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*Editorial*

# The people will wage relentless struggle against Cha-cha

**T**he Arroyo regime has suffered successive setbacks in its efforts to push for Cha-cha before the May 2007 election, with its schemes foiled one after the other.

First, the Supreme Court junked the sham people's initiative that sought to change the constitution through a petition supposedly signed by millions of people. The so-called people's initiative was exposed as nothing more than a huge scam concocted by Arroyo's cohorts.

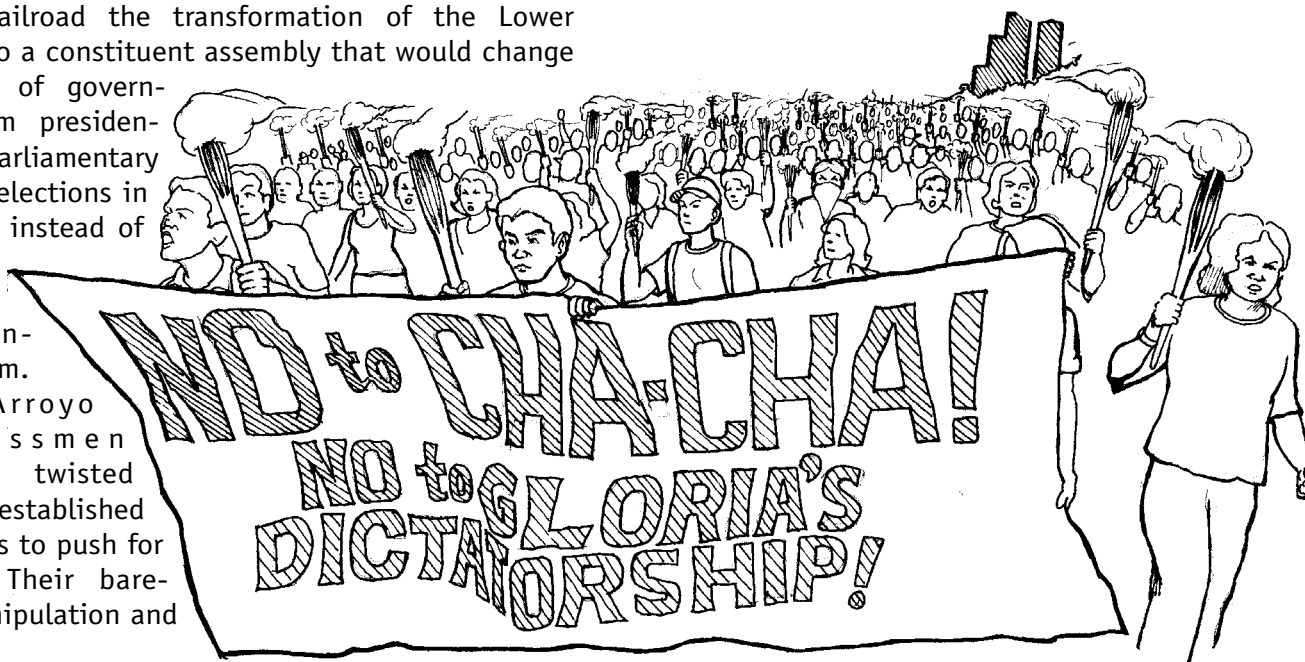
A few weeks after the failure of the sham people's initiative, Arroyo's henchmen in Congress tried to push a "simplified con-ass" that would exclude the Senate, railroad the transformation of the Lower House into a constituent assembly that would change the form of government from presidential to parliamentary and hold elections in November instead of May, under a parliamentary system.

Pro-Arroyo congressmen brazenly twisted laws and established procedures to push for con-ass. Their barefaced manipulation and

pressure tactics sparked intense anger and harsh criticism among the broad masses. Various sectors threatened to launch huge and relentless protest actions that threatened to push the regime to the brink of collapse. Arroyo had to postpone con-ass to calm the people's raging anger.

However, she still tried for a comeback and Malacañang's mouthpieces dutifully pushed for the holding of a rushed constitutional convention with delegates elected during the regular polls in May.

Fully aware that it is the Arroyo camp's mad lust for power that is behind these barefaced and corrupt



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schemes, the irate masses did not let this pass. Since the scandal triggered by the "Hello Garci" tapes, the people have been witness to a steady stream of lies, dirty maneuvers, brazen coercion and outright violence perpetrated by the Arroyo clique to remain in power.

Fuelling the ruling clique's eagerness to railroad Cha-cha and cancel the imminent election is Arroyo's fear that her allies will lose massively in the May election. Her failure to control a Congress majority would render her vulnerable to the series of legal processes to be advanced by her political rivals, as well as by democratic forces and other groups revolted by the Arroyo regime.

Arroyo will no longer be able to simply whitewash the cases of wholesale plunder and massive electoral fraud in 2004, the brutal killings of leaders and members of democratic organizations and terrorism among the broad Filipino masses. Losing her shield against the impeachment cases to be filed against her, she faces isolation and the danger of being ousted and meted just punishment.

Aside from imposing martial law and unleashing outright fascist rule, Cha-cha is Arroyo's only other way out of her current predicament. She desperately relies on Cha-cha to keep her in power, evade her legal and criminal responsibilities to the people and go on plundering and imposing even more repressive measures to crush her opponents. To ensure the continued support of her US imperialist master, she will go all-out to auction off the national patrimony and open Philippine territory, economy and politics to foreign intervention and control.

Arroyo's continuing failure to push through with Cha-cha before the May election is the result of the people's relentless protests on various fronts—in the courts, in parliament, in media and other forums and above all, in the streets.


Patriotic and democratic forces, anti-Arroyo oppositionists, various religious sects and the politicized masses are taking zealous and determined action. They are demonstrating their intense hatred for the Arroyo re-

gime's lust for power, its thoroughly corrupt administration, its ruthless repression of basic rights and utter servility to foreign powers and interests.

The enlightened masses are well aware that the Arroyo regime will not stop searching for even the slightest pretext to resurrect the dead Cha-cha scheme. In fact, immediately after shelving Cha-cha, Arroyo once more changed her mind last December 19 and called for a new people's initiative in January. She wrongly assumed that the low turnout in the anti-Cha-cha prayer rally in Luneta last December 17 meant that the people's anger had abated.

Meanwhile, should the May election push through, Arroyo is prepared to commit massive fraud to ensure her continued hold over the majority in Congress and the local governments and increase her allies in the Senate. Blood will be shed, violence will reign and bribe money will abound during the May 2007 election if only to gain for Arroyo this majority.

The nation is fed up and the broad masses are filled with loathing for the Arroyo regime. Various sectors are launching more emphatic and forceful protests against the Cha-cha scheme and the Arroyo regime's continued rule. The series of protest actions this December are just a buildup towards more intense struggles. There will be growing and continuing protests by the revolutionary, patriotic, democratic and other anti-Arroyo forces and by the broad Filipino masses to resist and defeat the contemptible Cha-cha scheme. The Filipino people will be relentless in their struggle until they put an end to the Arroyo regime and its nefarious schemes. **AB**

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# Cha-cha confronted by series of protests

Successive protest actions in various parts of the country were launched against the Cha-cha scheme hatched by the Arroyo regime and its henchmen in Congress. The protests launched over the past few weeks demonstrated fiery public opposition against Malacañang's plan to foist upon the people a constitution that would perpetuate Arroyo in power either through a constituent assembly (con-ass) or a constitutional convention (con-con).

The huge prayer rally in Luneta last December 17 led by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and supported by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan and many other democratic organizations, the National Council of Churches of the Philippines and other religious groups and even lawmakers and opposition leaders is indicative of the people's rage despite the best efforts of Arroyo's henchmen to derail the mass action. After being compelled to shelve the Cha-cha scheme, Malacañang desperately tried to dissuade the various protesting religious sects and the broad masses from continuing with the prayer rally ostensibly because the Cha-cha scheme was dead.

Despite this, thousands of people from various sectors attended the prayer rally. They did so despite the many restrictions imposed by the police on the participants, the fabricated stories about terrorist plans to disrupt the activity and the threat to arrest anyone who goes on stage to criticize the Arroyo regime. Earlier on, at about 10:00 a.m., members of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party, BAYAN and allied organizations such as Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, LFS, Anakbayan, COURAGE and other progressive organizations launched a mass action in Liwasang Bonifacio. From there they marched to Luneta to join the larger rally in the afternoon. The Catholic dioceses of Calamba, La-

guna and Cavite City held simultaneous prayer rallies. In Cebu City, the JIL, Philippine Independent Church and other protestant sects led in the protest actions.

After the prayer rally, thousands of members of Bayan Muna, BAYAN and their allied organizations marched towards Malacañang. They carried torches and placards and streamers condemning the Arroyo regime's brazen distortion of laws and processes to push through the Cha-cha scheme. They called for the ouster of the power-hungry regime. They were unable to reach historic Mendiola Bridge because they were blocked by police along Morayta.

Before Arroyo's henchmen in Congress could begin their meeting for con-ass, peasants allied with the KMP put up tents around the Batasan Complex to express their protest. The next day, December 12, up to 25,000 members of BAYAN and Laban ng Masa marched towards the Batasan Complex. They were blocked by anti-riot policemen before they could reach the building. Meanwhile, the 1,700-strong Senate Employees Union staged a walkout. They vowed to stage daily walkouts until Cha-cha scheme is foiled.

While the prayer rally scheduled for December 15 had to be moved to December 17 because the use of the Luneta had supposedly been reserved earlier by the Philippine Gaming Corporation (Pagcor), protest actions still took place in many other parts of the country.



The dioceses of Novaliches, Quezon City; Malolos, Bulacan; and Balanga, Bataan held their own rallies.

About 5,000 churchworkers, professionals and students marched through the streets of Dagupan City before converging at the plaza. In Negros, about 30,000 attended activities in the cities of Bacolod, Kabankalan, San Carlos, Cadiz and Escalante in Negros Occidental and Guihulngan in Negros Oriental. In Iloilo City, more than 1,000 members of BAYAN and Laban ng Masa marched through the main thoroughfares before attending a prayer-rally led by CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo. In Roxas City, 800 people joined a protest march.

There were protest actions in Kidapawan, North Cotabato and Marbel, South Cotabato; Ozamis City; Cagayan de Oro; and Digos, Davao del Sur.

A fearful Arroyo ordered the establishment of checkpoints along all routes into Metro Manila. Six thousand troops were assigned to Luneta aside from those assigned in strategic thoroughfares. Malacañang was surrounded by troops and seemed like a garrison that day.

AB

## The Philippines has the right to detain Smith

**J**udge Benjamin Pozon of Branch 139 of the Makati City Regional Trial Court (MCRTC) maintained that the Philippines has the right to detain Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, the American soldier convicted in the Subic rape case. Pozon denied once more last December 13 the petition filed by Smith's lawyers requesting his transfer to US custody. Subsequently, Smith will remain at the Makati City Jail. Last December 4, Pozon convicted Smith of rape and sentenced him to life imprisonment.

US embassy officials immediately demanded custody of Smith. They cited a provision of the Visiting Forces Agreement that they said gives them the right to hold Smith until the completion of judicial processes.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) shamelessly supported and even lawyered for the US. US Ambassador Kristie Kenny and DOJ Secretary Raul Gonzalez released a joint statement saying an agreement has been reached to put Smith under US custody.

Judge Pozon rejected the statement and refused to cave in to the pressure exerted by the US, DOJ and DFA. He asserted that the Philippines has the right to decide where to detain Smith. He said that the cited VFA provision no longer applies since Smith has already been convicted for raping Nicole. Pozon added that the DOJ is not authorized to enter into an agreement with the US because only the president has this right.

By siding with the US, the DOJ has shown even more its lack of empathy for the victim Nicole and the interests of the Filipino people.

The Court of Appeals (CA) denied another appeal filed by Smith's lawyers requesting a reversal of Judge Pozon's decision and the return to the US embassy of custody over Smith. The CA denied the appeal last December 19, saying the petition was premature since it still has to be proven if Judge Pozon's decision was indeed arbitrary and despotic. Contrary to Smith's petition, the CA believes that he would not suffer any permanent harm while he remains in the Makati City Jail. The CA added that all the rights of the accused were duly recognized during the trial.

On December 25, the victim Nicole, accompanied by former senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada will file a petition asking the CA to submit to the Supreme Court the Smith custody case because the US position violates the Philippine constitution and is beyond the jurisdiction of the CA.

AB

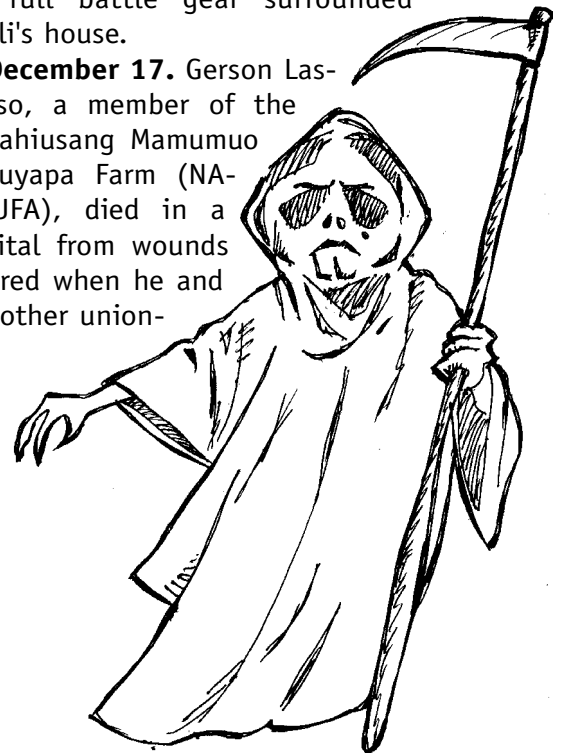
## Death squads kill 7 in two weeks

**S**even activists in various parts of the country were killed by the Arroyo regime's death squads in the past two weeks. The victims include a member of the partylist group Suara Bangsamoro, union leaders in Cavite and Mindanao, an AnakBayan leader, two Bayan Muna members, a leader of a local mass organization and a human rights lawyer. Three activists were also wounded in the attacks and one was abducted.

Cagayan Valley has likewise joined Central Luzon, Bicol and Southern Tagalog as among the regions with the highest numbers of victims of political killings.

**December 18.** Three armed men wearing fatigues and bonnets shot, wounded and abducted Rahman Camili, 34, a member of Suara Bangsamoro. The gunmen forcibly entered Camili's house in Barangay Madaum, Tagum City at 2:20 a.m. and pointed their guns at his wife. When they saw Camili, they immediately shot him in the abdomen and foot and dragged him into a green van with license plate LFV-687. According to witnesses, about 20 men in black and full battle gear surrounded Camili's house.

**December 17.** Gerson Lastimoso, a member of the Nagkahiusang Mamumuo sa Suyapa Farm (NAMASUFA), died in a hospital from wounds suffered when he and four other union-



ists were ambushed on the morning of December 15. Lastimoso's companions included union officers Vicente Barrios, president; Andres Lagare, vice-president; and Aldin Cortez, board member; and NAMA-SUFA member Doniglenn Sundon. Barrios and Cortez suffered slight injuries while Sundon remains in critical condition. The victims were on their way to work at the Fresh Banana Agricultural Corp. (FBAC) Packing Plant 90 when they were waylaid.

There is an ongoing dispute between the workers and the management of the FBAC owned by the

Andres Soriano Group and Barrios has repeatedly received death threats. The union is fighting for the payment of cost of living allowances, holiday pay, service incentives and other benefits due the workers.

That same day, Roque France, 64, newly elected head of the Dagup Igurut Asosasyon was shot in the foot in front of his house in Cabiraoan, Torkia, Gonzaga, Cagayan. He was shot while preparing to attend an anti-Cha-cha rally organized by militant groups in the province.

**December 13.** Six elements of

the 21st IB killed Nelson Asocena, 19, member of AnakBayan and Caguimongan and head of the municipal Sangguniang Kabataan in Rizal, Cagayan. According to his brother, Asocena was riddled with bullets in their house in Barangay San Juan, Rizal, Cagayan by the soldiers who first asked for a drink of water.

According to the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), a sister organization of Caguimongan, three other KMP leaders in Cagayan—Pasciano Payay, Albert Himmiwat and Vilma Mangili—are subjects of intense military surveillance and are feared to be the next targets of death squads.

**December 12.** Two men aboard a motorcycle shot dead human rights lawyer Gil Gojol and his driver Danilo France in Sityo Naduyan, Barangay Payawin, Gubat, Sorsogon at about 9:45 a.m. The victims were on their way back to Sorsogon City from a hearing. Gojol has been handling human rights cases for the past ten years and served as counsel for Danilo Borjal in 1996 and for Sotero Llamas. Borjal is currently a peacetalks consultant for the National Democratic Front, while Llamas was a former revolutionary leader in Bicol who was killed last May. At one time, Gojol was offered the job of counsel for the NDFP during the peace negotiations. He is also the counsel for citizens assailing Lafayette's mining operations in Rapu-Rapu, Albay.

The killers blocked the victims' van and shot and killed the driver. Gojol was able to get out and run but fell when he was wounded. The killers finished him off with a shot to the head.

That same day, men aboard a motorcycle shot to death Renato

## Couple commits suicide due to intense torture

**L**ibrado and Martina Gallardo, local leaders of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Barangay Conversion, Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija committed suicide after being repeatedly tortured by elements of the 48th IB who accused them of supporting the New People's Army.

According to their children and members of a UMC fact-finding mission that went to Nueva Ecija last November 8-10, the Gallardo couple and Librado's sister Macera Villajuan were thrice arrested, interrogated and tortured from October 9-10. They were being forced by the military to reveal the supposed location of an M16 rifle, P40,000 and documents.

Librado suffered the worst torture. After he was interrogated last October 9, he was forced to attend a public meeting where he and 40 other alleged members of Bayan Muna were singled out. After the meeting, he was brought to the detachment and was beaten in the chest, head and neck. He was strangled and suffocated with a plastic bag. He defecated in his pants due to the intense torture.

He was released, but the next day he and his wife were brought by the soldiers to the detachment. Librado was again tortured. The military threatened to kill his entire family if he did not admit to supporting the NPA.

Librado was again released, but on the morning of October 11, soldiers arrived to bring them again to the detachment. The Librados chose to commit suicide by drinking pesticide instead of being subjected to further torture. They died before they could be brought to the hospital.

The narrative is included in the UMC report published last December 5.

AB

Estrella, 58, chairman of Barangay Atlag, Malolos City and a member of Bayan Muna (BM). Estrella has long been threatened by the military because of his opposition to the militarization of his barangay and for his support for the activities of BM and other progressive organizations.

**December 11.** Two death squad elements shot and killed BM member Crisanto Frivaldo in his house in Irosin, Sorsogon. The victim is the younger brother of Irosin councilor and fellow BM member Max Frivaldo who was killed in January 2006.

That same day, Jesus "Butch" Servida, 36, former vice-president of the Samahang Manggagawa sa EMI-Yazaki (SME) and one of the leaders of the Solidarity of Cavite Workers was shot and killed in front of the EMI semiconductor factory in Barangay Anabu 2A, Imus, Cavite. His companions, former SME member Joel Sale, 32, and Kenny Mari Severo, a contractual employee of the company were wounded in the attack. Servida is the third union leader of EMI-Yazaki to be ambushed in the past two years.

**December 10.** Intelligence elements of the AFP ransacked the Bayan Muna office in Midsayap, North Cotabato, carting away a computer, diskettes and documents. The soldiers ransacked the office while the BM staff were out attending a celebration of International Human Rights Day in Kidapawan City.

**December 8.** The Arroyo government deported Brian Campbell, an American labor lawyer. Campbell was here to attend activities and protest actions in connection with the 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu City. He had just arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport when he was forcibly put aboard a flight back to Hongkong. AB



## Comprehensive peace agreement signed in Nepal

The Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist and the new Nepali government signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement on November 22. The agreement signed by Comrade Prachanda (Pushpa Kamal Dahal), CPN-M chairman and Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal was the result of a seven-month negotiation and ceasefire after the victorious overthrow of King Gyanendra's absolute monarchy.

The agreement ends the 11-year Nepali people's war led by the CPN-M that inflicted the heaviest blows on the Gyanendra monarchy. Red political power led by the CPN-M and controlled by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) covered the vast Nepalese countryside. The victory of the struggle to overthrow the Gyanendra monarchy is a result of the CPN-M's brilliant leadership, the Nepali revolutionary forces and people's determined struggle to continuously and effectively advance revolutionary armed struggle, and the resounding mass movement and broad united front.

In November 2005, the CPN-M led the establishment of

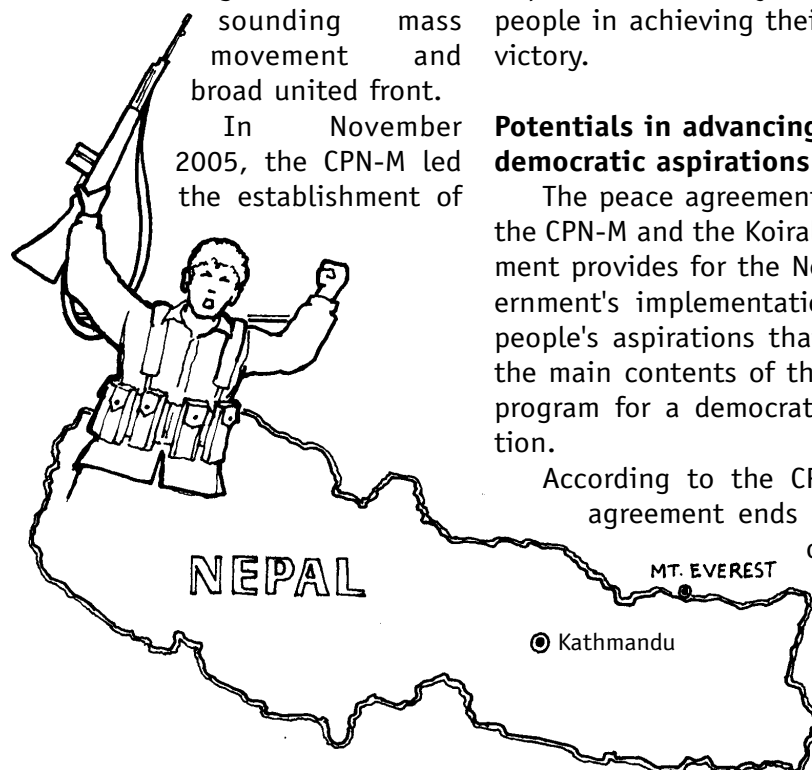
a broad united front of various democratic parties who were members of the parliament dissolved by Gyanendra. This united front included the CPN-M and seven parliamentary parties that were anti-monarchy. Through this, the Nepali people's unity broadened considerably, totally isolating King Gyanendra and directly mobilizing millions of people in an insurrection that led to the monarchy's end and the establishment of a democratic government.

The Communist Party of the Philippines salutes the CPN-M, the Nepali revolutionary forces and people in achieving their brilliant victory.

### Potentials in advancing democratic aspirations

The peace agreement between the CPN-M and the Koirala government provides for the Nepali government's implementation of the people's aspirations that are also the main contents of the CPN-M's program for a democratic revolution.

According to the CPN-M, the agreement ends 238 years of feudal rule in Nepal and





casts out "any governmental authority" of the monarchy over the nation. It also provides for steps to be taken toward the eradication of social problems based on religion, class and caste. The agreement ushers in a situation full of potentials for democratic change.

Among the particular socio-economic programs agreed upon is the transformation of economy and society to end all forms of feudalism. The key to this policy is a "scientific program of land reform" and "protection and development of national industries and resources." Also included is the advancement of all the people's rights to education, health, housing, employment and food.

The agreement also provides for the release of all political detainees and guarantees for the return of all refugees forcibly evacuated from their communities. A commission will be formed to investigate grave cases of human rights violations and crimes against humanity and decide on remuneration for all casualties of war.

The agreement stipulates the formation of a new coalition government of all antifeudal and anti-monarchy forces, including the CPN-M forces. Through the CPN-M's participation in the coalition government and control over a significant part of the parliament, it unites with and assists other democratic sectors to push for social change, advance land reform and industrialization, make democracy flourish and assert national sovereignty and anti-

imperialist policies.

The agreement provides for the calling of elections in May 2007 to form a Constituent Assembly that will formally end the monarchy and draft a new constitution for the coalition government to be set up. A new political system that "upholds human rights, social justice and equality, regular elections, press freedom, people's participation and other democratic principles" will be established. After this, another election will be held to form the government. With the CPN-M's broad influence and power, it has a great chance of achieving a decisive role, if not the actual leadership, of the permanent coalition government to be elected. Aside from CPN-M representatives serving as ministers in the executive branch of the interim government, 73 other CPN-M representatives will be added to the parliament that includes 209 representatives from other democratic anti-monarchy parties. Another 48 representatives from "civil society" that supported the struggle against the monarchy will be added. Such distribution

makes the CPN-M one of the two biggest parties next in size to Prime Minister Koirala's ruling Congress Party.

The number of CPN-M representatives will be as large as that of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxists-Leninists (CPN-UML), a legal parliamentary party.

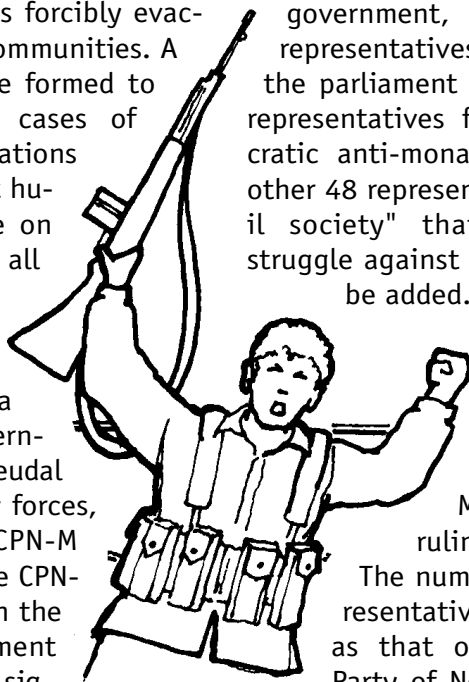
#### Perils in the agreement

While joining the coalition government may bring great advantages and potentials for demo-

cratic reforms, the CPN-M also faces great risks and dangers, especially regarding provisions on the status of the PLA and structures of revolutionary political power and even the security of the Party and the revolutionary forces.

As the CPN-M joins the new government, reactionary forces within and outside of Nepal are expected to doggedly attempt to coopt, confine and weaken the CPN-M and revolutionary forces through bourgeois structures, processes, procedures and influences. The reactionaries and imperialists are also expected to do everything within their means—violent or otherwise—to wrest the armed forces from the Party's control and afterwards thoroughly attack it and the forces it leads. The US also has a particular interest in installing a pro-US Nepali government toward establishing US control and influence in South Asia.

Intense struggles might likewise erupt between CPN-M and the reactionary forces within and outside the new government and its armed forces. This could be ignited by the ongoing confinement of all PLA forces in designated camps, the lockup of their firearms, the dismantling of revolutionary power structures, and the process of integrating the PLA with the Nepal Army (formerly the monarchy's Royal Nepal Army now under the new government's control) as agreed upon. On one hand, the reactionaries will definitely try to dissolve the CPN-M's independent armed strength and put the revolutionary forces under the bourgeoisie's armed control. On the other hand, it is a great challenge to the CPN-M how it can maintain its absolute leadership and independent control over the PLA





forces in such a situation and sway the Nepal Army to come under its influence.

The agreement states that the PLA forces will be garrisoned in seven cantonments in various parts of the country while their integration in the Nepal Army has not been effected. The bulk of their declared firearms will be deposited in padlocked arsenals and the keys entrusted to them. They will only be allowed to bear firearms to guard their locked up weapons.

The government will provide food and other needed provisions for the PLA forces in the camps. United Nations representatives will monitor this process. All other firearms not held by the Nepali Army will be considered illegal, including those held by the people's militia under the PLA.

An equal number of firearms from the Nepal Army will likewise be locked up. But because the Nepal Army has 90,000 firearms (three or more times more than the number of regular PLA forces), this provision is definitely to the Nepal Army's advantage. Furthermore, the PLA's prolonged confinement may result in their isolation from the masses and familiar battle grounds, dependence on the government for their needs, and possible erosion and weakening of their dedication to the revolutionary armed struggle.

While the agreement specifies the reorientation and restructuring of the Nepal Army "according to democratic principles," PLA fighters will be made to undergo "rehabilitation" and evaluation before they are integrated into the Nepal Army. The CPN-M may take advantage of this by arousing and organizing the ranks of the Nepal Army, but the militarists and ultra-reac-

tionaries in the Nepali military and government, including the imperialists that are now getting more interested in Nepal will definitely not allow this to happen.

If the CPN-M does not gain command of the merger army, or even attain decisive influence over a significant portion of it, and if it cannot maintain its independent and absolute command over the PLA forces, they are in danger of being subsumed within the Nepali Army and eventually fade into oblivion.

The government is accelerating the locking up of PLA firearms and using this as a condition for integrating CPN-M elements into the government—a process that should have started even as early as December 1, based on the agreement. There will be further delays since the United Nations has said that its representatives to Nepal will arrive several weeks late.

The agreement further stipulates the dismantling of political power established and led by the CPN-M, and prevailing over a wide revolutionary base in the countryside. On one hand, the CPN-M may continue leading the forces and people in these bases through the Party's own organizing efforts, advancing the mass movement and ensuring its hold on local governance under the coalition government.

On the other hand, without an armed force it can rely on and under its leadership, the CPN-M is in danger of disintegrating, eroded by corrupt reactionary politics, and its

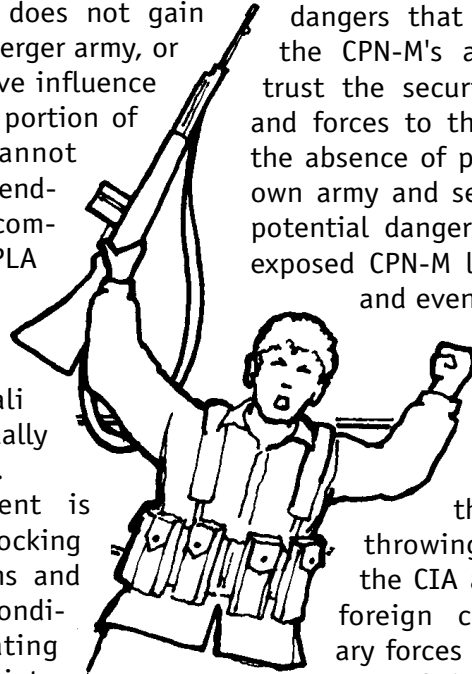
direct leadership and influence over the masses will vanish, including its own strength and current bases.

There are also undeniable dangers that could arise from the CPN-M's agreement to entrust the security of its leaders and forces to the Nepal Army. In the absence of protection from its own army and security forces, the potential danger to the safety of exposed CPN-M leaders and forces

and even its army is something that should not be ignored. The ultra-reactionaries, other forces that joined in overthrowing the monarchy, the CIA and other local or foreign counterrevolutionary forces could take advantage of this vulnerability.

In seizing political power and more especially in maintaining it, the key lies in the revolutionary party's firm grip on its weapons and absolute leadership over its own army. This was enunciated by Mao Zedong when he declared that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." As a party upholding the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the CPN-M faces great challenges in the new situation it has entered into, in becoming an open Party and in its integration with a government the has set as a condition the lockup of its army's weapons.

A firm and sharp grasp and a realistic application of revolutionary principles by the CPN-M in facing the new situation in Nepal become decisive not only in thoroughly advancing democratic reforms, but also in safeguarding them and achieving greater revolutionary victories in times ahead. **AB**







## Ambush and disarming operations in North Central Mindanao

**R**ed fighters of the New People's Army in North Central Mindanao seized four high-powered rifles in an ambush and disarming operations in December against reactionary government forces.

Ka Cesar Renerio, National Democratic Front spokesperson in North Central Mindanao reported that an M14 and a carbine were seized by the Rexan Perez Command on December 7 when it disarmed a CAGU element in Silae, Malaybalay City.

A squad under the Eking Balacuit Command also seized an M203 grenade launcher and an M16 in an ambush on December 4 in Barangay Tinagaan, Salay, Misamis Oriental. Four soldiers of the 8th IB of the Philippine Army were aboard a vehicle when they were ambushed at around 2:40 p.m. Two enemy soldiers were wounded while two others fled the scene in fright, leaving behind their weapons.

## Ambush in Masbate

FOUR elements of the 507th Provincial Mobile Group of the Philippine National Police (PNP) were killed in an ambush launched by the NPA in Placer, Masbate in the afternoon of December 17. Initial reports state that police elements were riding a motorboat along the shores of Barangay Manlut-od at around 5:40 in the afternoon when the Red fighters fired on them.

## BM assails "communist" tag

REP. Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna denounced National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales' proposal to officially label Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela Women's Party as "communists" or "communist front organizations." Ocampo said that this only serves to incite the military to target these parties for assassination.

Gonzales' ploy is the latest in his obsession to subsume or link legal progressive parties and organizations to the armed struggle.

Ocampo cited that the more than 800 victims of extrajudicial killings by the state's death squads were all branded as communists before they were killed. As such, being labeled a Leftist or communist is virtually a death sentence, Ocampo said.

## Arroyo cancels 12th ASEAN Summit

GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo abruptly cancelled the 12th ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) Summit on December 8, two days before the scheduled meeting in Cebu City of leaders from ten member-countries. No one believed the regime's lame excuse that the summit was cancelled and postponed to January due to the coming storm "Seniang".

It was a political storm that triggered the sudden cancellation, according to Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN)-Central Visayas. Before the ASEAN Summit's cancellation, protest actions were launched in Cebu City against globalization and other imperialist dictates, and mass actions had also begun in the national capital region in response to moves by Arroyo's lackeys in Congress to railroad a "simplified con-ass."

Foreign delegates left in disgust a few hours after they were informed of the cancellation. Akira Amari, a Japanese minister, was one of the many who disbelieved Arroyo's excuse. He said that the real reason for the cancellation was Arroyo's fear of possible terrorist attacks. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen expressed the same opinion. The Philippine government had lost credibility because of this, a Thailand newspaper said.

Meanwhile, the International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) pushed through with its counter-conference against US militarism and war against terrorism. One-hundred thirty delegates from 20 countries discussed the implications of the US' global war and united on means to combat this. They launched a campaign against US military bases in East Asia and Oceania. The US has 850 military bases in 138 countries worldwide.