

That same day, Pablito Glean, chief security officer of opposition Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay was gunned down by four men. Glean was shot while drinking coffee with his friends at a convenience store in Taguig City. A security guard was also killed and three of Glean's friends were wounded in the attack. Glean disclosed last August the existence of an "Operation Phoenix," a plot by Malacañang to assassinate members of the anti-Arroyo opposition.

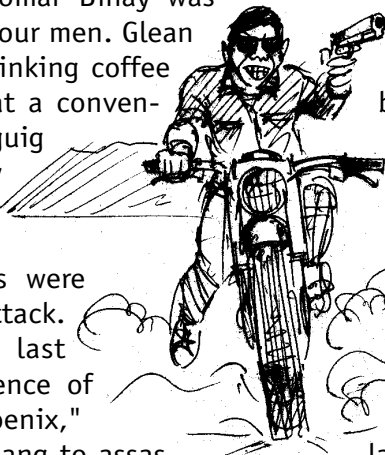
**September 15.** Three members of Anakpawis were seized from their homes in Sitio Sabitan, Barangay Santo Rosario, Malolos City. They were detained and interrogated for 20 hours regarding the presence of NPA guerrillas in their community. The illegal arrest of Francisco Nicodemus, Emmanuel Maceda and Sonny Rodante Cabague is the first listed human rights violation of the 7th ID un-

der Maj. Gen. Juanito Gomez who replaced Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan last September 11.

Three Aeta peasants were also illegally arrested in San Marcelino, Zambales on the same day. Nelson Mallari, Nardo Serrano and Andres Dacanay, all leaders of the Central Luzon Aeta Association, were arrested when they passed by a military checkpoint and could not show their cedula. They were detained in the police station in Castillejos, Zambales and were only released after the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas filed a complaint.

**September 13.** Joseph Domingo was shot and seriously injured in Sitio Mathay, Barangay Tuyoy, Bala-nga City, Bataan. He was accused of being an NPA guerrilla and subsequently shot by PO2 Leonardo Boy Tan of the PNP Special Action Force.

On the same day, ten members of the Teatro Obrero were illegally arrested by elements of the RPA-ABB in Sitio Bato-Bato, Barangay Tabun-ac, Toboso, Negros Occidental. Teatro Obrero is the cultural group of the National Federation of Sugar Workers. The victims were alternately detained by the RPA-ABB, Philippine Army and Toboso police before they were released. They were accused of being new NPA re-



cruits. The victims were in Toboso to rehearse for a street play to be shown on the anniversary of the Escalante Massacre on September 21.

**September 12.** Nemesio Aquino, president of the JAM Liner Employees Union-National Federation of Labor Unions, was shot by two men aboard a motorcycle in Calamba, Laguna. Aquino was shot as he left the regional office of the Department of Labor and Employment where he attended a hearing for his union. He died an hour later in a hospital.

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna coordinator Marco Ferdinand was abducted in Mauban, Quezon by suspected military elements. The military accused Ferdinand of being an NPA guerrilla.

**September 11.** Troops of the 19th IB summarily executed hors de combat Bibiano Rentillosa, secretary of the Northern Leyte Front. Rentillosa was taking a bath when cornered by the soldiers in Barangay Libertad, Kananga, Leyte. He was unarmed and offered no resistance. Witnesses said that Rentillosa was alive and unharmed when arrested. Soon after, the military claimed that Rentillosa and three other NPA guerrillas were killed in an encounter. The Nation-

al Democratic Front in Eastern Visayas denied that any encounter had taken place. It also denied that there were other guerrillas killed with Rentillosa or that documents taken from his person.

**September 10.** Elements of the 74th IB abducted Midwen Hiwatig, 26 and Jovito Marco, 23 in Barangay Buenavista, San Narciso, Quezon. Both victims were brought to Camp Nakar in Lucena City. The military, however, denied having Hiwatig in its custody when his mother Flordeliza went to the camp to look for her son.

**September 7.** The body of Napoleon Bautista was found in Calumpit, Bulacan seven days after he and his wife Ofelia were abducted from their house in Barangay San Roque, Hagonoy, Bulacan. Both victims are members of Anakpawis. Ofelia, who was severely tortured, was released last August 31. Napoleon was hardly recognizable because his face was bashed in. He had multiple stab wounds and an ear sliced off.

Meanwhile, Victor Olayvar, 41, provincial coordinator of Bayan Muna (BM) and an officer of Hugpong sa mga Mag-uumang Bol-anon (HUMABOL) was killed by two men aboard a motorcycle in Barangay

Cantubod, Danao, Bohol. Olayvar is one of four of HUMABOL leaders targeted for assassination by the 302nd Bde. The three others are HUMABOL chairman William "Boy" Banting; HUMABOL vice chairman Felipeneri Bejasa; and Thomasa Santos, municipal chairperson of HUMABOL in Alicia, Bohol.

That same day, men aboard a motorcycle shot and killed Councilor Roberto Victoria and his wife Shirley at 5:30 a.m. in Pulilan, Bulacan. The victims were active supporters of a peasant struggle against Hacienda Meñez in the same town.

In Barangay San Jose, Hagonoy, Bulacan, armed men abducted Roderick John Cruz and Marvin Verrano and forced them into a jeep.

**September 4.** Ranbert "Alvin" Placencia, Anakpawis municipal coordinator in Mawab, Compostela Valley, chairman of the Nuevo Iloco Farmers Association and council member of Nagkahiusang Mag-uuma sa Mawab was shot and killed by seven armed men. Placencia was gunned down after his assailants flagged down his motorcycle in Purok 8, Sta. Monica, Nuevo Iloco, Mawab, Compostela Valley. He is the 77th victim of political killings in Southern Mindanao. **AB**

## A call for justice

HUSTISYA or Victims of the Arroyo Regime United for Justice was formally launched last September 15 in the University of the Philippines. HUSTISYA is a national organization of families of victims of the Arroyo regime's extrajudicial killings and other forms of political repression.

The victims and their families formed an organization to demand justice and an end to state terrorism. They took upon themselves the responsibility of protecting witnesses and preserving vital evidence, being well aware that the Arroyo regime will not extend

them sympathy and security.

Among those who attended were the family of Benjaline Hernandez, a former campus writer from Ateneo de Davao University and deputy secretary general of KARAPATAN-Southern Mindanao who was summarily executed by the AFP in North Cotabato in July 2002. Her mother Evangeline is the spokesperson for HUSTISYA. Convenors are Dr. Constancio Claver, husband of Alyce Claver, and Orly Marcellana, husband of Eden Marcellana, both victims of political killings. Alice, a Bayan Muna coordinator, was killed last July in Kalinaga. Eden, secretary general of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog was killed in Oriental Mindoro in April 2003. **AB**



## An insult to the victims of human rights atrocities

**G**loria Arroyo's promotion of her favorite fascist general to cabinet rank is a resounding insult to victims of human rights atrocities.

Prior to Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan's retirement last September 11, Malacañang had announced that he would be appointed deputy national security adviser. It had to withdraw the appointment, however, in the face of intense local and international condemnation. Another retired fascist, Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, former chief of the Southern Luzon Command was appointed in Palparan's stead. Malacañang plans to later appoint

Palparan to the Presidential Task Force on Counter-Insurgency under Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, one of the leading militarists in Arroyo's cabinet.

In a statement, the Communist Party of the Philippines said that by rewarding Palparan and Cabuay, Malacañang is expanding on a nationwide scale the fascist terror they implemented in their old areas of operation. It also signals the AFP to intensify its armed attacks against the legal democratic movement and unarmed civilians in the countryside and cities. **AB**

### *Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement*

## Another blow to the local economy

**P**hilippine and Japanese representatives signed last September 8 the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA), an accord proposed in 2002 and secretly finalized over the past four years. As with other free trade agreements, the JPEPA follows the doctrine of imperialist globalization that seeks to thoroughly liberalize the economies of backward and non-industrialized countries. This is the first bilateral free trade agreement entered into by the Philippines, aside from the multilateral agreements it signed as a member of the World Trade Organization.

Under the JPEPA, the Arroyo regime will reduce by up to 80% tariffs on industrial, agricultural and other products over a period of ten years. The regime also pledged to grant incentives to huge Japanese companies who will invest in the local automotive and electronics industry. The incentives include tariff reductions of up to 60% on Japanese steel products by 2010 and zero tariff on Japanese vehicles by 2011. In ex-

change, Japan will reduce tariffs on Philippine agricultural products such as bananas and pineapples. Japan also pledged to hire 200 Philippine nurses and caregivers annually.

The glaring imbalance between what the Arroyo regime had conceded and the insignificant concessions granted by the Japanese government is immediately apparent. It is clear that the sole beneficiaries of the agreement are the Japanese companies who have long exploited the backward and non-industrialized Philippine economy. These companies will build their factories in export-processing zones where they will enjoy the many incentives and concessions given to them by the reactionary government, including the right to import all of their raw materials from their home countries, 100% repatriation of their

profits to Japan and exploitation of a docile and cheap Philippine labor force.

This agreement underscores the Arroyo regime's lack of interest in supporting local industries and developing an independent and industrialized economy. It is interested merely in the temporary

relief provided by the remittances of overseas contract workers and the export of selected products. Worse, agreements like the JPEPA will surely destroy remaining local industries and impoverished sectors of the Philippine economy. As the first in a series of unequal

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**Under the JPEPA, the Arroyo regime will reduce by up to 80% tariffs on industrial, agricultural and other products over a period of ten years.**

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and detrimental bilateral agreements to be entered into by the reactionary government, the JPEPA augurs an even greater crisis for the Filipino people and the deterioration of the semicolonial and semifeudal system in the Philippines. **AB**

# Thwarting the RSOT in Albay

Ang Bayan interviewed on August 27 Ka Floyd, the party secretary of a guerrilla front in Albay, on how they thwarted the operations of a Reengineered Special Operations Team (RSOT) launched by the AFP in their area.

For a number of days in February 2006, 11 enemy platoons combed villages in the three towns covered by the guerrilla front led by Ka Floyd. This was the first phase of the enemy's nine-month RSOT operations, which was followed by the entry of combined elements of the 3rd Scout Rangers Battalion (SRB) and the 65th, 31st and 42nd IB of the Philippine Army.

The RSOT was meant to win over the hearts and minds of the people and in the process deprive mass support for and crush the New People's Army (NPA) in the area. The enemy launched various activities in the three towns to this end. As a first step, the military called barangay officials to a meeting and informed them of their intentions to occupy and take control of the area for several months.

For nine months, the RSOT went to each of the barangays and conducted a census in each sitio. It tallied the number of households, gathered background information on each family and each individual, and familiarized itself with the terrain.

To beguile the people, the military set up infrastructure projects and provided social services such as fixing up basketball courts and clean-

ing pathways.

The enemy set up an intelligence network in the three towns, choosing women involved in anti-social activities in the barrio as assets. Soldiers were assigned to court these women and charm them with cash, frequently getting drunk with them and sleeping in their houses.

The military also set up the Civilian Volunteers Organization (CVO) from the barangay police.

In the last phase of their operations, the enemy called for barangay general assemblies with the compulsory attendance of all villagers.

In the face of massive enemy presence in the area, the Red army was firm and prepared to hold the line and persist with revolutionary work. As a first step, the NPA units held meetings to discuss how they could maneuver through the prolonged enemy presence in the area.

The NPA units chose to work in areas where enemy presence was weakest or absent. Ka Floyd said that they also planned how to strike at the enemy in the area while continuing with the daily task of organizing the masses.

To control the enemy's movements, the NPA launched harassment and sniping operations in selected barangays, with the goal of making the enemy believe that the NPA was protecting those areas and thus concentrate their forces there. "This tactic proved to be correct," Ka Floyd said. Military spokespersons claimed that they had cornered the NPA guerrillas who were thus launching ha-

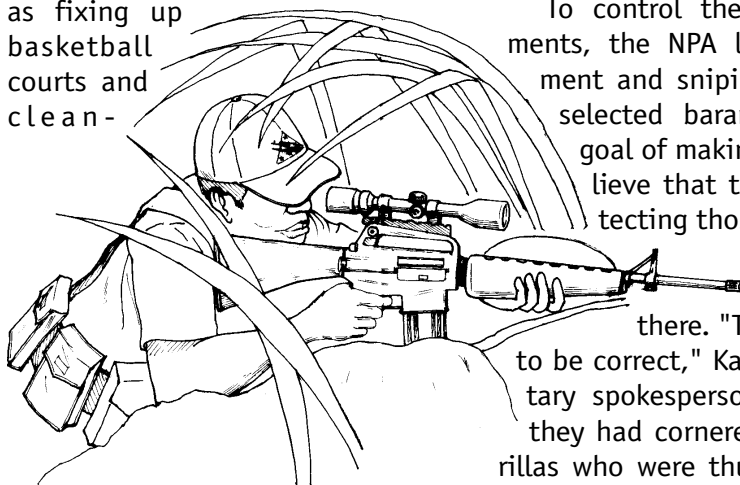
arrassment operations in areas where they were forced to retreat. Unknown to the enemy, concentrating their forces in the selected barangays where the NPA launched attritive actions freed up other areas for the Red army to operate in. "The enemy fell for our tactic...we forced them to go where we wanted them to go," Ka Floyd said.

The enemy never discovered the Red guerrillas' base. They never sighted a single unit of the people's army. They never held the initiative in battles. Contrary to the enemy's expectations, the NPA always held the initiative and struck the RSOT troops. The NPA freely launched a dozen harassment and sniping operations against the enemy. One enemy trooper was killed and two others wounded when the NPA harassed even the brigade's headquarters. In another NPA operation, three troopers of the 3rd SRB were wounded.

The comrades also took steps to neutralize the women collaborating with the enemy. They talked to the women, asking some of them to leave the barrio to keep them away from the enemy's influence. After the enemy's nine-month stay in the area, the NPA gave priority to completing the neutralization of proven enemy spies. All of them were issued warnings and given the chance to stop working for the enemy.

By controlling enemy movements in the area, the Red army was able to persist in conducting mass work. Even during the RSOT's presence, the Red guerrillas were able to continue organizing the people, conducting education work, advancing agrarian revolution and generating financial and material support for the revolutionary movement from the middle forces in the areas covered by the RSOT.

The keys to the comrades' suc-



cess in dealing with the RSOT and conducting revolutionary work lay in meticulously studying enemy movements and closely coordinating with the masses and enlisting their active assistance especially in constantly providing information on enemy movements.

The NPA units consistently monitored the enemy's manner and pattern of movements, including actions that were out of the ordinary. The Red army found out that the RSOT adhered to the style of "clustering" or operating in three adjacent barangays, using at least 40 troopers per cluster. The main body had a security force consisting of a platoon divided into three squads. It occupied one of the barangays and deployed squads in the two other villages. One squad took care of clearing operations. The NPA also found out that the security force never went farther than 500 meters away from the main body. Thus, the NPA was able to freely conduct political work in the barangays right next to the enemy's cluster area, assured of the enemy's self-delimited movement. Ka Floyd recalled with amusement that there were times when the NPA could even base itself in one of the barangays covered by the enemy's cluster.

The Red guerrillas' intelligence network among the villagers was ever-watchful and covered a wide area. The comrades were always promptly informed which barangay the enemy planned to enter, and thus they always knew where to take base accordingly and favorably. The Red guerrillas also knew who among the people the military talked to and recruited as intelligence assets.

When the military left the area, the comrades rejoiced over the fact that the NPA did not suffer a single defensive battle and were able to persist in their tasks, that the masses never wavered in their active and enthusiastic support for the NPA, and that the enemy failed to dismantle any of the mass organizations and revolutionary political structures in the area.

Ka Floyd concluded, "Even when the enemy tries to assert control over our areas, we should not simply leave the area but instead adapt to the situation. We should also assist the masses when the enemy clamps down on them. The masses should see for themselves

that they can rely on us. There would be dire consequences if we abandon them because their security is at stake. If we did, we might have had to start from scratch upon our return. **AB**



## Five years after 9-11

**G**eorge W. Bush used al Qaeda's terrorist attack on New York City on September 11, 2001 as a pretext for attacking and occupying Iraq and Afghanistan and threatening other nations asserting their sovereignty and resisting US hegemony. To this end, Bush had rallied allies and puppet states to join wars of aggression in the name of "anti-terrorism."

In the process, the US has unleashed a terrorism far worse than al Qaeda's 2001 attacks. The US wrought greater havoc on the countries it attacked and occupied. It violated international humanitarian laws and civilized conventions to completely demolish all legal obstacles to its fascist rule.

For five years, the Bush regime has been using 9-11 as an excuse. Contrary to its expectations, however, it has mired itself in wars that can only result in greater losses. Americans and the world's peoples are increasingly opposed to and condemn the US as its fallacious excuses for waging war are relentlessly revealed. **AB**

## Greater casualties, mounting opposition

**F**rom the time the US attacked Iraq in 2003 up to September 11 of this year, US-led occupational forces have suffered 2,904 killed—2,671 of them Americans, 118 British and 115 of various other nationalities. At least 19,945 US soldiers have been wounded and an estimated 30,000 suffer severe psychological trauma from the war. In Afghanistan, occupational forces have suffered 475 deaths—335 of them Americans and 140 of other nationalities—and 894 US troopers have been wounded since the US attack in October 2001 up to September 2006.

An estimated 200,000 civilians have been killed or wounded and millions have lost their homes in the unmitigated US bombings in Iraq and Afghanistan. Millions continue to suffer from intense hunger due to US artillery fire, bombing and







military operations. Most of the casualties are women and children. There is widespread rape, arson, theft and other human rights violations by US troops.

In various parts of the world, condemnation of the US' wars continues to grow. In the UK, Prime Minister Tony Blair was forced to announce his resignation by July 2007 for embroiling his country in the war against Iraq and Afghanistan. In Canada, the people oppose sending any more troops, while in Spain and Italy, candidates who supported the wars have suffered electoral defeat. In the US, families of American soldiers vigorously oppose the extension of the lat-

ter's tours of duty. Instead of reducing its troops, however, the US now has up to 132,000 soldiers in Iraq and is expected to have as many as 140,000 soldiers there by 2007.

A huge majority of the American people oppose the continued US occupation of Iraq, mainly because of the huge amount the Bush regime has been spending on the war and the increasing number of American casualties. The US budget deficit is expected to grow to \$286 billion by 2007 from \$260 billion this year because of the Bush regime's diversion of funds and resources to support its war in Iraq. **AB**

## More lies laid bare

**S**addam Hussein's legendary cache of weapons of mass destruction has been proven to be a big lie. Now, the Bush regime is being caught in even more lies.

Documents released to the public in September by the US Senate Intelligence Committee reveal that as early as October 2005, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had concluded that Saddam had no connection with and was not coddling Abu Musab al Zarqawi, one of the al Qaeda ringleaders based in Iraq. In fact, an even earlier CIA report dated January 2003 stated that Saddam viewed "Islamic extremists" operating in Iraq as a threat to national security.

Zarqawi's presence in Iraq was one of the Bush regime's touted

pieces of "evidence" of Saddam's alleged support for al Qaeda and a basis for overthrowing his government. Zarqawi was killed in June when US troops attacked and bombed the building where he was hiding.

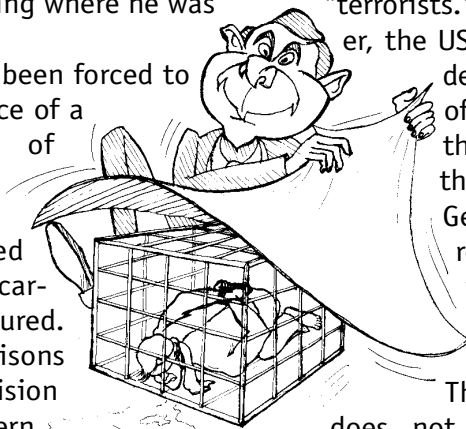
Bush has also been forced to admit the existence of a secret network of prisons in various parts of the world where suspected terrorists are incarcerated and tortured. Most of these prisons under CIA supervision are based in Eastern and Western Europe and some Asian countries like Pakistan and Thailand. These are apart from the prisons operating overtly in Iraq and Guantanamo, Cuba.

To quell the people's ire over the recent disclosure of brazen human rights violations, Bush announced the formation of a special military tribunal to try suspected "terrorists." Last June, howev-

er, the US Supreme Court ordered the abolition of these tribunals as they violate not only the provisions of the Geneva Conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners of war but also the US's own laws.

The Bush regime does not consider the detainees as prisoners of war who have rights but as "enemy combatants"—a spurious category for prisoners who have no rights.

The Supreme Court and other critics likewise oppose Bush's proposal regarding the use of "coercive methods" or torture to force suspects to admission and to use such admissions as evidence in court. They also oppose measures that would allow the trial and conviction of suspects based on secret evidence and grant immunity from prosecution to CIA operatives and other "interrogators" using "coercive methods."



### AFP to be inculcated with Bush doctrine

THE abduction and assassination of activists and the suppression of protests are bound to intensify with the Arroyo regime's announcement of US plans to increase its military aid to the Philippines and provide military training to all units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Arroyo disclosed these plans after her visit to the US Pacific Command headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii on September 17.

The Bush doctrine dispenses with all established principles of humanitarian law and conventions on the conduct of war. The doctrine will be used as the framework in training exercises, further making the AFP the primary instrument to defend the puppet and rotten Arroyo regime and suppress the patriotic and democratic forces. **AB**

*Continued on "More lies..." on page 10*

## 7 soldiers killed, 5 wounded in NPA ambush in Samar

SEVEN soldiers of the 14th IB were killed and five wounded in an ambush by Red fighters of the New People's Army (NPA) Arnulfo Ortiz Command (AOC) in the afternoon of September 15 in Sitio Cantipon, Barangay Casandig, Paranas, Samar. The soldiers had just returned from the Paranas town center aboard a truck when the NPA ambushed them. The military downplayed its casualties by reporting to the media that only one soldier was killed and

two wounded.

In a statement, AOC spokesperson Ka Vicente Magbuhat said that the ambush is one way of attaining revolutionary justice for the victims of political assassinations and other human rights violations in Eastern Visayas. It also shows the growing strength of the armed struggle in Samar, contrary to military claims that the revolutionary movement here has weakened, Ka Vicente added.

### I will fight to the finish—Nicole

"I will fight to the finish"—this was the reaction of "Nicole," 22-year-old victim of rape by four US Marines in November 2005, to derogatory attacks against her and to attempts by Department of Justice (DOJ) personnel to convince her to amicably settle the case.

She and her mother appeared to the media on September 16 that Senior State Prosecutor Emily Fe de los Santos had tried to convince her to come to an amicable settlement with the accused. According to de los Santos, should they refuse to settle amicably, the Philippine government would offer to the US the acquittal of the accused in exchange for a grant of asylum to former agriculture undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante. De los Santos also wanted Nicole to state in court that she wanted to quit the case because she was exhausted and that her lawyers were at a loss over what to do next. Nicole and her mother revealed this upon finding out that the government lawyers assigned to the case were merely playing a charade. Instead of pressing on the accused, the prosecution's questions even put him in a favorable light.

As a result, Nicole and her mother walked out of the court

room and wrote Secretary of Justice Raul Gonzalez demanding that he replace the majority in the prosecution panel because they were incompetent and lacked credibility. Gonzalez denied their request and instead defended his personnel. He even denigrated Nicole by saying, "I hope she is not imagining again."

Gonzalez has long betrayed his lack of sympathy for the victim. Even before the trial started, he had proposed to reduce the charges against three of the four accused and spread wrong information to the public that Nicole was withdrawing from the case.

Gonzalez also insinuated that private counsel Evalyn Ursua pressed Nicole and her mother to walk out and create a scandal because Ursua's organization, the TOWNS Foundation, was profiting from the continuance of the case.

The TOWNS Foundation, a women's organization, has been at the forefront of fund-raising activities for the pursuance of the case. The TOWNS Foundation promptly belied Gonzalez's innuendos and said it was ready to open to the public the records of donations received. They also vowed to pursue Nicole's case.

De los Santos eventually admitted that she offered amicable settlement despite her earlier denials. She angrily said Nicole and her mother were "crazy" and called them "ingrates" as if doing her job as prosecutor was a personal favor to the victim.

In response, Nicole announced that she would continue boycotting the proceedings if majority of the prosecution panel were not replaced. Nicole and her supporters are aware that the US and the Arroyo regime are in cahoots with the accused in manipulating the case's outcome.

#### *"More lies..." from page 9*

To bypass the limitations set by the US Supreme Court decisions on the abusive treatment of prisoners, Bush is now asking the US legislature to pass a law legalizing the category "enemy combatant" with all its attendant policies that violate human rights. In particular, Bush is once again pushing for the establishment of military tribunals and seeking the admissibility of "secret evidence."

Bush is bound to fail, however, in the face of mounting opposition even from members of his own party in the US Senate and a number of his closest allies.

AB