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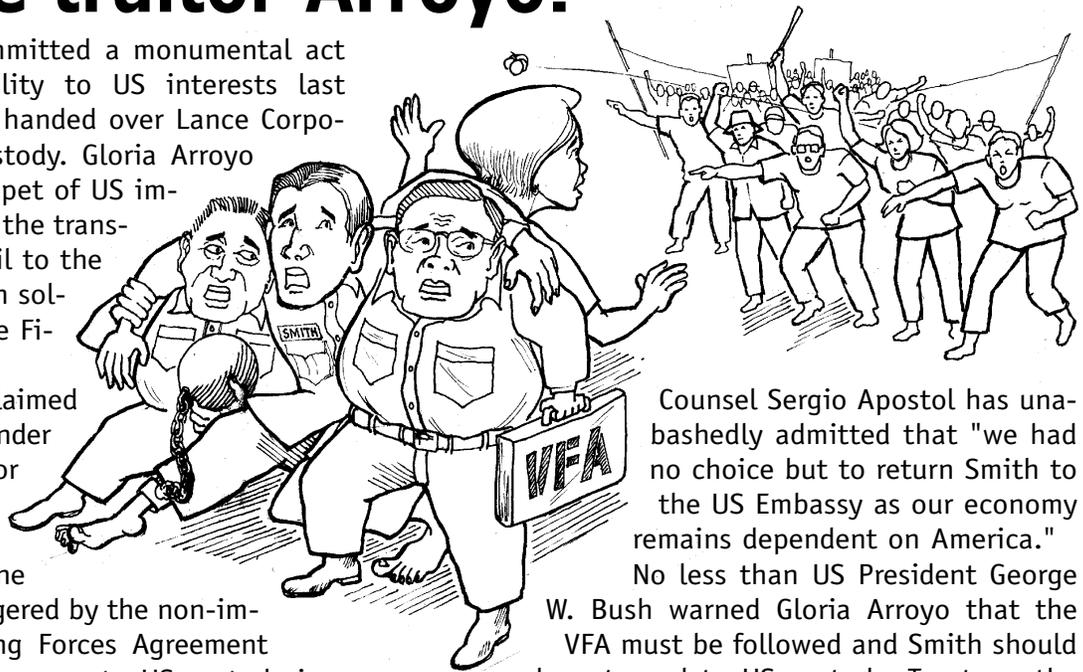
Editorial

## End unequal relations with the US! Punish the traitor Arroyo!

**T**he Arroyo regime committed a monumental act of treason and servility to US interests last December 29 when it handed over Lance Corporal Daniel Smith to US custody. Gloria Arroyo shamelessly acted as a puppet of US imperialism when she ordered the transfer from the Makati City Jail to the US Embassy of the American soldier convicted of raping the Filipina "Nicole."

Arroyo lied when she claimed that she ordered the surrender of Smith to US custody for the welfare and interest of the Philippines and to save strategic US-Philippine relations which were endangered by the non-implementation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). In reality, Smith's turnover to US custody is a rape of Philippine sovereignty and an added violation of the victim Nicole. It is an arrogant display of US power, despicable puppetry by the Arroyo regime and blatant abuse of the Filipino people's national dignity.

The Arroyo government spirited away Smith from the Makati City Jail and transferred him to the US Embassy in mortal fear that the US would make good its threat of cutting off its military aid to the Philippines. Arroyo desperately wants this aid to use it to bribe the corrupt and fascist generals propping up her rule. She likewise covets the second hand weapons she will be wielding against the revolutionary forces and training against the people. Chief Presidential Legal



Counsel Sergio Apostol has unabashedly admitted that "we had no choice but to return Smith to the US Embassy as our economy remains dependent on America."

No less than US President George W. Bush warned Gloria Arroyo that the VFA must be followed and Smith should be returned to US custody. To stress the point and demand Smith's return, the US cancelled scheduled Balikatan joint military exercises and stopped all "reconstruction" projects in Mindanao and alleged "humanitarian missions" of American troops in disaster areas. The US made it appear as if stopping these activities was a big loss to the Filipino people.

In its haste to return Smith to US authority, the Arroyo regime disregarded and ran roughshod over Philippine laws, courts and judicial processes. The transfer was done hurriedly and furtively in the dead of night and at a time when the courts were closed to avoid any sudden backlash from the people and any legal obstacle that may be posed by the court.

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By releasing Smith, the Arroyo regime disregarded and preempted the Court of Appeals (CA) which was then preparing to rule on Smith's petition. And while the CA decision issued last January 2 supported the earlier decision of Judge Benjamin Pozon to continue detaining Smith at the Makati City Jail, it had become moot and academic because Arroyo had already turned over Smith to the US Embassy.

The US and Arroyo assert that Smith's return to the US Embassy is in accordance with the VFA's provisions. They used its deliberately ambiguous provisions to justify their actions which are in fact way beyond the scope of the VFA. Their rationalizations further demonstrate starkly the VFA's oppressiveness and violation of the Filipino people's interest. It has become clearer that the VFA's only purpose is to defend US interests and troops in the Philippines. The US has refused to entertain any of the amendments proposed by a number of quarters to remedy the VFA's glaring contravention of existing Philippine laws and judicial processes.

The US and the puppet Arroyo regime are wrong in assuming that they can evade the ire and protest of the Filipino people. The Filipino people will not tolerate the release of a criminal US soldier from a Philippine jail and his exemption from Philippine jurisdiction and neither will they countenance the US and Arroyo regime's defense of the VFA and the US' exploitative and oppressive domination over the country. The US and the Arroyo regime are pushing the people to rise up in anger, unite and intensify their struggle against continuing US domination, intervention and abuse.

The Filipino people are one in their demand that Smith be incarcerated in the Philippines as punishment for his crime. They are united in calling for the termination of the VFA, the US-RP Mutual Defense Pact and other unequal agreements, and the end of oppressive relations between the US and the Philippines. And they are bound in the struggle to indict, punish and oust Gloria Arroyo and all her co-conspirators for betraying the nation and advancing the interests of a foreign power. **AB**

# Arroyo lets Daniel Smith go scot-free



The entire nation was in shock on December 29 when Malacañang underhandedly and without a court order evacuated Lance Corporal Daniel Smith from the Makati City Jail and surrendered him to US custody. Smith has been detained at the Makati City Jail since December 4 on orders of Judge Benjamin Pozon of the Makati Regional Trial Court who convicted Smith of raping Filipina "Nicole" in November 2005.

The order to transfer Smith was issued by Gloria Arroyo herself and implemented by officials of the Department of Interior and Local Government and men of the PNP and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology. A few hours before she issued the order, Arroyo and US embassy officials had hurriedly held a meeting in Baguio City.

Smith's sudden transfer to the US Embassy is a huge legal anomaly. The laws of the reactionary government decree that only the courts have the power to order the detention and transfer of any prisoner. But Malacañang ordered the transfer even while there was a case pending before the Court of



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Appeals (CA) filed by Smith himself.

Smith's lawyers filed the petition before the CA last December 15, claiming that Judge Pozon abused his power when he denied the first petition to transfer Smith to the US Embassy. Smith's side insisted that VFA provisions state that any American soldier accused of a crime must be in US custody until the completion of judicial processes. Pozon made it clear that the judicial process ended December 4 when Smith was sentenced.

Malacañang and the US Embassy upheld the new petition filed before the CA. Aside from submitting an agreement signed by US Ambassador Kristie Kenny and Foreign Affairs Sec. Alberto Romulo, Malacañang also submitted a document signed by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura, all in support of Smith's transfer. The US Embassy and Malacañang practically lawyered for Smith and insisted that according to the VFA, he should be under US custody until judicial processes are finished.

Malacañang ended up disregarding its own pending petition before the CA and rushed Smith's transfer because it expected the CA to deny the petition.

Last January 2, the CA issued its decision affirming Pozon's earlier decision and pointed out that Smith should rightfully remain at the Makati City Jail. However, the decision had become moot because Smith was no longer in jail and was no longer under the court's jurisdiction.

Smith's transfer immediately ignited strong censure and protest. Various sectors immediately launched numerous protest actions in front of the US Embassy to demand that Smith be returned to jail to serve his sentence and to condemn the Arroyo regime's monumental act of treason. Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs and Presidential Commission on the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement head Zosimo Paredes resigned in protest.

There is now a growing clamor to junk the VFA after events have exposed its nature as an unequal agreement that oppresses and tramples on the Filipino people.

Malacañang and the US may have returned Smith to the US Embassy, but they have only succeeded in inflaming the people's patriotism. The fight is not over. Expect stronger and louder protests in the days to come. **AB**

## Why Arroyo refuses to ratify the ICC

**U**S insistence on keeping custody of Lance Corporal Daniel Smith despite his conviction for rape and detention in a Philippine jail brings to the fore the US' arrogant view that its troops cannot be subjected to other countries' laws and judicial processes no matter how heinous their crimes.

As a result, the US and its puppet Gloria Arroyo have refused to ratify the International Criminal Court (ICC). The US is instead pushing for the adoption of arrangements similar to the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in countries where American troops are sent to participate in military activities. The VFAs maintained by the US are unequal and oppressive agreements that serve only to protect the interests of the US and its troops.

The ICC was formally established in 2003 based on the Rome Statute of 1998, a treaty signed by 139 nations, including the Philippines and the US. This international treaty empowered the ICC to put on trial governments and individuals who commit genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

By mid-2006, up to 104 countries had ratified the ICC. The US and Israel who were among those who ratified the ICC in December 2001 are the only ones who have withdrawn their support. The US withdrew its signature in May 2002.

To further weaken the ICC, US Pres. George W. Bush pushed the US Congress to pass the American Service Members Protection Act (ASPA) in August 2002 to protect American soldiers and shield them from the jurisdiction of the ICC or any other court outside the US. When Bush launched his war against terror and spread it to Afghanistan, the Philippines, Georgia, Yemen and other countries, the US government and military became fearful of the many possible cases that may be filed against the US and its armed forces.

The United Nations refused to exempt the US from its obligations to abide by the treaty despite its withdrawal of support for the ICC. But the US was able to obtain permission yearly from the UN to exempt American troops from ICC jurisdiction. The UN has not granted this privilege since news of prisoner abuse by US troops in Iraq spread worldwide in 2004.

The US is now coercing its puppet regimes, including the Arroyo government not to ratify the ICC. The ASPA makes it clear that the US will stop all military aid to governments that ratify the ICC. That is why Arroyo refuses to submit the treaty to the Senate for formal ratification.

Arroyo's refusal was once more brought to light last August when the European Union asked the Philippines to ratify the ICC as a requirement for economic aid and a precondition for entering into any trade agreements. Arroyo was

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*Continued on "Why Arroyo..." on page 4*



## NPA seizes 11 firearms in Aurora and Surigao del Norte

**N**PA guerrillas seized 11 high-powered firearms in December and January in raids in Aurora and Surigao del Norte without firing a single shot. Two PNP officers were likewise killed last December when Red fighters ambushed a police and military convoy in Agusan del Sur.

NPA guerrillas seized four rifles and an M79 grenade launcher at dawn of January 4 when they attacked a police precinct in Maria Aurora, Aurora. The guerrillas swiftly controlled the precinct because the two policemen on guard were fast asleep.

The 6th Platoon of the NPA Pulang Diwata Command seized six high-powered firearms last December 23 when they raided the house of despotic Malimono, Surigao del Norte Mayor Clemente "Loloy" Sandigan Jr. Two M16 and two M14 rifles, an M79 grenade launcher, a .30 cal carbine, 57 magazines, eight military vests and more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition were confiscated.

Sandigan is a retired colonel of the former Integrated National Police. It is his custom to sow terror in his town especially during elections. He maintains a coterie of armed goons with criminal records who commit arson, destroy farm equipment, arbitrarily shoot people, forcibly enter homes, beat up and threaten people with their guns. Sandigan's abuses have terrified many residents who have been forced to flee the area.

Meanwhile, San Luis, Agusan del Sur chief of police Insp. Enrico Bamba and his deputy SPO2 Espiridion Palma were killed last December 20 when their convoy was ambushed by NPA guerrillas in Sitio Bayanihan, Barangay Robaco, San Luis at about 3 p.m. Bamba and Palma were with a convoy of the 42nd IB. An unknown number of soldiers were also wounded in the ambush. AB

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### *"Why Arroyo..." from page 3*

roundly criticized then in Europe for her dismal human rights record. She chose to come home empty-handed from Europe rather than defy the US.

Another reason for Arroyo's refusal to ratify the ICC are the more than 800 cases of killings and the more than 200 cases of abductions of leaders and members of progressive organizations perpetrated by her armed minions. Her regime's systematic violations of human rights are enough cause to put Arroyo on trial for crimes against humanity. AB

## Deceitful and worthless AFP Christmas ceasefire

**M**alacañang's declaration for a four-day suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) last Christmas and New year was deceitful, phony and utterly worthless. As with the reactionary regime's previous declarations, the reactionary armed forces used this as a cover to treacherously attack NPA units and the revolutionary mass base, alongside continuing attacks against activists and the opposition. In many instances in the past, the military launched attacks against NPA units and suspected civilian supporters despite government declarations of a SOMO. In fact, a military death squad killed Albay provincial Bayan Muna coordinator Rodolfo Alvarado last December 31, a day covered by the SOMO.

The CPP saw no reason to respond to the SOMO declaration of a regime that is unequalled in its viciousness and terrorism against the people. The CPP instead called on all revolutionary forces and masses to beware of the enemy's treacherous attacks and for the NPA and the revolutionary masses to intensify people's war against the rotten, puppet and fascist Arroyo regime.

The same call was issued by the Central Committee in its statement celebrating the CPP's 38th founding anniversary last December 26. The CPP said it was the desire of the revolutionary movement and the people to oust at the soonest the ruling Arroyo clique, especially since it is maneuvering to perpetuate its hold on power. The Party leadership called on the revolutionary forces to do all that is possible and necessary to expose the regime's crimes against the people to hasten its isolation, decline and overthrow from power.

The CPP added that should the Arroyo regime prolong its hold on power through violence and deception, all revolutionary forces would be given ample opportunity to draw strength upon the united front and mass movement and expand and intensify people's war while the broad masses strive to break free

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*Continued on "Deceitful..." on page 5*

# Congress passes ₱125 wage increase

Seven years after Anakpawis Rep. Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran filed the resolution, Congress approved last January 4 a nationwide across-the-board ₱125 daily wage increase for workers in the private sector. Even if the legislated increase barely meets daily living requirements, it is considered an important victory in the workers' struggle for a nationwide wage hike.



There were no dissenting votes in Congress, even among the pro-Ar-

*"Deceitful..." from page 4*

roy regime's unbearable oppression and exploitation.

The CPP called on its members to expand their ranks by making the most of the intensifying contradictions. It said the intense and widespread armed and legal forms of struggle continuously produce new recruits with strong motivation and militancy.

The CPP repeated its call for the NPA to mete revolutionary justice on the perpetrators of the Arroyo regime's continuing terroristic campaign. It ordered the NPA to punish the worst crooks and violators of human rights. It added that the most opportune moment to arrest or engage the ogres of the Arroyo regime will be when they are on the political defensive. AB

royo majority. The Senate is also expected to approve the measure. However, Arroyo will most likely veto the proposed law, especially since she and her senior cabinet officials support big foreign capitalists and compradors who strongly object to it.

When Ka Bel submitted the resolution in Congress in 2001, the daily requirement

for a family of six to live decently was ₱445.53. But the highest minimum wage then was ₱250.00, paid only to workers in the National Capital Region. Data from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) showed that the average national daily wage was ₱222.42.

Even government data show that the daily requirement for living a decent life for a family of six grows by more than ₱40 annually. From ₱695 in 2006, it is expected to reach ₱750 in 2007. On the other hand, Regional Wage Boards (RWB) increased the average daily wage to ₱283.67 or a paltry ₱38.67 in six years!

Workers have asked that the ₱125 daily wage hike be given to them in a single tranche. But Congress has approved the increase in three tranches—₱45 in 2007 and ₱40 each in the next two years. Even if the wage hike is legislated and implemented this year, it would only be enough to meet the annual increase in the daily requirement to live decently. Workers will still be short of ₱400 or more than half of what they would need daily

## Militants, public workers oppose EO 366

Government employees and progressive parties are opposing the Arroyo regime's Executive Order 366 or the scheme to "rationalize" the civilian bureaucracy, saying it would lead to massive layoffs of workers in various government agencies.

Arroyo has tried to underhandedly make the scheme more palatable by linking it to a proposal to raise employees' salaries starting July 2007.

Like workers in the private sector, government employees have long been demanding a ₱3,000 hike in their monthly salaries to help them meet their basic needs. The lowest-ranking government worker receives a mere ₱5,082 per month despite the fact that families need a minimum of ₱16,900 to defray their monthly needs.

Under EO 466, however, top-ranked bureaucrats are set to receive bigger pay hikes compared to rank-and-file employees. To get the heftiest pay increase is the president (143%) and members of the cabinet (147%) while lower-ranking employees will get a mere 14-29% raise in their salaries. AB

to support their families for the next three years.

However, if the wage increase is legislated, it can give immediate partial relief to millions of workers. The resulting annual increases would still be bigger than the paltry increases that have been allowed by

the RWB in all the time they have been deciding on all increases in minimum wages in their respective regions. RWBs are composed of representatives of capitalists, the pro-management Department of Labor and Employment and yellow unions.

A legislated national wage increase would be a great political victory. It would be the result of the workers' perseverance and collective action in their struggle against injustice, poverty and shrinking wages. Workers have long demanded a national wage increase in the face of the reactionaries' use of the RWB to

dictate wages and thus divide the ranks of workers and weaken their unity. A legislated wage hike would make Congress a significant front in the struggle for better wages where workers nationwide could concentrate their collective strength.

Arroyo and her key officials often repeat the threats hurled by big foreign and comprador capitalists that a large legislated wage increase would lead to the closure of companies and the loss of jobs for millions of workers. This is inconsistent with government reports that show big foreign investors and com-

pradors raking in huge profits over the past years.

The workers will persist in their struggle for just and better wages and other rights despite the intense reaction and daunting obstacles placed in their path by reactionaries, corrupt and anti-labor government officials and greedy big capitalists. The issue of a just and sufficient wage is not simply a life-and-death struggle for them. It is part of the greater struggle of the working class to put an end to the present exploitative and oppressive system. AB

## UP community vigorously opposes tuition fee hike

The University of the Philippines (UP) Board of Regents (BOR) approved on December 15 a tuition fee hike of up to 300%. The BOR approved the increase despite widespread opposition from students and teachers. It cunningly changed the venue for its meeting to prevent the attendance of the teachers' and students' representatives who both opposed the decision.

The BOR decision calls for an increase from ₱300 to ₱1,000 per academic unit in the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses; and a hike from ₱200 to ₱600 in the Baguio, Visayas and Mindanao campuses. Miscellaneous fees, on the other hand, will go up from ₱600 to ₱2,000 in the Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses; from ₱595 to ₱1,405 in the Baguio and Visayas campuses; and from ₱839 to ₱1,640 in the Mindanao campus. The new fees will be implemented among freshmen enrolling in the coming semester.

Students take a minimum of 15 academic units per semester. A student generally used to pay from ₱5,000 to ₱9,000 per semester at UP. With the newly approved rates, however, he will have to shell out from ₱17,000 to ₱20,000 for matriculation and other fees.

Along with the tuition fee hike, the BOR likewise revised the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assis-



tance Program (STFAP). The STFAP is a tuition fee scheme where fees are based on parents' income. The system is described as "progressive" because students' fees are supposedly based on their capacity to pay. This is insidious propaganda to conceal the STFAP's objective of raising the biggest possible funds from tuition, a huge irony in a public university that should be providing free educational services.

The STFAP's real objective became even clearer when the BOR revised the way it has been categorizing students by expanding its definition of "rich." The goal is to increase the number of paying students, reduce the budget for subsidies and thus ensure maximum income.

When the scheme was first implemented in 1989, it classified students into nine categories where the lowest five levels do not pay any tuition and receive various amounts in benefits. Under the new scheme, there will only be five categories with only one category enjoying free tuition. Up to 80% of new UP enrollees can expect to pay exorbitant fees under this new categorization. Worse, there are plans to limit the number of students receiving subsidies to a mere 650.

With the new STFAP, the only families classified as "poor" and eligible for free tuition are those with annual incomes of not more than P80,000—an amount much lower than the P325 daily minimum wage in Metro Manila. (Under the previous scheme, a family had to have a maximum income of P130,000 for it to be able to avail of free tuition).

The new categorization is a lot of hogwash! No less than the National Wages and Productivity Commission has stated that a family of six needs up to P695 daily (or P253,675 yearly) to live decently. A student whose parents earn this amount which is just enough for daily needs will be required by UP to pay from P9,000 to P18,000 per year which is almost 300-700% higher compared to present rates.

Students, teachers and the rest

Revised STFAP		
Bracket	Parents' monthly income	Tuition fee per unit at the UP Diliman, Manila and Los Baños campuses
A	P1 million or more	P1,500.00
B	P500,001-P1 million	P1,000.00
C	P135,000-P500,000	P 600.00
D	P80,001-P135,000	P 300.00
E	P80,000 or less	none

of the UP community have opposed the cunning STFAP since its inception. As in 1989, its objective is to cover up the national government's neglect of UP. The students have thus insisted that this wily scheme be junked and that a policy of free education at UP and all other public universities be implemented.

With this newest tuition fee hike at UP, students and their parents are being made to shoulder even more the government's responsibility to support education. Students will sooner or later be shouldering the entire costs of their UP education, a situation that will be no different from that existing in capitalist-owned universities.

This is a never-ending process of commercialization in the face of continued neglect by the national government of UP and the entire educational system. Like other public schools, the UP administra-

tion has been adding more and more fees yearly. It has likewise pushed ahead vigorously with the commercialization of lands and other university property.

Like other government-owned institutions, UP is required to raise its own funds to support a growing proportion of its operational expenses. Meanwhile, government can use its funds to service the Philippines' growing external debt.

As a public university, UP should provide free, or affordable education at the very least. The latest tuition fee hike further deprives even more impoverished Filipino students of the right to study at UP—students who as it is, are already having an extremely difficult time getting into college because of the spiralling expenses brought about by the commercialization of education.

UP students, teachers and employees are one in opposing the privatization and commercialization of UP operations. They likewise challenge the UP administration to unite with them in calling and fighting for a bigger budget for the university and the educational sector. Education is a basic people's right, not a privilege. It is correct to continually criticize and oppose the government's neglect of its obligation to support education and other social services for the people.

## The UP budget

The University of the Philippines has had less than half of its proposed budget approved by the national government in the past four years. In 2003, UP submitted a P7.3 billion budget. It asked for P6.3 billion in 2004; P6.3 billion in 2005; P7.8 billion in 2006; and P8.4 billion in 2007. The government has consistently approved a little more than P4 billion while passing on to the university the responsibility to look for additional funds to defray its needs. Like other social services, the educational sector is not a priority of the US-Arroyo regime.

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# 3 Bayan Muna leaders in Bicol slain one after another

The year 2006 was about to end, but no end was in sight for the killings perpetrated by Arroyo's death squads. A known progressive leader in Bicol was slain, an NDF consultant was abducted and two other militant leaders were killed in a spate of terroristic acts by the Arroyo regime.

**December 31.** Military elements pumped eight bullets into Rodolfo "Pong" Alvarado, 53, Bayan Muna (BM) provincial coordinator in Albay. He was killed at around 5:45 p.m. while driving his car in Barangay San Lorenzo, Ligao, Albay. He was the sixth BM nominee in the 2004 elections. He is also the 122nd BM member and 814th victim of extrajudicial killings since Gloria Arroyo took power.

Meanwhile, military elements mauled and strafed with Armalites residents of Barangay Languyin, Polillo, Quezon because they were allegedly coddling New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas. Juanito San Jose, 53, one of the barriofolk, was abducted by the military. The soldiers also robbed residents of P12,000 and three cellphones.

**December 30.** Three motorcycle-riding death squad elements killed Tapaz, Capiz vice mayor Victor Gardose and his bodyguard in the middle of celebrations for the town fiesta. Gardose was accused of being an NPA supporter.

**December 24.** Soldiers of the

59th IB killed Juan Sangalang, 59, member of the Haligi ng Batangueñong Anakdagat (Habagat), the provincial chapter of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas. Sangalang was shot in his house in Sitio Pinagapugan, Barangay San Diego, Lian, Batangas at around 4 a.m. His neighbor, Bobby Espaldon, was also wounded in the shooting. Karapatan belied military claims that Sangalang was killed in an

encounter between soldiers and NPA guerrillas.

**December 22.** Butchers of the Arroyo government killed BM provincial chair Francisco Bantog at around 10 a.m. in Barangay Dancalan, Donsol, Sorsogon. Bantog sustained 20 gunshot wound from .45 cal pistols wielded by three motorcycle-riding death squad elements.

He is the third militant leader in Sorsogon to be killed in a span of two weeks. Before this, progressive lawyer Gil Gojol was killed December 12 and BM member Cris Frivaldo was slain December 11.

That same day, a motorcycle-riding

gunman shot DZMM correspondent and DWNE Palayan City reporter Rufino "Butch" Gamboa while he was on his way home from an event in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija. He was hit in the left arm and chest.

**December 21.** NDF consultant Cesar Batralo was abducted while he was on his way to a family reunion in San Pablo City. Batralo is the 94th desaparecido in 2006 and the 207th since 2001. He is also the fifth NDF consultant missing since their abduction in 2006.

**September to the present.** Arroyo's death squads

have been targeting Artemio Principle, 53, a peasant leader from Niugan, Bulacan because of suspicion that he is an NPA member. He and his family continue to be in hiding and have had to transfer from one place to another to evade the death squads.

Angeles, Pampanga resident Lenny Dizon and her 53-year old mother have been suffering the same plight. For the past two months, they have been moving from place to place to escape soldiers who have been pursuing them. Lenny, 25, is a member of the Aguman da reng Maglalautang Capampangan, the local chapter of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas. Her brother, Anakpawis member Romulos Robinos was abducted by soldiers last November 17 and has yet to be surfaced. AB





# Anarchy and uprisings in Iraq to intensify with Saddam Hussein's hanging

There has been no letup in the Iraqi people's armed resistance despite the execution of Saddam Hussein, 69, Iraq's former president who was deposed by the US when it invaded the country for the second time in 2003. The puppet government hanged Hussein on December 30 upon the US' orders as punishment for his alleged responsibility in the death in 1982 of 142 Iraqis accused of treason. Hussein's sentence was passed by the puppet court in November after an illegal and bogus trial marked by strict US control and dictates, among other anomalies and violence. (See the article "Saddam Hussein's death sentence, a US dictate" in *Ang Bayan's November 7, 2006 issue*).

The US used the serious crimes Hussein was charged with to cover up the unprecedented atrocities and other crimes committed by US Pres. George W. Bush against the Iraqi people.

The US accused Hussein of killing a hundred thousand Iraqis in his 35-year rule. In the past four years, however, Bush's brutal occupation of Iraq has caused the death of a far greater number of Iraqis and has wrought far greater damage on them. Bush is responsible for the deaths of more than 665,000 Iraqi civilians and the



destruction of livelihoods, strategic infrastructure and basic services in Iraq. Before this, a hundred thousand Iraqis, mostly children, had already died as a result of the US-imposed embargo on Iraq from 1991 to 2003. This is aside from the fact that Bush has wasted the lives of more than 3,000 US soldiers because of his illegal and brutal occupation. More than 25,000 others have been wounded and 200,000 have suffered war shock and other mental illnesses as a result of the war.

Among the crimes the US had charged Hussein with is genocide

and the killings of Shi'ites and Kurds at a time when he was still considered a close US ally in the Middle East. The US and its other imperialist allies in Europe incited conflicts among the Sunni Arabs (to which Hussein belonged), Shi'ites and Kurds in Iraq. The US even supplied the weapons allegedly used by Hussein to commit the crimes he had been charged with once he had become an enemy of the US. The US and the puppet Iraqi government purposely manipulated the entire process of Hussein's trial to conceal US responsibility for these alleged crimes.

When the US attacked and colonized Iraq, it intensified conflicts among Iraq's ethnic groups by favoring Shi'ites and suppressing the rest, especially the Sunni Arabs.

The US would like to portray Hussein's execution as the Iraqi

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**Bush continually refuses to admit defeat, the hopelessness of ever winning the war he has waged against Iraq and the need to bring home American troops as soon as possible, despite glaring military failures and vigorous demands from the American people.**

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people's collective desire, hoping that the death of their former leader who was used by the US as the pretext for its invasion, occupation, plunder and other atrocities in Iraq would finally quell unrest in the country. The US likewise wants to make it appear as if the puppet regime has the capability to unite and actually rule the Iraqi people.

In ordering the death of Iraq's deposed president, the US and the puppet regime have unwittingly made Hussein a martyr of the Iraqi liberation movement. Hussein's execution has only heightened the Iraqi people's hatred for the US imperialists and the puppet Maliki regime and stoked the fires of resistance among the broad masses of the Iraqi people. Hussein's hanging has fueled the ire of his fellow

Sunni Arabs and the broader Iraqi public especially since the insults heaped on Hussein as he was being executed were all recorded by a cellphone camera and exposed to the public, directly belying official media versions of the event. This has worsened ethnic strife and intensified the various ethnic groups' respective uprisings against US occupation, further depriving the increasingly isolated and unstable puppet Maliki regime of the capability to unite and rule over the country and stop the people's resistance.

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**What is certain is that the Iraqi people's struggle will continue to intensify for as long as the occupation forces and their minions have not been defeated.**

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Hundreds of Iraqis daringly defied curfew to pay tribute to the slain leader as he was laid to rest on the morning of December 31. Many more launched demonstrations and other mass actions against detachments and checkpoints guarded by American soldiers. A series of bomb explosions also took place in various places in Iraq.

Bush continually refuses to admit defeat, the hopelessness of ever winning the war he has waged against Iraq and the need to bring home American troops as soon as possible, despite glaring military failures and vigorous demands from the American people. Instead, Bush still hopes for a US victory and has even pushed for the deployment of more troops to Iraq.

The US and its puppet government are mistaken if they believe that the Iraqi people's resistance will wane now that Saddam Hussein is dead. There is an even bigger section of the armed movement against Iraqi occupation that has no links to Hussein. What is certain is that the Iraqi people's struggle will continue to intensify for as long as the occupation forces and their minions have not been defeated. AB

