

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

Publication of the International Information Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines

Relaunch Issue

30 October 2006

The US and Arroyo Regime's Dirty War Uncovered



Filipino People File Case vs US-Arroyo Regime in International Tribunal

A broad range of Philippine progressive organizations and individuals, demanding that justice be served against intensifying political repression and impoverishment in the country, announced in early October their appeal for an international tribunal to hear the Filipino people's case against the US-supported government of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

A group of initiators headed by Hustisya! (Victims of the Arroyo Regime United for Justice), BAYAN (New Patriotic Alliance), KARAPATAN (Alliance for the Advancement of People's Rights), the Ecumenical Bishops Forum and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, filed their appeal before the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal to convene a second session on the

Philippines, and to indict the US-Arroyo regime for human rights violations, economic plunder and transgression of the Filipino people's sovereignty. The group of initiators expressed confidence that the Tribunal proceedings shall expose the crimes of the Arroyo government as well as the key role of the US government, under George W. Bush, in intensifying the exploitation and oppression of the Filipino people.

More than 760 individuals have fallen victim to extra-judicial killings since the US-Arroyo regime took power in 2001. In the same period, more than 180 others have been disappeared. They were abducted by suspected reactionary security forces. Thousands of families have become

to page 6, col 3...

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

At the latest count, there have already been more than 760 assassinations of leaders of the legal democratic movement in the Philippines. These political assassinations have continued despite strong condemnations from various groups both in the Philippines and abroad. The killings are the expected "accomplishment" of Operational Plan Bantay Laya (OPLAN Freedom Watch) of the Gloria Arroyo regime and its fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Counterrevolutionary centerpiece scheme

Oplan Bantay Laya or OBL is the Arroyo regime's counterrevolutionary centerpiece scheme to defeat the armed revolutionary movement in the Philippines led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA). It is also designed to cow the regime's political rivals into silence and submission.

The various "opplans", starting from the Marcos dictatorship up to the Arroyo fascist regime, were designed to coordinate the US-directed

to page 3, col 1...

**INSIDE
TIPPING
POINT**
*US War of Aggression
is Facing Defeat in Iraq*

page 6

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL is back!

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is pleased to announce the return of Liberation International. With the renewed publication of Liberation International, we intend to provide our readers a continuing account of the ongoing struggle being waged by the Filipino people for national and social liberation against imperialist domination and feudal backwardness. We also aim to publish the analyses and views of the NDFP and its allied organizations on current burning issues in the international front.

The NDFP is a united front of 17 revolutionary organizations of the different democratic classes and sectors in Philippine society that aim to overthrow the decaying local

ruling system in order to build a country that is truly independent, democratic, progressive and prosperous.

The ongoing struggle for national and social liberation in the Philippines employs the strategy of protracted people's war utilizing both armed struggle and legal parliamentary struggle. The armed struggle waged mainly in the countryside is the principal form of struggle because it is decisive for the people in seizing state power from the reactionary ruling classes. The legal struggle, though secondary, is essential to the over-all advance of the revolution.

Following this strategy, the revolutionary forces wrest political power first in the countryside, set up the organs of democratic state power

there and implement programs in the areas of land reform, education, health, culture, people's livelihood, etc. In the major cities, the revolutionary forces advance the legal democratic struggle, fight for reforms that benefit the people and constantly build organizational and political strength until the over-all development of the revolution paves the way for the merging of the armed struggle in the countryside and the uprising in the cities in a general offensive to achieve nationwide victory.

In its international work, the NDFP forms alliances with progressive forces around the world to build a broad international united front to oppose imperialism, especially its wars of aggression and plunder of the world's resources. It also gives

IN THIS ISSUE:

*LIBERATION*INTERNATIONAL
30 October 2006

The US and Arroyo Regime's Dirty War Uncovered	1
Filipino People File Case vs US-Arroyo Regime in International Tribunal	1
LIBERATION International is back!	2
Philippine Anti-Terrorism Bill and Bush War of Terror	5
CPP Warns Against Use of Philippines as Staging Ground for US War Against DPRK	6
TIPPING POINT: US War of Aggression is Facing Defeat in Iraq	7
Sidebar: The Iraqi Resistance	7
21 September International Day of Protest vs Rights Violations in the Philippines	9
India's RDF calls for 14 October General Strike	9
FARC Leader Ricardo Palmera's Trial Sparks Solidarity Protests	10
Workers' Party of Belgium Triples Number of Councilors in Municipal Elections	11
Czech Communist Youth Fight Against Government Ban	11
She is a Military Cadre	12



The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, authentic democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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moral and concrete support based on its capabilities to anti-imperialist and democratic movements in other countries.

Imperialist propaganda tries to paint the people's movements for national and social liberation in the oppressed countries as terrorism. The imperialists have taken advantage of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US to whip up worldwide anti-terrorist hysteria in order to vilify revolutionaries as terrorists.

In fact, the biggest terrorists today sit in Washington, DC, directing wars of aggression and plunder in Afghanistan, Iraq and other sovereign nations, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians and bringing massive destruction to hospitals, schools, factories and other civilian infrastructure. They have no qualms about sending out young Americans to be killed or to become psychotic killers and torturers in dirty wars that benefit only US big business.

By featuring real life stories from the Philippine revolution, stories about a people struggling to build a better and more humane society, we intend to debunk the lies being peddled by the imperialists, their puppets in the client states and their paid mouthpieces in the big corporate media who try to demonize the people's liberation struggles in the Philippines and other third world countries as terrorism.

We aim to show to our readers how the Philippine revolution is destroying a decaying social system which is responsible for the exploitation, oppression and political repression that condemns more than 80% of the Filipino people to a life of poverty and misery. We shall also try to show how this revolution is constructing a new democratic and progressive Philippines that will later take its rightful place in the community of free nations and make its own contribution to the struggle of building a better world for humankind. ■

US-Arroyo Dirty War ... from page 1

counterrevolutionary war and its so-called war on terror.

According to the OBL, the leaders of people's organizations and the progressive alliances are "legal fronts" of the CPP and NPA. They serve as the "political infrastructure" of the armed revolutionary movement. Thus, they are, in the lingo of the OBL, to be "neutralized" or in actual terms, physically eliminated. This explains the impunity of the killings, and the Goebbels-like manner with which the Arroyo regime washes its hands of the killings and unleashes the detestable lie that the revolutionary movement itself is responsible for the killings. The liquidations are carried out by special operations groups or death squads.

To wash its hands of the dirty killings and diffuse the local and international condemnations, the Arroyo regime created a police task force and a civilian commission that have only succeeded, so far, in acquitting the reactionary Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

That the liquidations are committed by the Arroyo regime can be clearly

seen from documents of the AFP itself, among them a presentation entitled "Knowing the Enemy", which identified militant people's organizations and progressive political parties as "fronts" of the CPP. This same presentation is contained in the book "Trinity of War" released by the Northern Luzon Command of the AFP and has served as the guide for field unit commanders of the AFP. In 2004, the AFP also released two internal documents: "Target research on Sectoral Organizations" and "Institutionalizing the Conduct of Target Research as a Major Component in the Intelligence Project Preparation in Particular, and Intelligence Cycle Process, in General", which targeted legal mass organizations and progressive party list organizations for surveillance.

On the civilian front, known fascist Jesuit priest Romeo Intengan, wrote an essay in September 2005 entitled "The AFP: Defender of the Nation" which identified progressive party list groups that won in the May 2004 elections as "controlled or heavily-influenced by the CPP-NPA-NDF".

... to page 4, col 1.



the allied organizations of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines: Communist Party of the Philippines; New People's Army; ARMAS, Artists and Writers for the People; CNL, Christians for National Liberation; CPDF, Cordillera People's Democratic Front; KAGUMA, Association of Patriotic Teachers; KASAMA, Federation of Labor Organizations; KM, Patriotic Youth; LAB, League of Scientists for the People; LUMABAN, Council of Lawyers for the People Revolutionary Organization of Lumads; MAKIBAKA, Patriotic Movement of New Women; MSP, Patriotic Health Association; MKP, Patriotic Government Employees; Moro Resistance and Liberation Organization; PKM, National Association of Peasants; RCTU, Revolutionary Council of Trade Unions.

HOMEFRONT

US-Arroyo Dirty War... from page 3.

This obscure essay was officially endorsed by Intengan's fellow witchhunter, national security adviser Norberto Gonzales.

Shadow of "Operation Phoenix"

The use of death squads by the AFP, from Marcos' time up to the present Arroyo fascist regime, and the quota-system assassination of patriotic and democratic leaders have apparently been copied from the strategy and tactics of US Special Forces called "new operational arts", and have long been operationalized under "Operation Phoenix".

"Operation Phoenix" was a fascist campaign of genocide launched by the US against the people of Vietnam and the Vietnamese National Liberation Front from 1967-1974 that led to the Nazi-like liquidation of more or less 40,000 unarmed Vietnamese.

Like "Operation Phoenix", Oplan Bantay Laya's campaign of fascist killings mocks the Geneva Conventions on the conduct of war. The Arroyo regime and the US' war of terror against the Filipino people has openly targeted unarmed civilians.

The US itself has not been brought to any international court of justice for the genocide and other barbarities it

committed during the Vietnam War. In fact, the concept used in "Operation Phoenix" has been propagated by the US-Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon in other parts of Asia, Latin America, Europe and Africa. It should not come as a surprise if political observers and keen followers of the US aggression in Iraq would cry that the workings of "Operation Phoenix" is being reborn there.

Masterminds and US puppets

While OBL is geared to defeat the armed revolutionary movement, it is apparent that OBL also serves to ensure the political survival, at all costs, of Gloria Arroyo — the illegitimate, corrupt, puppet and fascist president, and her pro-imperialist regime.

This means broadening of the definition, under the OBL, of the so-called enemies of the state, to include the political opposition, the progressive churches and middle classes. Thus, the recent assassination of a high-ranking bishop of the Philippine Independent Church and the harassment of several high-profile political oppositionists.

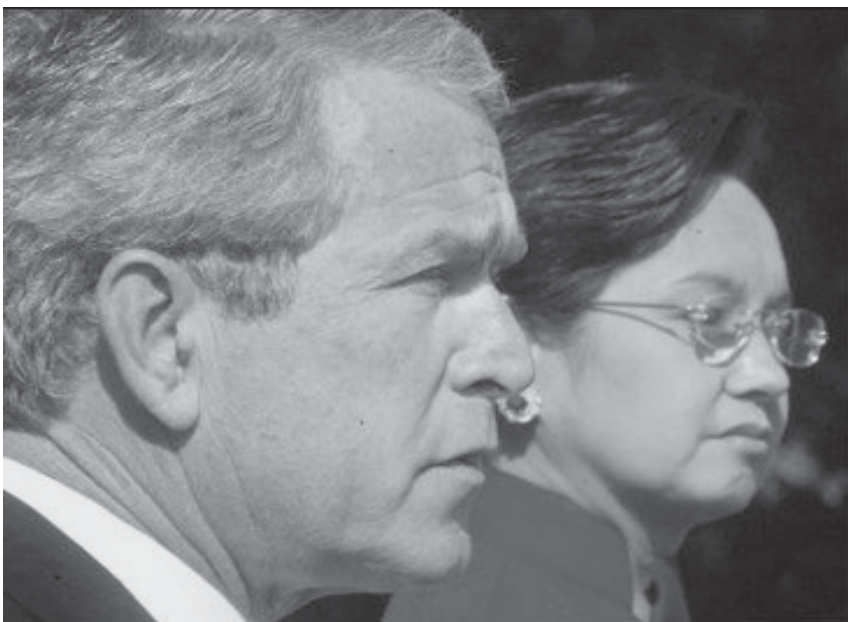
Though the operations of OBL are decentralized, such as the assassinations carried out by the

Like "Operation Phoenix", Oplan Bantay Laya's campaign of fascist killings mocks the Geneva Conventions on the conduct of war. The Arroyo regime and the US' war of terror against the Filipino people has openly targeted unarmed civilians.

motorcycle-riding death squads, its command is centralized. At the helm of the command is Gloria Arroyo herself and the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (COCIS) whose members include executive secretary and former AFP general Eduardo Ermita, (a Vietnam-veteran himself, involved in the implementation of "Operation Phoenix"), national security adviser Norberto Gonzales (chair of the shadowy Philippine Social Democratic Party), justice secretary Raul Gonzalez, defense secretary Avelino Cruz and AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

Just how bloodthirsty and fanatic this committee is has been publicly exposed a long time ago when national security adviser Norberto Gonzales in one of the meetings of the COCIS officially proposed the assassination of NDFP chief political consultant Prof. Jose Ma. Sison who lives in exile in the Netherlands.

As the Philippines continues to be the US' Second Front in its so-called war on terror, and the US-backed Arroyo regime's puppetry to the US deepens even more, expect the fascist plague to further spread throughout the country. But as the history of the people's resistance also shows us, more repression breeds more resistance. The outpouring of anger and condemnation for OBL's fascist killings and other war crimes is steadily expanding the ranks of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines and the international solidarity for the Filipino people. ■



Bush and Arroyo are both war criminals

Philippine Anti-Terrorism Bill and Bush War of Terror

The master has cracked the whip. No surprise therefore that the Arroyo regime is forcing the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Bill in the Philippine Senate.

US President George W. Bush gave the order early October 2006 through Admiral William J. Fallon. Admiral Fallon, the US Commander in Chief of the Pacific (CINCPAC) told former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos that the US wants the Philippines to pass its anti-terror bill as soon as possible.

Patterned after the repressive USA Patriot Act of 2001, the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Bill allows warrantless arrests, prolonged detention without charges, the arbitrary freezing and sequestration of financial assets and the violation of one's right to privacy through unhampered use of electronic surveillance.

With its vague and sweeping definition of terrorism, the proposed Bill threatens to flout the freedom of speech and assembly of the people in mass protests, strikes and other concerted actions of the working people and rallies of the legal opposition. It can be used to brand as terrorist the acts of the revolutionary forces which otherwise conform to the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law in general.

The proposed Bill empowers the reactionary police, military and other law enforcement officers, through designated Regional Trial Courts, to gain secret access to bank accounts and other private records and thereafter to freeze bank accounts and other assets and effect their eventual confiscation.

Anyone "charged or suspected" of the "crime of terrorism" or "conspiracy to commit terrorism" or of being "an accomplice or accessory"

can be subjected to numerous forms of punitive action in violation of his/her fundamental rights. False witnesses are provided immunity.

The proposed Bill allows the proscription and banning of liberation movements, such as the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), just by branding them as "judicially declared terrorist organizations." Their members are also made subject to punitive measures.

It practically establishes a police state. The proposed Anti-Terrorism Council, chaired by the sitting president, Gloria Arroyo, is in effect a civilian-military junta, clothed with vast powers to destroy or debilitate the legal opposition.

She can use the anti-terrorism law to ram through any of her schemes to revise the 1987 constitution of the Republic of the Philippines. The regime wants to revise said constitu-

tion to allow US military forces to base their troops and weapons of mass destruction in the Philippines, further auction off the national patrimony, and accord unlimited "national treatment" to foreign multinationals. She also intends to do away with the restraints on the declaration of martial law and to curtail further the guarantees of civil and political rights.

The proposed Anti-Terrorism Bill is clearly an instrument of the US-Arroyo regime to intensify the US war of terror against the Filipino people. For her part, Mrs. Arroyo expects to wield a more repressive weapon to destroy the legal opposition and the armed revolutionary movement in order to cling to power.

This Anti-Terrorism Bill, just like the US Patriot Act and the US Military Commissions Act, must be vigorously opposed by the Filipino people and all freedom-loving peoples. ■



US Marines arrive at the former US naval base in Subic, Zambales, in northern Philippines, from their High Speed Vessel, for the "shoulder-to-shoulder" joint military exercise.

CPP Warns Against Use of Philippines as Staging Ground for US War Against DPRK

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) denounced the current large-scale military exercises being conducted jointly in various areas in Luzon and Palawan by US and Philippine security forces as a "continuing transgression against Philippine independence and sovereignty". At the same time, the CPP warned against the use of Philippine territory as a staging ground or support base for US military aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Up to 5,700 US troops from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Unit based in Okinawa, Japan and from the Essex Expeditionary Strike Group based in Sasebo, Japan, arrived recently in Luzon and Palawan to conduct joint drills with 1,300 Filipino soldiers up to October 31.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal noted that more and more US troops are being deployed in joint exercises being conducted in the Philippines "purportedly to counter terrorism, but actually as part of the conditioning to increase the scale of the continuing US military intervention in the Philippines itself as well as in other countries."

Rosal said that the joint US-Philippine military exercises are being used by the US as cover for its increasing military intervention in the Philippines, including direct participation in the Philippine military's combat and intelligence operations in Mindanao and, more and more, the development of its own intelligence network, database build-up and direct familiarity in areas of conflict in the country, especially in the strongholds of the New People's Army.

Rosal also said the joint military exercises and the increasing presence

"Joint US-Philippine military exercises are being used by the US as cover for its increasing military intervention in the Philippines, including direct combat and intelligence operations"
-- Ka Roger

of US troops in the country is also setting the stage for any possible use of Philippine territory as launching pad for wars of aggression against other countries, especially those in the Asia-Pacific region opposed to US superpower hegemony. The US used the Philippines as one of its launching pads for its invasion of Iraq in 1989-1990 and again since March 2003.

Rosal urged the Filipino people to vigilantly oppose any step by the US government to use the Philippines as a possible launching pad or support base for a possible war against North Korea, even as he also said that the US is only barking frenziedly to hide its real fear of actually going to war against the DPRK which has just demonstrated its self-defense capability.

"All Filipino patriots and the entire Filipino nation should not allow the Philippines to be used as a pawn and staging ground for the hegemonic wars of aggression of the US against countries and peoples fighting to defend their independence and freedoms," Rosal said. [CPP Information Bureau] ■

internal refugees as a result of brutal military operations conducted by the regime's military and police forces.

Individual victims of political killings include leaders of opposition political parties, trade unions and peasant associations, lawyers and judges, journalists and broadcasters, and religious leaders. Bishop Alberto Ramento, co-chairperson of the Ecumenical Bishops Forum, was brutally murdered inside his convent on 3 October. Most recently, Eduardo Millares, a 50-year old urban poor activist from the south of Manila, was shot dead on 18 October. Millares' organization is protesting the increased presence of reactionary security forces in their community.

The Permanent Peoples' Tribunal will convene the Second Session on the Philippines in The Hague, The Netherlands, on 30 October. According to statements from the International Coordinating Secretariat of the Tribunal's Second Session, the proceedings in The Hague will be presided over by Dr. Gianni Tognoni, General Secretary of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal. Philippine Senator Maria Consuelo Madrigal and Congressman Teodoro Casiño will be the guest speakers.

The hearings of the Tribunal will be conducted on 21-25 March 2007 in The Hague before an international jury presided by Prof. Francois Houtart of Louvain-la-Neuve University. Individual representatives from the group of initiators are expected to personally appeal their case before the Tribunal.

Other members of the initiating group include SELDA (organization of political prisoners), Desaparecidos (organization of victims, relatives and friends of the disappeared), Public Interest Law Center, Peace for Life, Philippine Peace Center, and IBON Foundation. The initiators called on the international community to support the sessions of the Tribunal by sending messages of support, joining protest activities against the US-Arroyo regime, giving donations and informing more people about the worsening social situation in the Philippines. More information about the Tribunal second session on the Philippines is available at <http://www.philippinetribunal.org>. ■

TIPPING POINT

US War of Aggression is Facing Defeat in Iraq

By N. Timmerman-Francisco

Not too long ago President George W. Bush was quoted by a journalist that he would not leave Iraq even if the only ones left supporting him are his wife, Laura, and his dog, Barney. But in the face of mounting American casualties and widespread criticisms back home, the US president was forced to announce recently it was time to change course.

Bush called it a mere change in tactics. But for many a political pundit, his move to meet up with his war generals and advisers and talk of “adjusting” tactics over the conduct of the war in Iraq is proof that his “stay the course” strategy has gone astray and that American withdrawal from the oil-rich country is just a matter of time.

Worse for Bush, comparing Iraq with Vietnam, where the United States suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese people, has even become the favorite topic of political discussions not only in the US but worldwide. A consensus is growing that the world’s most powerful army has lost the war in Iraq.

Pressures for Bush to admit there was something wrong with the way the Iraq war is handled were enormous. Bad news coming one after the other – not only from Iraq but also from Afghanistan – has only made it more and more difficult for the White House occupant to justify his Iraq adventure, in particular, and his so-called war on terror, in general.

This October, attacks coming from the Iraqi resistance became more widespread and fiercer. A total of 78 American soldiers and countless Iraqi military and police forces were killed in this new wave of armed assaults. The American public is incensed, their anger and disapproval of Bush reflected in survey after survey.

Interestingly, criticisms and calls for change coming from the Washington corridors of power were also



Iraqi civilians celebrating victory of the Iraqi resistance fighters against US forces

competing for media attention, the latest of which was the “arrogant-stupid” statement used by a senior US diplomat to describe his government’s handling of the war.

“We tried to do our best but I think there is much room for criticism because, undoubtedly, there was arrogance and there was stupidity from the United States in Iraq,” said Alberto Fernandez, who is connected with the State Department and considered one of Bush’s spin doctors.

Then there was Richard Haass, a former foreign policy official in the Bush administration, telling reporters that the situation has reached a “tipping point” both in Iraq and US politics. Speaking on the heels of resurgence of attacks against American forces in Iraq, Haass said that “more of essentially the same is going to be a policy that very few people are going to be able to support” and that the current administration’s strategy of bringing stability and democracy to Iraq “has virtually no chance of succeeding”.

Within the Republican Party in Congress, support for Bush’s Iraq policy has likewise begun to melt. “I don’t believe that we can continue

based on an open-ended, unconditional presence [in Iraq]. I don’t think there’s any question about that, there will be a change,” said Senator Olympia Snowe, a Maine Republican, told the *Washington Post* recently.

Another influential senator, John Warner, who chairs the Republican armed services committee in the Senate and who joined a recent fact-finding mission to Iraq, said that that country was adrift and all options should be considered.

Why the Bush camp is in panic is understandable. With 2 in 3 Americans now believing that Bush is “wrong” in Iraq, Republicans – and even a number of Democrats who earlier supported the invasion of Iraq – are therefore cautious of being identified with the war lest they get the goat of the electorate further.

Nevertheless, the Republicans’ efforts at damage control may be all for naught as polls show that the Democrats are going to take back control of both the chambers of the House. Nationwide, all Republican candidates for the lower house, senate and governorship are trailing their Democratic opponents by two digits.

contd next page...

Tipping Point... from page 7

Indeed, more and more Americans are convinced that they were lied to about the weapons of mass destruction which were used as a pretext for the invasion of Iraq and that Saddam Hussein had definitely nothing to do with the 9-11 attacks. The call to bring home the troops and stop using them to steal Iraq's oil is in fact becoming louder.

A housewife, Vicky Harman, sums up the prevailing sentiment of ordinary Americans: "People are upset about our kids being killed in Iraq in a war that everyone now knows was started on false pretenses. Every day there's more information about the cover-ups, the efforts to misguide the public and — worst of all — their absolute lack of remorse."

It is this sudden shift of public opinion against the war in Iraq that Bush is trying hard to parry. His admission that the upsurge of armed attacks against American forces in Iraq could be compared with the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, did not help any to win back the public support he once enjoyed and had exploited to lash out against critics questioning his Iraq policy and his so-called war on terror.

As if bolstering this Iraq-Vietnam comparison, Bush's calling on the Iraq Study Group (ISG) is seen as Lyndon Johnson's asking advice from the "three wise men" who advocated the change of American handling of the war in that country. The ISG, which is headed by Bush family friend and former Secretary of State James Baker, has also been advocating for change because it does not believe that the current policy in Iraq is working.

The ISG is entertaining a host of other alternatives: military withdrawal, partitioning the country along ethnic lines, or even asking Iran and Syria to step in and help restore order. But as things stand now, withdrawing from Iraq — either phased or immediate — is the alternative which is gaining momentum. The one challenge being ironed out by Baker now is how not to make this withdrawal appear as yet another US defeat at the hands of a people they occupied but failed to subjugate.

And Bush is playing his part well. With his usual display of bravado, he declared: "Our goal in Iraq is clear and unchanging: our goal is victory.

What is changing are the tactics we use to achieve that goal." Unfortunately for Bush, Barney the dog may be the only one left listening. ■

The Iraqi Resistance

Of late military parades seem to be a regular occurrence in Iraq. No, it is not the American forces or their lackeys in the Iraqi military and police who are holding this sort of victory celebrations. On Oct. 18 and 21, for instance, a large group, with their weapons hoisted airwards, paraded in the heart of five towns in the province of Al Anbar, including the provincial capital of Ramadi, which is within striking distance of American soldiers stationed in nearby bases.

Who are these people? They are the Iraqi resistance fighters, part of the tens of thousands who have joined the armed struggle to put an end to the US occupation. Their nemesis in the White House invariably refers to them as Al-Qaeda terrorists, extremists, Saddamists, etc. But for the majority of the Iraqi people, they are heroes waging a just revolutionary struggle against a foreign occupier.

Nothing much is written about the Iraqi resistance. But a quick search on the Internet will give one an idea who these revolutionaries are.

Far from being foreigners fighting in Iraq, the guerrillas of the resistance are Iraqi civilians fighting a foreign army that occupies their country. It is composed of a dozen or so major guerrilla organizations and as many as 40 distinct groups, according to the abovementioned site. Their religious and political backgrounds encompass Iraqi society: Sunnis, Shi'as, Kurds, Ba'athists, nationalists, and communists.

This composition of the resistance confirms the observation made by a

number of political scientists, including Professor Wamidh Nadhmi, who believe "that the major division in Iraq is not along ethnic and religious divisions nor between the general population and violent groups, but between those who collaborate with the foreign occupation and those who resist it."

Realities on the war front attest to this comment. An article published online by the *The Observer* on Oct. 22 reported:

"More worrying [for the Bush administration] still is the assessment that both Sunni and Shia nationalist resistance movements have reached the level of being 'coordinated/consolidated' — able to reply to multinational offensives with their own 'push capability'."

The resistance fighters are also enjoying support from the majority of the Iraqi people. A September 2006 poll of both Sunnis and Shiites found that: 71% of Iraqis wanted the US to leave within a year; 65% favoring an immediate pullout and 77% voicing suspicion that the US wanted to keep permanent bases in Iraq; and 61% approved of attacks on US Forces. ■



21 September International Day of Protest vs Rights Violations in the Philippines

International condemnation continues to mount against the US-backed Arroyo regime's blatant human rights violations. On the occasion of the 34th anniversary of the imposition of Martial Law by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos on 21 September, coordinated protest actions were mounted across the globe in front of embassies and consulates of the Manila government and in other public places. The International Day of Protest Against Repression in the Philippines, organized by the International League of Peoples' Struggle, was also an occasion to consolidate the democratic and progressive forces protesting against the worsening political repression in the Philippines.

In the US, protest actions were held in eight cities participated in by Filipino-Americans and American leaders of progressive organizations: in Los Angeles and San Francisco, in California; Seattle, Washington; Manhattan, New York; Washington, DC; Chelsea, Massachusetts; North Carolina; and Honolulu, Hawaii.

In Canada, Filipino-Canadians held protest rallies in front of the Philippine consulates in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto.

Dutch, Turkish and Filipino activists picketed the Philippine Embassy in the Hague, the Netherlands. Protest actions were also held in front of Philippine foreign missions in Geneva, Switzerland; Oslo, Norway; London, in the United Kingdom; and in Rome, Italy.

Filipinos picketed the Philippine Consulate in Sydney, Australia, and lit candles to commemorate the victims of the US-Arroyo regime's fascist attacks. A protest action was also held in Melbourne, Australia. Three Indonesian organizations took their protest action in front of the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. A rally was held in Seoul, South Korea participated in by Filipino, Korean, Bangladeshi and

Nepali activists. Similar protest actions were also held in Taiwan; Lahore City in Pakistan; in Hongkong; and in Tokyo and Nagasaki in Japan.

Partial list of organizations which participated in the 21 September International Day of Protest Against Repression in the Philippines:

USA: Bayan-USA, Anakbayan-Los Angeles • Habi Arts • National Alliance for Filipino Concerns • POWER • League of Filipino Students • Babae • Anakbayan-Seattle • Pinay • Philippine-US Solidarity • Anakbayan NJ/NY • New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines • Katarungan • Philippine Forum Committee Action • Movement for a Free

Philippines • International Action Center • CAAAV: Organizing Asian Committees • Nodutdol • Committee Organizing Coalition of Philadelphia • Anakbayan-Honolulu.

Europe: Filipino Resource Center • Changemaker • Kalayaan • Rice & Rights • Migrante-Europe • Nederlands-Filippijns Solidariteitsbeweging • ATIK (Turkey) • PUMIGLAS • AKP (Norwegian Left Party).

Asia-Pacific Region: Front Mahasiswa Nasional • Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia • Aliansi Mahasiswa Papua (Indonesia) • KASAMMA (South Korea) • MINBYUN • All Pakistan Trade Union • Labor Rights Association • Human Rights Program • Soochow University students in Taiwan. ■



India's RDF calls for 14 October General Strike

The Revolutionary Democratic Front in India called for a 24-hour general strike on 14 October in the states of Orissa, Jharkhand and Bihar, to protest the arrest of three activists last 7 September.

Orissa police forces arrested Budhni Munda, President of the Nari Mukti Sangh, along with two others activists, Rajan Rahul Munda and Sanjay alias Bijay Tudu, in the morning of 7 September 2006. According to RDF reports, the three were interrogated and subjected to psychological torture for 36 hours before they were presented to a local magistrate. They had since been remanded to police custody.

The RDF severely condemned the illegal arrest and continued detention

of the three activists, and called on all sections of the population in the states of Orissa, Jharkhand and Bihar to voluntarily join the 24-hour bandh or General Strike.

On 14 October, train service was cancelled in eastern India and buses were off many roads in rural areas of Jharkhand. Vehicular traffic also thinned out in the Malkangiri district of Orissa. Shops were also shut down in parts of neighboring Bihar and Orissa.

The RDF revealed that Budhni Munda was in Orissa as part of her organizing work for the Nari Mukti Sangh. The RDF also insisted that "Nari Mukti Sangh is working legally and uses all legal means of protest activities". ■

FARC Leader Ricardo Palmera's Trial Sparks Solidarity Protests

Everyone who supports peace and justice should demand the immediate release of Ricardo Palmera, a man who has devoted his entire life to the liberation of the Colombian people," says Tom Burke of the National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera.

Ricardo Palmera, also known by his Simon Bolivar-inspired revolutionary name, "Simon Trinidad", was kidnapped and brought to trial in Washington in the Federal Court on October 12. Supporters of Palmera held a protest action in front of the court. "We put out a call to pack the courtroom and protest the unjust imprisonment of Palmera. ... Our picket line and press conference turned a spotlight on the travesty of justice taking place today."

The Latin American press, including Colombian, Venezuelan and Cuban media, extensively covered the protest actions and press conference.

At the press conference, Kosta Harlan of the Colombian Action Network stated, "The United States is trampling on Colombian sovereignty by placing Palmera on trial in this kangaroo court. We believe the US has no right to try Palmera – the Colombian people have the sovereign right to determine how they want to struggle."

Harlan noted further, "The US has spent over \$5 billion of our tax dollars on Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia is a plan for war, misery, and death. Americans should defend Palmera and other Colombians who have bravely fought against foreign domination and exploitation of their country."

Kati Ketz, a member of Asheville, North Carolina's Student for a Democratic Society told the assembled press: "Plan Colombia is taking money that could be used for education here in the US and giving it to Colombia so that students in universities can be killed for being a

political activist. Just last Saturday, Julian Hurtado was murdered by paramilitaries for being part of the Truth Commission investigating the murder of another student gunned down on the campus last year. Today, students from five different campuses are standing here in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Colombia."

The International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS), an anti-imperialist and democratic formation of more than 300 participating organizations from 40 countries, issued a statement of solidarity. Professor Jose Maria Sison, Chairperson of the ILPS International Coordinating Committee, demanded Palmera's immediate release. He also demanded that the US respect the national sovereignty of the people of Colombia and dismantle Plan Colombia.

Palmera is being subjected to inhuman prison conditions. He is not allowed a counsel of his choice. Bright lights are on in his cell 24 hours everyday... He is not allowed visitors from his family and relatives... He is not given access to any newspaper.



Ricardo Palmera

Prof. Sison underlined the fact that Palmera was one of the leading FARC peace negotiators. Palmera was in Ecuador to meet with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to work out a prisoner exchange with the Uribe government when he was treacherously kidnapped on 2 January 2004 in a joint operation of the Interpol, the CIA and the Colombian and Ecuadorian armed forces. Detained in Colombia until 31 December 2004, Palmera was extradited by the Uribe government to the US.

Palmera is being subjected to inhuman prison conditions. He is not allowed a counsel of his choice. Bright lights are on in his cell 24 hours everyday, so he does not know if it is day or night. He is not allowed visitors from his family and relatives, except for 5-minute rare visits from his mother. He is not given access to any newspaper.

Nevertheless, Palmera is in high militant spirit. He was smiling at supporters with his fist in the air when he was led from the courtroom by guards. The struggle to free Ricardo Palmera continues.

For more information see www.freericardopalmera.org and www.fightbacknews.org ■

Workers' Party of Belgium Triples Number of Councilors in Municipal Elections

The Workers' Party of Belgium (WPB) made significant gains in the recently concluded municipal and provincial elections of 8 October. It tripled the previous number of its municipal councilors, from five to fifteen, by winning seats in eight municipalities with significant concentration of workers. The WPB also made progress in all major cities of Belgium.

According to the WPB, the results of the recent elections mean that a credible Leftist and social alternative

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WORKERS PARTY OF BELGIUM
WPB



to the traditional parties in power is taking shape in several cities and municipalities in the country. In Antwerp, in particular, the Party has been able to block the further advance of the extreme Rightist and racist Vlaams Belang Party (Flemish Interest).

The significant electoral progress, according to WPB, is the result of

their sustained grassroots work. The Party aggressively increased its membership among the

workers, trade unionists, youth, democrats and progressives.

The Party is also promoting its new main slogan, "People First, Not Profits", to show in a popular and accessible way that the choice for Belgians and the European people is either for the working class or for capitalism. [from wpb, <http://www.wpb.be>] ■

Czech Communist Youth Fight Against Government Ban

The Communist Youth Union (KSM, Komunistický Svaz Mladeze) in the Czech Republic issued on 16 October an international call to intensify efforts to fight against its illegalization, following an announcement by the Interior Ministry on 12 October to ban the group. A spokeswoman for the ministry said the KSM is violating the Czech constitution for advocating the collective ownership of the means of production.

The KSM has been fighting illegalization by the government these last two years and has been drawing broad support within the country and abroad. Thousands of Czechs have already signed a petition deploring the moves of the interior ministry. Hundreds of youth and student organizations, trade unions and political parties have also held protest actions in front of embassies of the Czech Republic in other countries.

The KSM declared that it will challenge the interior ministry's decision in court.



World Federation of Democratic Youth protests repression of KSM

According to the KSM's International Department, the official ban will not stop their activities, saying that they are "going to carry on the struggle for the rights of the majority students, young workers and unemployed, and for socialism".

It revealed that the illegalization is being carried out amidst an intensified anti-communist witchhunt campaign, including renewed calls for

the criminalization of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM).

The KSM sounded out the call to the international community to condemn its illegalization by holding protest actions in front of Czech embassies around the world. Signatures of support are being collected at the following websites:

<http://4ksm.kke.gr>

<http://wfdy-ksm.kne.gr> ■

Being a Woman and an NPA Commander

The women sat close to one another as they awaited the coming of Ka Nadia. They were excited to meet her for they had heard of the woman commander of the New People's Army whose powerful voice resonates as she gives orders to Red fighters during battles and maneuvers.

Their excitement is not surprising since in a semifeudal society like the Philippines, the traditional role of women is in the home, taking care of the husband, the children, the parents, the family. No matter that in the decaying social and economic system, she bears the responsibility of both wage-earner and caregiver to her family. Theoretically she is put on a pedestal and has to be defended but in reality she is exploited, oppressed and abused.

Thus, having a woman as an officer of the army is considered a rarity. Having a woman commander like Ka Nadia of a liberation army is something else, because in the revolutionary movement the old adage that women hold one half of the sky is not empty rhetoric. In fact, the revolutionary movement believes that it is impossible to attain victory without the participation of women in every aspect of revolutionary work.

Ka Nadia, 40, is a member of the regional military training staff in Cagayan Valley, northeast of Manila. As a military cadre she possesses the characteristics of courage, confidence and resoluteness, tempered by more than two decades of struggle and hard sacrifice. Her family was among the victims of mass evacuations due to intense military operations and rampant abuses of the reactionary armed forces in their village, especially during the dying days of the Marcos dictatorship and during the US-Aquino regime.

She started as an activist and later joined a semilegal team that organized mostly poor peasants

and farm workers in the barrios (villages). Later she would take on various tasks in the revolutionary underground as a staff member for a regional publication, a full-time guerilla fighter, a political guide of for her guerilla squad, and then as a political instructor for a platoon of the regional guerrilla unit. As a platoon leader in the Western Cagayan guerrilla front, she and other cadres and comrades advanced revolutionary work in the area until the two guerrilla fronts in the north and south of Cagayan province merged to form the region's Northern Front.

As an instructor, Ka Nadia plays a major role in encouraging women fighters to do their very best in training and she serves as an inspiration to them. Ka Nadia has a special interest in discovering women fighters who have potential to become military cadres. There is difficulty in finding such potentials because of the various cultural and psychological restraints that women face. Once convinced of such potential in women red fighters, Ka Nadia provides them with special attention, encouragement and shares her experiences with them.

She tells them of the feeling of fulfillment when being of service to the people and together attaining small victories in the improvement of their lives. But she also tells them that revolution is no picnic and that sacrifices have to be made.

Ka Nadia's sacrifices are real. She was separated from her family and is not able to visit her child because they are under the close surveillance of the reactionary military since she was put on the military's wanted list. She agonized over the death of eight comrades who composed their squad in 1995 and she herself has several times faced death during encounters. Then her husband died from a serious illness.

But Ka Nadia finds strength in the cause of serving the people, in doing mass work among the poor peasants



and in the support of the comrades who helped her in every step of the way. The Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM) which started in 1992 was also a turning point for her and the other comrades. Ka Nadia holds on to the lessons learned from the errors committed due to the militarist orientation that led to defeats and increased casualties at that time. But her experience in the military field, together with the lessons from the rectification movement, honed her to be a better military cadre.

Truly, the revolution will not be victorious without the participation of women in all aspects of work. Women now hold functions and responsibilities in the revolutionary movement including in the highest policy- and decision-making bodies of the revolutionary movement. Women are participating in the all-comprehensive undertaking of waging revolution, whether in the socio-economic, health, education, cultural, or military fields, and yes, even in peace negotiations.

I remember a bet made with a woman writer in 1986 when the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) announced it would be creating a negotiating panel in its peace talks with the then Aquino government. She bet a computer that the NDFP panel would be composed of all men. I smiled for I was confident that a woman would be appointed to the panel. I have to say that the computer served the staff of the Ang Bayan well. ■