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Editorial

Gloria Arroyo—Cold-hearted imperialist puppet

Gloria Arroyo's obsequiousness to her imperialist master during her visit to the US in the last week of June was nothing short of disgusting. While typhoon "Frank" battered the entire nation, Arroyo was frittering away the nation's coffers in a frivolous, wasteful and lavish trip. Her appalling callousness in the face of the Filipino people's suffering fuelled intense fury and earned her widespread condemnation.

Arroyo tried to squeeze what she could from meeting with her master George W. Bush who, like her, is in the twilight of his power. Her master contributed a measly \$100,000 and sent the nuclear-powered warship USS Ronald Reagan as a token of US "assistance" to the victims of typhoon "Frank" and the capsized passenger ship MV Princess of the Stars.

But Arroyo's main objective in visiting the US was to bootlick the two presidential candidates this year—John McCain of Bush's Republican Party and Barack Obama of the opposition Democratic Party. In her hard-pressed desire to meet with them, Arroyo looked like a pesky little gadfly chasing after the two candidates, who tried their best to avoid her. Towards the end, Obama obliged with a letter and a short telephone call and McCain had a brief luncheon meeting with her.

Although the US presidential election is scheduled in November, this early, Arroyo has started licking the asses of the major US candidates in order to secure support from whoever will emerge the winner. Arroyo hopes that the victor will support her plans of clinging adamantly to power beyond 2010.

While she was traipsing around and wasting the nation's money in reckless extravagance in the US, typhoon "Frank" was devastating millions of people already suffering the cruel blows of the economic crisis. She remained indifferent to intense and widespread condemnation from the people of the huge sum spent on her junket that amounted to \$1.5 million (or ₱65 million). Tagging along was her entire family—her children, in-laws, grandchildren and their nannies, over 70 of her cabal—10 cabinet members, 59 house representatives, a senator, along with their husbands and wives and a number of sidekicks. They shamelessly luxuriated in posh hotels, restaurants, exclusive jets and chauffeured limousines. Arroyo even hired costly public relations companies to

deodorize her image during her visit.



This issue's highlights...

NPA seizes 17 firearms

PAGE 4

Literacy campaign in the midst of war

PAGE 6

ILPS holds third assembly

PAGE 10

Arroyo had plans to go with her minions to Las Vegas, Nevada to watch a boxing match, if not for the numerous criticisms already thrown her way.

In a futile effort to make it appear that she sympathized with the plight of victims of the typhoon and sea mishap and that she was on top of relief operations, she sent out orders to her subordinates via teleconferences and berated her subalterns in front of the media.

All this was nothing but posturing to enable Gloria Arroyo to conceal the truth—that she is nothing but a corrupt, tyrannical and rabid US imperialist puppet. The whole nation was witness to her obsession to kowtow before her imperialist master, secure his continued support for her and wallow in the spoils of exploiting and oppressing the people even as she brutally turned a blind eye to, and aggravates, the poverty and suffering of the Filipino people. AB

Protests hound Arroyo in the US

Various organizations spearheaded by Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-USA (BAYAN-USA) led protest actions upon Arroyo's arrival in the US on June 20. Migrant Filipinos picketed in cities and places visited by Arroyo, including Washington DC and New York City.

Filipino-Americans displayed their rage at the Arroyo regime's corruption, gross human rights violations and the continuing US military presence in the Philippines.

They denounced Arroyo's rule and held her responsible for the incessant sufferings their families had to bear back home.

They criticized the military aid provided by the US to the Arroyo regime that the latter uses in its campaign of political killings, abductions and illegal arrests against critics in Arroyo's unforgiving drive to remain in power.

BAYAN-USA similarly condemned Arroyo's total indifference to the damage typhoon "Frank" wrought on the country. Arroyo chose to go on a junket to the US as hundreds of thousands of Filipinos in Western Visayas suffered from the typhoon's wrath and almost 500 perished when the passenger ship MV Princess of the Stars sank off the coast of Romblon. AB

CPP scores Obama's support to Arroyo

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) criticized US Democratic Party presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama for endorsing the Balikatan exercises and US military intervention in the Philippines. The CPP said Obama's recent pronouncement only proves that no substantial change in US foreign policy and treatment with regard to the Philippines is to be expected from whoever succeeds Bush as US president.

The CPP added that Obama has revealed this early that he is no different from George W. Bush and even his fellow presidential candidate Sen. John McCain of the ruling Republican Party with regards to US control and military intervention in semicolonies like the Philippines.

Obama's endorsement of Balikatan completely disregards the terrorist viciousness of the US-Arroyo regime and its bloody record of human rights abuses in the name of the US "war against terror." He likewise ignores the US's own human rights violations, its crimes against the Filipino people and its military intervention in Philippine territory.

The CPP said further that through Balikatan and by continuously funding the AFP, the US bolsters the counterinsurgency war in the Philippines. It buttresses the Philippine puppet state in intensifying the war against a people demanding an end to US imperialist domination and intervention. AB



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Contents

Editorial

Arroyo—cold-hearted puppet	1
US protests	2
Obama support for Arroyo	2
US intervention	3

CPP, NPA and "Frank"	3
----------------------	---

Victorious TOs

Literacy campaign	6
RCTU files complaints	7
Anti-OceanaGold	8
Anti-mining protests	9
ILPS 3rd assembly	10

Fascist state on a rampage

News	11
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US uses calamity as pretext for intervention

US imperialism has once again used the damage inflicted by the recent typhoon in the Philippines to trespass on the country's territory. Upon orders of US Pres. George W. Bush, the nuclear-capable warship USS Ronald Reagan entered Philippine waters on June 26. Its avowed purpose was to deliver relief goods to typhoon victims in Panay.

Gloria Arroyo readily accepted the US warship, a move that grossly violated her own constitution which prohibits the entry of nuclear weapons to the country. Except for the US' loyal puppet Arroyo, no one believed US Ambassador Kristie Kenney's statement that the USS Ronald Reagan does not carry nuclear arms.

Meanwhile, former AFP chief of staff Sen. Rodolfo Biazon has pointed out that a warship such as the USS Ronald Reagan would be

useless in rescuing the over 800 passengers of the MV Princess of the Stars that capsized at the height of the typhoon. Nor were the F18 fighter jets aboard the US warship appropriate to bring in relief goods.

It has been a common practice of the US to use disasters as pretext to bring in combat troops to various parts of the Philippines, especially in areas where the revolutionary forces are present. The US sent soldiers to St. Bernard,

Southern Leyte in February 2006 when a massive landslide devastated the area. Prior to this, the US also sent American troops to Quezon and Aurora in 2004 in areas also hit by typhoons, floods and landslides.

The US's real objective in sending these so-called "humanitarian missions" is to prepare the area for heightened military intervention, through such activities as terrain familiarization, intelligence buildup and psywar as well as for other devious and counter-revolutionary purposes. Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, chair of the International League of Peoples' Struggle, said that if the US were really sincere in extending humanitarian assistance, it should have sent the American Red Cross instead and not combat troops. **AB**

NPA and CPP mobilize forces for typhoon victims

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) called on all revolutionary forces to carry out all possible measures to extend relief to those injured, bereaved and displaced by typhoon "Frank." The CPP ordered all New People's Army (NPA) units, especially in Eastern Samar and Panay, to conduct rescue, relief and rehabilitation work.

Typhoon "Frank" unleashed its fury on June 21 and 22 and destroyed some 4,000 barangays, 366 towns, 37 cities, 49 provinces and 15 of the country's 16 regions. By June 28, up to 540 had been reported dead, 41 missing (excluding the over 800 passengers and crew of the capsized MV Princess of the Stars) and 175 injured. Almost four million people were gravely affected, majority of them left homeless in Western and Eastern Visayas. Damage to properties, agriculture and infrastructure was estimated at P12 billion.

In the light of this tragic situ-

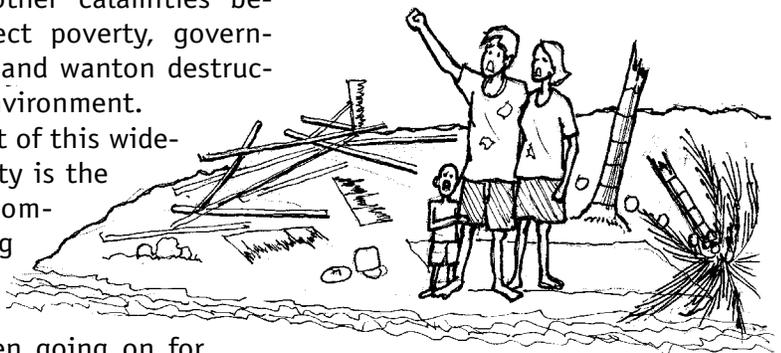
ation, the CPP conveyed its sympathies to the millions of people victimized by the typhoon. The great majority of the typhoon victims were peasants, fisherfolk and ordinary people vulnerable to storms and other calamities because of abject poverty, government neglect and wanton destruction of the environment.

At the root of this widespread calamity is the unbridled commercial mining and logging activities

that have been going on for

decades. In Panay, in particular, the rampant denudation in recent years of whatever little forest was left in the island to pave the way for hybrid corn cultivation resulted in monstrous environmental destruction. This resulted further in massive flooding, landslides and flashfloods such as those that occurred in Western Visayas, where nearly the whole of Panay island was submerged in water. At least 400 landslides have already been reported in the island.

The US-Arroyo regime must be held accountable for the environmental destruction brought about





by its policies allowing extensive mining, massive logging and conversion of forests and agricultural lands to the production of crops for export. The CPP also assailed the owners of Sulpicio Lines as primarily responsible for the tragedy that befell the MV Princess of the Stars because they allowed the ship to sail despite the ferocious storm. The passenger ferry sank off the coast of Romblon on June 22.

Unilateral ceasefire in Panay.

The Party regional leadership in Panay also declared a unilateral ceasefire in the island to enable its forces, including NPA units to carry out relief and rehabilitation work. CPP-Panay spokesperson Comrade Concha Araneta said the directive will be implemented within and outside guerrilla zones in the four provinces of Panay until July 8. The CPP is also open to extending the ceasefire pending the result of the regional Party committee's initial assessment, considering that in the Visayas, Panay was worst hit by the typhoon.

In contrast, the Philippine Army 3rd Infantry Division leadership, which is based in Jamindan, Capiz, did not declare a ceasefire. According to Brig. Gen. Nestor Ochoa, chief of the 301st Bde, their main task is "internal security operations" (ISO). They continue to conduct military operations despite supposed standing orders for their troops to help typhoon victims.

The CPP spokesperson in Panay warned that the Red fighters will fire their weapons in case they are attacked by government soldiers, the police, paramilitary forces and elements of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) bandit group.

Arroyo pelted with criticisms.

Meanwhile, Gloria Arroyo was vigorously slammed for her evident

NPA seizes 17 firearms in successive raids

New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas seized 17 firearms in four separate raids conducted in Surigao del Norte, Davao Oriental and Compostela Valley on June 28 and July 3.



In Davao Oriental, six M16 armalite rifles, two 9 mm pistols and a .22 caliber revolver were seized by Red fighters who assaulted a po-

lice station in the town of Banay-Banay, Davao Oriental at around 9:00 in the morning of July 3. Carrying placards bearing anti-government slogans, the Red guerrillas looked like protesting peasants staging a demonstration in front of the Banay-Banay municipal hall. The NPAs swiftly overran the police station despite resistance from the police.

Earlier, guerrilla forces simultaneously raided two mining tunnels in Diwalwal, Compostela Valley—the Azarez and JB Management Corp.—in the morning of

disregard and utter lack of concern for the typhoon victims. The fake president proceeded with her US trip despite news of an impending supertyphoon. She pigheadedly refused to cut short her 10-day junket with her entourage of over 70 underlings even after she received reports of the wide swath of destruction created by the typhoon.

Severe criticisms were also aired by Catholic church leaders, including Bishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines; Bishop Oscar Cruz; and Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales. They particularly condemned Arroyo's cabal who scampered to watch Manny Pacquiao's boxing match in Las Vegas, Nevada instead of rushing home to give assistance to the typhoon victims.

Upon her return to the country on July 1, Arroyo did nothing but send out orders left and right and give her subordinates a public tongue-lashing in a vain attempt to cover up her own negligence.

These pretensions were obvious attempts to deodorize her regime. In Panay, which suffered the worst devastation, AFP Chief of Staff Alexander Yano even suspended on June 28 the use of military helicopters to bring in supplies for a scheduled relief and rehabilitation operation by the Philippine Army in southern Iloilo simply because a "very important person" (VIP) had not yet arrived—referring to Arroyo. This, despite the fact that the national government had by then not provided any assistance to the island for more than a week already.

Meanwhile, hundreds of residents confronted Arroyo with protests in the town of España, Sibuyan island, Romblon, when she visited the province on July 1. The residents blamed mining activities in the area for the heavy floodwaters that gushed from the slopes of Mt. Guiting-Guiting. Policemen blocked the march to prevent the residents from getting near Arroyo.

AB



July 3, successfully disarming the guards at the tunnels.

In Surigao del Norte, more than eight firearms were seized by NPA fighters after a near simultaneous attack on police stations in the towns of General Luna and Dapa in Siargao Island on June 28, at 10:30 p.m.

The first assault was staged in General Luna. Arriving aboard a pump boat, the assault team immediately took control of the police station. A policeman who fought it out was wounded.

Soon after, the Red fighters raided the police station in Dapa town, a 15-minute pump boat ride from General Luna town. Here, another NPA unit aboard three vans joined the assault team.

The guerrilla forces immediately took control of the police station and were able to defeat the six policemen on duty. Confiscated in the raid were three M16 armalite rifles, four .45 caliber pistols, a 9 mm pistol, rounds of ammunition and military uniforms.

Before leaving, the guerrilla forces hoisted the CPP flag at the municipal hall flagpole and distributed revolutionary reading materials.

The following morning, Red fighters ambushed elements of the Regional Mobile Group in Claver town on the Surigao del Norte mainland. Two policemen were killed in the ambush, including P/Chief Insp. Ricky Arado. Another two elements of the 30th IB were killed in a clash when Red fighters encountered AFP elements on pursuit operations. Contrary to the blatant lies being spread by the AFP that close to 18 guerrilla fighters died in its pursuit operations, the Red fighters were able to retreat without suffering a single casualty. AB

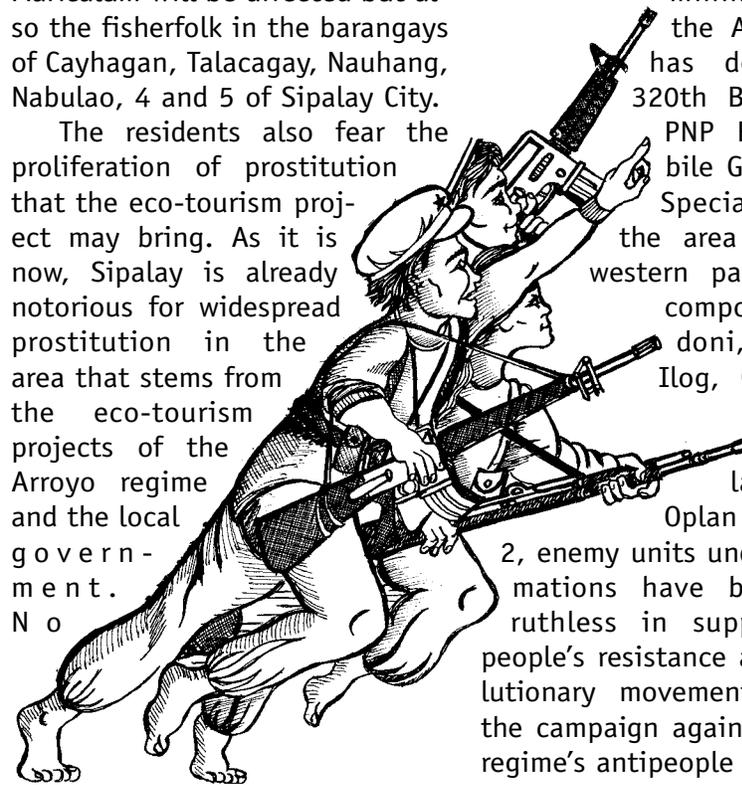
Tactical offensives in Negros against mining and eco-tourism

The New People's Army (NPA) raided the Maricalum Eco-Port in Barangay Maricalum, Sipalay City on June 8, at around 8:30 a.m. without firing a single shot. The comrades seized from the guards a shotgun, a .38 caliber revolver, a VHF radio and other paraphernalia.

The assault was conducted by the NPA in support of the people's protest against the impending entry in the area of four mining corporations—Philex, Colet, Maricalum and Vulcan—and the utilization of the coastal area for an eco-tourism project.

As a result of the eco-tourism project, hundreds to thousands of families living along the coastal areas are expected to be displaced. Poor fisherfolk will be forbidden to go fishing while farms, on the other hand, will be destroyed. Not only the fisherfolk in Maricalum will be affected but also the fisherfolk in the barangays of Cayhagan, Talacagay, Nauhang, Nabulao, 4 and 5 of Sipalay City.

The residents also fear the proliferation of prostitution that the eco-tourism project may bring. As it is now, Sipalay is already notorious for widespread prostitution in the area that stems from the eco-tourism projects of the Arroyo regime and the local government. No



less than Gloria Arroyo herself endorsed eco-tourism in Sipalay when she visited the area and went scuba diving there on May 21.

Meanwhile, the coastal areas, along with the mountainous barangays will be affected by toxic waste from the mining operations. Even families living in far-flung and secluded barrios will not be spared from dislocation should the mining operations push through.

To suppress the residents opposed to the eco-tourism and mining projects, the Arroyo regime has deployed the 320th Bde, 61st IB, PNP Regional Mobile Group and 6th Special Forces in the area (the southwestern part of Negros composed of Candoni, Hinobaan, Ilog, Cauayan, Kabanakan and Sipalay). Under Oplan Bantay Laya 2, enemy units under these formations have become more ruthless in suppressing the people's resistance and the revolutionary movement that leads the campaign against the Arroyo regime's antipeople programs. AB

Literacy campaign in the midst of war

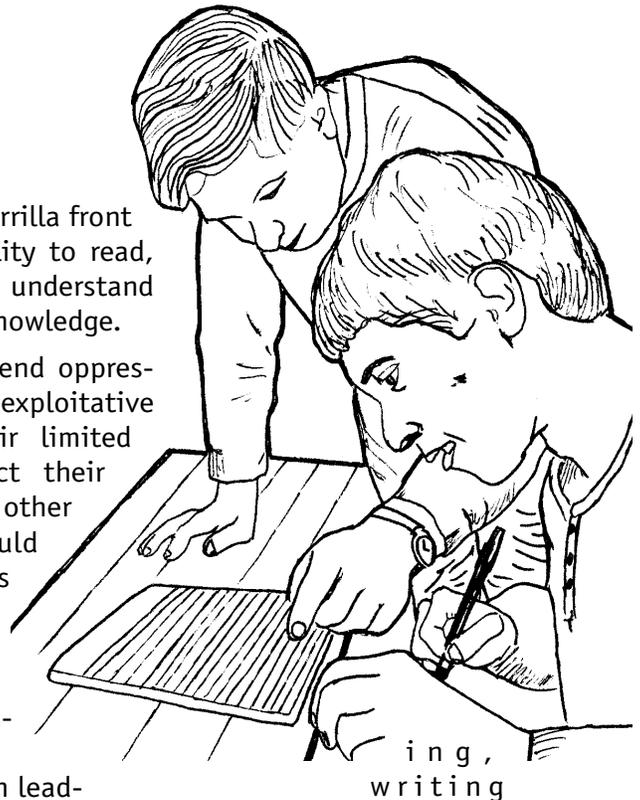
A literacy and numeracy campaign was launched in a guerrilla front in Southern Tagalog to provide Red fighters the ability to read, write and do numbers—basic requirements to better understand and comprehend theoretical studies and other intellectual knowledge.

Just as in the case of many NPA units, majority of the fighters in this guerrilla front hailed from the lowest stratum of the peasant class, the poor peasantry. Only a few among them were able to finish grade school. Others, on the other hand, had never even set foot in a bourgeois school and thus did not know how to read or count.

Despite their situation, with the help of the revolutionary movement, they are able to understand fully the roots of their poverty. They are determined to take on

revolutionary tasks to end oppression and topple the exploitative system. However, their limited reading skills constrict their capacity to carry out other functions that would strengthen the people's army, and other duties in organizing and mobilizing the masses.

A literacy and numeracy program was designed by the platoon leadership to address this situation. The program aimed to teach read-



ing, writing and arithmetic to the Red fighters, and in the process, develop them, build their confidence and strengthen their capacity to conduct education and propaganda work.

The program began with a centralized study session, which served as a basis to evaluate the levels of the participants. The students were then grouped into two levels. Students assigned to the first level were those who have never set foot in school. A program was drawn up that included familiarization with the alphabet and numbers and ways of reading, writing and computing.

The students in the second level, on the other hand, included those who were able to go to school but failed to finish. They have basic knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic but they still required further training. They were also taught correct spelling. They used as important readings the issues of *Ang Bayan* and other revolutionary materials. The instructors were fellow comrades who

Raid in Dapa, Surigao del Norte was a punitive action—NPA

The raid launched by the New People's Army (NPA) on a PNP station in Dapa, Surigao del Norte was a punitive action against the police and despotic Dapa mayor Peter Boy Ruaya because of their proven crimes against the people.

The NPA-Surigao del Norte listed the following crimes committed by Ruaya and his police elements:

- Grabbing of 160 hectares of land from the poor masses;
- Trading of illegal drugs such as shabu;
- Running illegal gambling operations such as Swer-tres, among many others;
- Brutal eviction of, and extorting from, small vendors, using the police;

- Repression of a number of businessmen;

- Maintaining armed criminal goons who had been convicted of murder like Yayong Dulguime and Eming Langres;

- Illegally terminating employees and appointing in their place close friends and allies.

The NPA-Surigao del Norte further said that the recent tactical offensive in Dapa serves as a stern warning against vicious elements and abusive government officials such as Ruaya who terrorize the people.

It added that the NPA, as the true soldiers of the people, will launch more tactical offensives to defend the interests of the vast majority. AB

attained higher levels in bourgeois schools. Some of them were able to finish high school while some were college level.

In the beginning, the comrades found it easy to convince fellow comrades to take on literacy and numeracy studies. However, there were some students, especially in the first level, who became disheartened by the difficulties encountered in learning. They were not used to using pencils and ballpens. Some students reasoned out that they suffered headaches from too much thinking and memorization. In such cases, the instructors used a one-on-one approach (one teacher focusing on one student) and convinced students who were having a hard time to continue with their lessons.

Because they were fulfilling a task that was new to them, the instructors also encountered difficulties in the course of the program. They nonetheless became flexible in implementing the program, basing lessons on the students' needs, and choosing appropriate examples drawn from their daily political tasks—for instance, computing the unit's expenses or drafting reports on enemy movements. The instructors made sure that there were collective discussions on the lessons on hand. Lesson plans were also drawn up by the instructors.

Classes were conducted daily—the first level in the morning and the second level in the afternoon. Each session ran for three to four hours. Before dismissing the classes, the instructors handed out homework to the students, which were then discussed in class the following morning. There were also diagnostic tests after every lesson to gauge the improvement of the students. There were short and long quizzes as

well.

Each student was given school provisions such as paper, notebooks, pencils and ballpens. The alphabet and flash cards were used as learning aids for the first level students. Students were also given one blackboard each so that they could continue studying even outside of the designated classroom.

Comrades who were not directly involved in the classes were likewise given related tasks. They contributed to the program by creating visual aids and drawing up assignments for the students. They also provided advice to students who at times encountered learning problems.

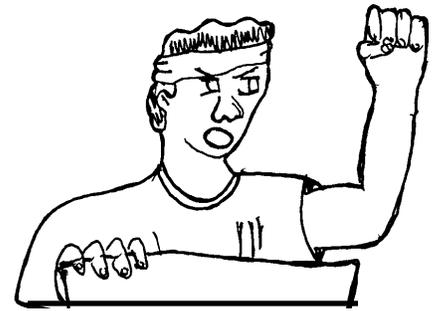
After a month, the unit dispersed to different barrios to continue with mass work. Because this situation could no longer accommodate regular centralized studies on literacy and numeracy, a follow-up program was designed to ensure one-on-one teaching.

The unit then assigned comrades who would serve as instructors in every formation. Their task was to ensure that studies continued during vacant hours even as everyone performed his or her main tasks.

In a good number of guerrilla fronts across the country, platoons also draw up and implement literacy campaigns among the masses being organized, who have long been deprived by the reactionary state of their right to education.

This fruitful experience proved that Red fighters do not only learn the science of war. The revolutionary movement also ensures that comrades continue to develop and raise the level of their consciousness and knowledge to further improve their ability to advance the people's revolutionary struggles. AB

RCTU to file charges before People's Court



The Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions (RCTU) in Southern Mindanao Region (SMR) will file cases of economic sabotage, gross human rights violations and other nefarious crimes before the Revolutionary People's Court against the managements of Stanfilco-Dole Phils., Franklin Baker Inc., Lapanday Development Corp. (LADECO) and Davao City Water District (DCWD).

Following are some of the more striking cases of gross human rights abuses committed against workers in Southern Mindanao for the past 10 months:

September 2007. Stanfilco-Dole Phils. illegally dismissed 250 of its workers at the Davao Integrated Transport Facilities, Inc. (DIFTI). The DIFTI, a subsidiary of Stanfilco, transports the latter's banana and pineapple products. The regular workers were then replaced by contractuels. Stanfilco-Dole Phils. used the mercenary force of the 10th ID and the anti-communist National Alliance for Democracy (NAD) to dismantle the picket line of protesting workers. Stanfilco-Dole Phils. has been notorious for the massive illegal termination of regular workers and their subsequent replacement with contractual workers.

January 2008. Franklin Baker

Inc., an American corporation engaged in the processing of desiccated coconut for export terminated 242 regular workers. The work performed by the dismissed employees was soon after contracted out to four factories. The incident was not surprising as Franklin Baker Inc. has a bloody record of atrocities against its workers. In the 1980s, two workers on strike were killed when their picket line was brutally dismantled by the company.

March 2008. The Davao City Water District (DCWD) illegally terminated the union president and two other union officers and suspended 38 union officers and members due to the union's strong position against the privatization of the DCWD.

At LADECO, a banana exporting company owned by the family of former Department of Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo, more than 200 regular workers of have already been fired from work in recent months.

On the other hand, the RCTU-SMR commended the NPA Pulang Bagani Command for successfully disarming the security force of LADECO on May 11. It will be remembered that in the 1980s, LADECO ordered the killing of five of its plantation workers. The murders were perpetrated by armed elements of the anti-communist NAD.

The RCTU-NDF-SMR called on all worker victims, including their families, and union members and officers to support this move to attain revolutionary justice. It also called on all workers in the region to further strengthen their ranks and to fight and thwart the depredations of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. **AB**

Anti-OceanaGold campaigns gain ground

OceanaGold Philippines Inc. suffered successive losses in the face of strong and massive protests of residents, environmental activists, church people, patriotic forces and the vast majority of the people against its mining operations in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya in June.

The near simultaneous rulings by the local government and regional court, and statements of patriotic solons against its mining operations served as a huge blow to the company.

On June 19, the regional trial court ordered a stop to the demolition of houses within the mining site while cases concerning the mine's operations were still pending in court. On June 25, the provincial government passed a historic resolution withdrawing support for OceanaGold. In addition, a resolution has already been drafted by the local government prohibiting open-pit mining in the province. Prior to this, the local government had already issued a cease and desist order against OceanaGold due to its failure to pay taxes amounting to P28 million.

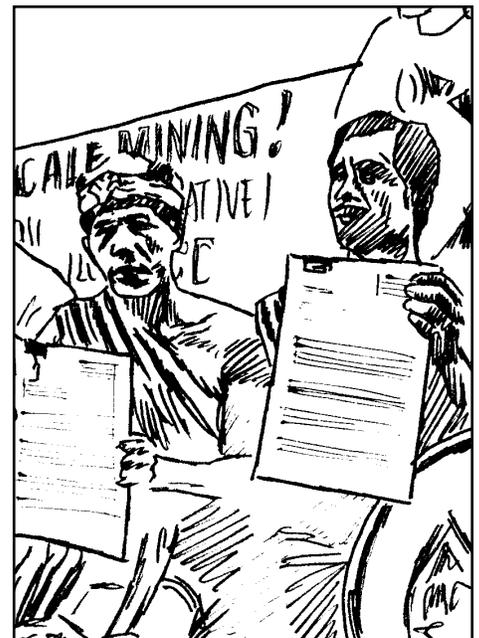
Meanwhile, the Arroyo regime maneuvered to have the Court of Appeals reverse the regional courts' ruling against OceanaGold. This manipulative move by the regime earned tremendous criticism as it allowed the continuation of OceanaGold's operations despite the people's intense resistance.

In Congress, Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño filed a resolution on June 18 to investigate the irregularities and abuses by OceanaGold and another foreign mining company now operating in Nueva Vizcaya. This was the result of a preliminary investigation on June 7 to 8 conducted by progressive repre-

sentatives in Barangays Didipio and Kakidugen. The militant congressmen stood their ground despite being illegally detained by paid policemen and guards while they were headed towards the mining site.

Up until June 24, OceanaGold was forced to temporarily suspend its operations reportedly due to lack of funds. It also suspended the implementation of related construction contracts in the area.

OceanaGold was forced to withdraw due to eroding values of its company stocks in the world market for three successive months when the gross delay in the operations of its projects in Didipio became public. The company had invested almost US\$117 million for preliminary exploration activities and in securing the necessary permits. Its Didipio operations re-



quired large capital infusions from its other mining operations in the world. Based on its annual financial report, the company had incurred grave losses of US\$24.43 million in 2006 (the year it began operations in Didipio). This further swelled to US\$69.04 million in 2007.

As protests expanded and intensified on the local, regional and national levels, OceanaGold's investors started to realize that the project was unsustainable and would only lead to bankruptcy.

Deceptions and atrocities. It has been decades since foreign investors attempted to exploit and profit from the rich copper and nickel deposits in Didipio.

In 1994, Climax-Arimco Mining Company (CAMC) started exploration activities in the barangay. The then incumbent Ramos regime awarded it the right to dig through 765-hectares of land encompassing 15 barangays of Didipio.

CAMC changed its name several times in an effort to deceive the residents and evade cases and petitions filed against the company.

In 2004, CAMC established Australasian Philippines Mining Inc. (APMI) and transferred its mining rights in Didipio to this company. But mining operations never took off as the company failed to secure the approval of the local council, then a requisite in any mining operation in the country.

OceanaGold finally acquired mining rights in Didipio in 2006. That same year, OceanaGold received A\$170 million (P7.3 billion at an exchange rate of A\$1=P42) to continue the project. APMI's name was then changed to OceanaGold Philippines Inc. in 2007.

Financed by huge capital, OceanaGold aggressively and violently pushed through with the

Growing ranks of antimining groups

More and more groups opposed to large-scale commercial mining have emerged as big foreign mining companies enticed by the US-Arroyo regime to invest in the Philippines furiously compete to gain mining rights in the country. Protests have intensified in the face of immense damage to the people's lives, properties and livelihood stemming from commercial mining operations in forested areas.

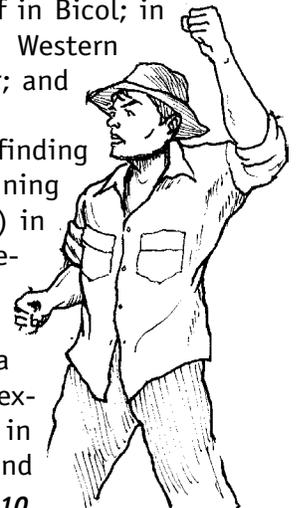
On June 23, foreign and local activists opposed to offshore mining in the country issued a joint resolution demanding that the Arroyo government put an end to imperialist activities that cause environmental destruction. The resolution was signed by 339 progressive activists and environmentalists from 26 countries during the Third International Assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle in Hong Kong on June 18.

In particular, the group declared its opposition to the \$110-million gas and oil exploration by ExxonMobil in the Sulu Sea, Japanese offshore mining in the Cebu-Bohol Strait and other oil exploration activities such as that in Ragay Gulf in Bicol; in the provinces of Guimaras and Antique in Western Visayas; Leyte; Davao del Sur; Surigao del Sur; and in Quezon and Mindoro in Southern Tagalog.

The group is set to send in October a fact-finding mission to examine the effects of offshore mining by Japan Petroleum Exploration Corp. (JAPEX) in Tañon Strait, which lies between Cebu and Negros. The mission will be spearheaded by the Philippines, Japan, Australia and Malaysia.

Alongside the anti-mining actions, Suara Bangsamoro also expressed opposition to oil exploration by the US's Exxon Mobil Corporation in the Sulu Sea. Suara said it was disappointed and

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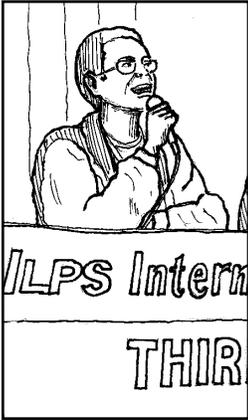
project, in collusion with the Arroyo regime, the military and various government agencies. In August 2006, the regime sent government troops from the 5th ID and the PNP regional mobile force to conduct "road clearing operations" along the boundaries of Barangays Tubod and Didipio, amid complaints and cases filed in courts by the residents against the company.

In March 2008, OceanaGold guards gunned down and killed a resident who was trying to save his neighbor from the company's demolition team. The company also threatened and persecuted local

officials and residents who strongly opposed its operations, with the police illegally detaining and physically abusing a barangay councilor.

The continued repression and abuses have only served to fuel protests by Didipio and Nueva Vizcaya residents in general, who, on several occasions, have succeeded in ejecting contractors and company teams. They have likewise gathered massive support from the church sector, human rights advocates, anti-mining international organizations, congressmen and many others.

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ILPS holds Third International Assembly

The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) successfully held its Third International Assembly in Hong Kong on June 18 to 20, 2008.

The assembly, attended by 265 delegates representing 165 organizations coming from 30 countries, carried the theme "Strengthen the peoples' struggle, unite to build a new world against imperialist aggression, state terrorism, plunder and social destruction!"

The assembly gave a fitting tribute and thanked the late Filipino worker-leader Crispin "Ka Bel" Beltran, the International Coordinating Committee's (ICC) founding chairperson and ILPS honorary chairperson. It commended his contributions to the working class movement, the people's struggles for national and social liberation and the establishment of the ILPS.

In his report, Prof. Jose Ma. Si-

son, the newly reelected ILPS ICC chair, cited the most significant achievements of the ILPS since the first assembly and the challenges it continues to face, the favorable conditions for further strengthening the ILPS, and its urgent tasks.

As a militant anti-imperialist and democratic formation, the ILPS covered a wide range of major issues and was active in the struggles of peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It has presented its position and called for people's action on the imperialist policies of neoliberal globalization and the global war of terror, the crisis of the world capitalist system, environmental plunder, the continuing US occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine and the

exploitation and oppression of peoples, among others. It presented its opposition to various forms of discrimination, and the imperialist policies of some countries against workers, migrants and youth.

Through a video conference, Professor Sison discussed from The Netherlands the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the intensifying exploitation of the peoples of the world. He cited high unemployment rates, the further depression of wages, the soaring prices of basic commodities, mass hunger and malnutrition and the rapid deterioration of social services in education, health and housing. These lead to intensifying people's resistance. He criticized the US imperialists for using the September 11, 2001 incident as a pretext to adopt the policy of a global permanent and preemptive "war on terror."

Professor Sison cited the revolutionary armed struggles in Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Nigeria, the Philippines, Turkey, India and other South Asian countries, adding further that the revolutionary forces of the people need to arise where they do not yet exist and be developed further where they exist. He also said that conscious and vigorous efforts are needed to create a resurgence in the anti-imperialist and democratic movement on a global scale after imperialism and revisionism succeeded in causing the temporary defeat of the world proletarian revolution and the anti-imperialist movement since three decades ago.

In closing, the ILPS unified to intensify its efforts to arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their millions to build a new and better world of greater freedom, development, social justice and global peace.

"Anti-mining groups..." from page 9

apprehensive about the Arroyo government's decision to allow Exxon-Mobil to conduct mining operations in the area. The group added that oil exploration in Sulu is proof that the US has long been searching for oil deposits in Mindanao and that it has long been using joint military exercises and so-called humanitarian missions as cover.

Suara vehemently opposes any exploration activities as these would not only be destructive to the environment but to the people's livelihood in the area, which is mainly inhabited by fisherfolk.

As early as April 2008, fisherfolk in Tañon Strait had also launched a protest action against oil exploration by JAPEX. Fisherfolk in the town of Aloguinsan, Cebu have complained that their catch had been greatly reduced since JAPEX's project began in May 2005. From a regular catch of 10 kilos a day, the fisherfolk could now only catch a mere three kilos or even less. They denounced the Arroyo government for allowing mining operations in a protected area.

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Ka Parago's brother slain, hundreds flee Eastern Samar

Military atrocities are unrelenting. Hundreds of farmers are forced to flee their barrios in Eastern Samar due to escalating militarization. A civilian brother of an NPA commander is killed by fascist soldiers in Davao del Norte. A Red fighter is abducted in Negros Oriental. In Surigao City, six workers are arbitrarily harassed, arrested and beaten up by military elements. These are just a few of the latest reports on human rights violations gathered by *Ang Bayan*.

July 5. Military elements abducted sisters Rose Ann, 21 and Fatima Gumanoy, 17, according to a report by Karapatan. They are the daughters of Kasama-Southern Tagalog chair Eddie Gumanoy who was murdered by the military in April 2003. Rose Ann was wounded in April when military elements strafed the house of a family she was visiting in General Nakar, Quezon. The military filed rebellion charges against her but she was later released on bail. According to their mother Maria, the three of them were set to meet in Alabang but the two failed to show up. In their latest text messages to their mother, they said that they were being tailed, and then abducted and brought to Camp Aguinaldo. Rose Ann has been receiving threats since her release, added her mother. The military now claims that Rose Ann voluntarily surrendered to the military. She is not allowed to receive visitors.

June 23. About 800 individuals fled their homes and headed towards the town center of General MacArthur, Eastern Samar due to severe military abuses in their mountain villages. The victims were all residents of six barangays in General MacArthur—Roxas, Alangalang, San Isidro, Osmeña, Tandang Sora and Pinggan.

The victims narrated the military's grave abuses. They said that a

man was abducted at daybreak by military elements, subjected to intense interrogation and released only in the evening. Two young children vending bananas were also accosted by enemy soldiers and punched in the stomach.

June 13. Elements of the 10th ID gunned down and killed Danilo Pitao, brother of NPA commander Leoncio "Ka Parago" Pitao. In a statement, the NPA Merardo Arce Command (MAC) said the brutal murder was a desperate act of the fascist army of the reactionary Arroyo regime. Danilo Pitao, 42, was a civilian and an employee at the provincial capitol in Davao del Norte. The MAC further added that it has already identified the perpetrators and the brains behind the murder and vowed to exact justice for Pitao and other victims of human rights abuses.

Danilo Pitao was headed home in Tagum City aboard a tricycle when he was gunned down by motorcycle-riding military operatives.

June 12. Elements of the 79th IB abducted a Red fighter in Sitio Kabalanusan, Barangay Dobdob, Valencia, Negros Oriental. The victim was Calixto "Ka Manong" Alfante, 46. Witnesses said that Ka Manong was alone and unarmed when he was seized by the military. Ka Manong went to Barangay Dobdob to help some farmers facing problems with their crops.

May 14. Six workers of the Surigao Water District (SWD) were arbitrarily arrested by AFP 402nd Division Reconnaissance Coy elements. The military carted away three VHF radio and four bolos. The victims, on the other hand were forced to act as guides during military operations. Some workers were beaten by the enemy soldiers. These military abuses crippled the services of the SWD to the people of Surigao City.

May to present. Elements of the 503rd Infantry Battalion Reconnaissance Coy and the 502nd Composite Coy harassed the Binongan tribespeople in Baay-Licuan, Abra due to their opposition to mining operations of Olympus Pacific Minerals, Inc. in their ancestral land. Leaders of the Baay-Licuan Takderan Omnu a Karbengan (Balitok) and the staff of the Cordillera Peoples' Alliance (CPA) in Abra (Kastan) who are helping the Binongan in their struggle were automatically tagged as members of the CPP-NPA-NDF.

Three houses in Barangay Poblacion are being used as camps by the military. Aside from harassment, surveillance operations are rampant in the barrio. The military took videos of a mass meeting on May 29. The following morning, enemy soldiers started conducting a census in the barangay while taking videos of residents in the area. The fascists have already finished conducting a census in Barangays Lenneng and Caoayan. On June 1, the military posted a list of so-called terrorist fronts, citing CPA as one of them.

April 10. Elements of the 30th IB murdered Jelson Pikato, a farmer, in Bagacay, Claver, Surigao del Norte. AB

Makati court junks journalists' class suit against PNP

A huge blow to press freedom. This was the reaction of 36 journalists and four mass media organizations to the dismissal of a class suit they filed against police and government officials who ordered the arrest of reporters covering the standoff with junior officers of the Magdalo group, led by Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim in 2007. According to Atty. Harry Roque, the plaintiffs' legal counsel, the decision of Judge Reynaldo Laigo of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 56 to dismiss the case was "a localized version of martial law." He added that the court ruling implies that the police had the right to determine which news events can and cannot be covered by the media. The court decision impinges not only on press freedom but also on the public's right to know, added Ellen Tordesillas, *Malaya* newspaper's chief correspondent.

Nevertheless, the mass media remain unmoved. They plan to appeal the case in higher court, even up to the Supreme Court if needed, and file charges before the UN International Committee for the Protection of Human Rights. The Philippines is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Arroyo government is thus obliged to respect human rights and freedom of expression, said Roque.

Roque also warned abusive policemen not to use as pretext the court decision to arbitrarily arrest journalists. He further said that they will also file counter-charges of coercion and serious illegal detention should arbitrary arrests occur.

It will be remembered that journalists covering the Manila Peninsula Hotel standoff were arrested because they allegedly refused to heed the deadline to leave the hotel. The police also claimed that the media workers conspired with the renegade soldiers.

The court also ruled in favor of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's order to immediately arrest and file charges against "defiant" journalists in similar situations.

In the meantime, violence against media workers persists. On June 31, unidentified men murdered Fausto Sison, 60, a broadcaster and newspaper journalist in Sariaya, Quezon. His daughter Liwayway, also a broadcaster, was wounded in the assault. **AB**

Simultaneous protest actions in Mindanao

ABOUT 100,000 protesters took to the streets on June 28 in different parts of Mindanao to demand the resumption of the stalled peace negotiations between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

The protests led by the militant Suara Bangsamoro were joined by Muslims and Christians alike and were staged in the cities of Cotabato, Marawi, Iligan and General Santos; in Pikit, North Cotabao; and in Basilan.

Aside from the peace talks, the militant group also demanded the immediate cessation of military operations in various parts of Mindanao.

Since the first week of June, ten clashes have been reported between the MILF and the military elements in the region. A number of civilians have already been caught in the crossfire and a big number have already fled their homes.

Peace talks between the MILF and GRP reached an impasse when the Arroyo regime insisted that the agreements signed by the two parties in the course of over three years of peace negotiations should adhere to the Philippine constitution. Most of the negotiations revolved around the issue of territory that should be controlled by the Moro people.

The GRP's move angered the MILF negotiators.

It will be remembered that on May 12, the Malaysian government recalled 28 of its 41 soldiers and police officers who were part of the International Monitoring Team to protest the stalled peace negotiations. The members of the monitoring team were deployed in different parts of Mindanao to monitor the ceasefire between the MILF and the GRP.



Oil firms rake in 80% of oil prices

A recent study on monopoly pricing of fuel confirms the insatiable greed of the huge oil cartels to the detriment of ordinary people.

According to Ibon Foundation, a research institution, up to 79% of oil prices in May comprised superprofits of huge oil firms. In its study, Ibon estimated

that the real cost of a barrel of crude oil amounted to only \$31 to \$32, inclusive of expenses for exploration, production and royalties to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Therefore, based on an average spot price of US\$146 per barrel in the world market, the oil giants amassed as much as US\$115 per barrel of crude oil.

In the local market, it is estimated that 47-54% of prices of petroleum products on June 14 went to the oil companies' profits: ₱26-31 for every liter of unleaded gasoline, and ₱23-27 for every liter of diesel.

Customs officials amass ₱500M

OFFICIALS and personnel of the Bureau of Customs were found in July to have overstated their revenue collections in order to collect incentives from the Arroyo government given to those who are able to achieve or surpass their revenue collection targets. This system of reward is in accordance with the Lateral Attrition Law, which was enacted to encourage efficient tax collection.

The rewards are also supposedly a means to increase the incomes of Bureau of Customs employees and discourage corruption.

Ironically, the opposite has resulted as the law has provided conditions for the intensification of corruption in the bureau.

A Senate investigation showed that as early as 2006, the Bureau of Customs had demanded advance payments from oil companies on their tax obligations for 2007, amounting to ₱2.2 billion. The BIR thus made it appear that it had exceeded its target collection of ₱196 billion for 2006 by ₱2.2 billion. As a result, they were gifted with rewards amounting to a staggering ₱537 million.

Up to ₱402 million was awarded to bureau employees while non-cash benefits totaled ₱135.75. Of this enormous sum, Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales received a hefty ₱15,293,206.13 while drivers and security guards each received ₱22,874.96.

5M Indian truck drivers launch transport strike

FIVE million truck drivers in India conducted an indefinite transport strike that began on July 2. The nationwide strike, headed by the All India Motor Transport Congress is being carried out to protest the unrelenting surge in oil prices, the government's decision to relax controls over fuel prices and the increasing taxes imposed on oil.

In conjunction with the transport strike, hundreds of people also marched in the streets in Madras, a city in southern India.

In the past year alone, the Indian government decreased oil subsidies that effectively resulted in a 10% rise in gasoline prices. The move also caused prices of diesel and gasoline to soar to as much as 40% at the start of 2008.

A month before this, protest actions had already been launched in West Bengal and Kerala states. The protests were led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), one of the main allies of the central government in these states.

Meanwhile, hundreds of truck drivers in the United Kingdom parked their vehicles along streets leading to parliament to oppose the latest fuel price increase on July 2.

They demanded a reduction in the taxes levied on oil. The drivers feared that they would eventually lose their jobs as a result of possible bankruptcies of companies that could no longer afford skyrocketing prices of petroleum products.

The price of diesel in the United Kingdom currently stands at \$10 per liter and half of this (\$5) goes to taxes collected by the government.

Nepali Prime Minister resigns

GIRIJA Prasad Koirala finally relinquished his post as Nepali prime minister on June 26. The move was prompted by the mass resignations of ministers from the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) as a sign of protest against the prime minister's refusal to cede power.

The communists said Koirala was no longer suitable as prime minister since the party he represented was a far second to the majority CPN-M. They added further that he failed to perform his duties well. The CPN-M has long been demanding the election of a new president and prime minister from the newly-established constituent assembly, where the Maoists hold the majority seats.

This development was only the latest among other deep-going political changes in Nepal. In May, the century-old monarchical system in the country was formally dismantled.

Massive retrenchments in the US

COMPANIES announcing layoffs in the US are ever increasing, the latest being Starbucks, a prominent café chain. Starbucks is set to terminate 12,000 employees and close down 600 of its branches across the US. Chrysler, a huge car manufacturing company, likewise announced that it will be retrenching 2,400 of its employees. It is estimated that within this year alone, 9.7% of workers had lost their jobs. Among the companies that have been forced to terminate a large number of workers were construction firms, real estate businesses, financing firms, automobile makers and manufacturing companies. Not only regular employees but also those at the management level have been booted out.

Some US economists observe that instead of a classical recession declared after two to three successive quarters of negative growth, the US economy will likely experience a long period of up to two years of "sub-par growth", which in turn will be aggravated by a sluggish market. This will result in even greater unemployment and people's suffering, which will be worsened by rapid increases in commodity prices.

The US has been experiencing six months of continued retrenchments. The number of workers dismissed from work has gone up to 440,000 since January. Even worse, workers' salaries and work hours have been reduced by companies who could barely survive the sluggish trading.

US, allies suffer mounting casualties in Afghanistan

MORE US and NATO troops have died in Afghanistan than in Iraq in the past two months.

Almost 40 foreign troops, including 27 American soldiers, died in June in Afghanistan during the US-led coalition's attacks on local armed guerrillas. This is the second month stating that there are now more US casualties in Afghanistan than in Iraq.

In the last week of June alone, the Taliban militia ambushed a convoy, crushing a Humvee and killing three American soldiers and an Afghan interpreter.

In the same month, the militia raided a prison in Kandahar where they freed 886 prisoners including suspected Taliban. The Taliban is the main guerrilla force fighting the US occupation of Afghanistan.

Cuba creates lung cancer vaccine

CUBA recently released a vaccine for lung cancer—the first ever vaccine developed for cancer. Human testing actually began in 1995, and the vaccine has since been administered to patients, according to the Havana Molecular Immunological Center, the vaccine's creator. It has already been tested in hospitals in India, Singapore, Britain, Canada and six other countries.

The vaccine has no known side effects and can be administered along with existing cancer treatments such as chemotherapy. The vaccine also helps reduce pain caused by cancer. In addition, it can prolong the life of a cancer patient by six months. Cuba also plans to sell the vaccine in Latin America.