



EDITORIAL:

## **Resist US plans to drag Philippines into imperialist war versus China!**

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## EDITORIAL:

**Resist US plans to drag PH into imperialist war vs China!**

US imperialism laid bare its warmongering intentions in its recently concluded trilateral summit with Japan and the Philippines last April 11-13 culminating in their so-called “joint vision statement” that essentially outlined US war designs in Asia. The said statement indubitably foreshadows intensified US military intervention as the Biden administration furthers its plans to use the Philippine archipelago as its forward military base versus China.

A day before the trilateral summit, US Senators Bill Hagerty and Tim Kaine introduced the Philippines Enhanced Resilience Act of 2024 (PERA Act) which aims to provide \$2.5 billion in foreign military funding to the Philippines from 2025 to 2029. In reality, the bill is a ‘deal sweetener’ meant to ease in politico-economic restructuring needed to allow more US military bases and greater military presence in Philippine soil.


True enough, in the next few weeks, the US is scheduled to mobilize around 11,000 American troops in the largest ever Balikatan war exercises from April 22 to May 9. The Balikatan war games this year aims to test their so-called “Comprehensive Archipelagic Defense Concept” which purportedly serves the country’s territorial defense scheme but in reality plays to US war plans in the region. During this time, US warships, planes and war equipment will be stationed across the country. The US also seeks to make full use of existing US military bases and facilities in the Philippines covered under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) as part of fulfilling its first island chain strategy to contain China.

US President Biden further threatened China by saying how any form of attack on Philippine waters will invoke the Mutual Defense Treaty it has with the Philippines. Even prior to the summit, key security officials from the US have already made consecutive visits to the Philippines including State Secretary Anthony Blinken who met with Marcos Jr. and representatives of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Department of National Defense.

The US plans to intensify its saber-rattling measures against China by stoking further conflict in the disputed waters of the West Philippine Sea. The US has thus far supported “supply missions” in Ayuningin Shoal precisely to challenge China’s ‘gray tactics’ or aggressive unarmed actions to force China into firing the first shot.

The US is expected to intensify its interventionist efforts in the Philippines as it increasingly faces political isolation due to the waning popularity of its war in Ukraine and because of its reprehensible and continuing support for “Israel’s” genocidal war against Palestine. Conditions are gradually pushing US imperialism to ignite its long-simmering conflict against China especially as Biden seeks a re-election bid on November 5, 2024, and therefore wants to be portrayed as the “defender of the small” countries such as Taiwan and the Philippines versus China.

To this end, the US imperialist propaganda machinery is now working overtime to portray Marcos Jr. as the poster child of its crusade against China similar to how the US used Ukraine’s Zelensky in the US-NATO war against Russia.

In the face of these growing threats brought about by US imperialist war preparations in Asia, the Filipino people must strengthen their resistance against all forms of US military intervention and strongly protest against the Balikatan 2024 war exercises. The US war design in the region will not benefit the Filipino people, but will only drag the Philippines in the middle of a full-fledged inter-imperialist war. 

**Balikatan war games turn PH into military camps versus China**

As the US and the Marcos puppet regime connive to stir war against China, US military troops have turned several parts of the Philippines into US military camps as they conduct “war exercises” as preparations for a direct military confrontation with China, and further heat up the conflict in the West Philippine Sea.

According to *Ang Bayan* (the newspaper of the CPP), thousands of US military troops are currently scattered in many parts of the country and have started several war maneuvers and activities. Together with their puppet AFP and other foreign troops from Australia, Korea, and Japan, the US military are set to hold nationwide “war exercises” called “Balikatan” on April 22.

Citing several reports, *Ang Bayan* monitored anti-submarine maneuvers in Palawan and the Marine Exercise 2024 or MAREX, the supposed “first” US marine exercises in Central Mindanao which started on April 19 at Camp Iran Un in Brgy. Togaig, Barita and Brgy. Pura, Datu Blah Sinsuat, all in Maguindanao del Norte.

In addition, *Ang Bayan* noted the Salaknib Exercises in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija with the participation of 4,000 soldiers from the 5th ID and 7th ID of the AFP and American troops from the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th ID. Cope Thunder, on the other hand, is being conducted at the Northern Luzon Intensive Military Training Area, Basa Air Base and Brigadier General Benito N Ebu Air Base.

On April 9, the US Indo Pacific Command announced through its social media accounts that American forces conducted live-fire exercises in the Philippine Sea using the USS Ralph Johnson-DDG 114. On the same day, the USS Theodore Roosevelt conducted routine flight operations,



image: philippinerevolution.nu

to flaunt to China the “readiness” of the US Pacific Fleet forces under the US 7th Fleet and its “support” in the Philippines.

Live-fire exercise conducted by USS HIGGINS (DDG 76) and USNS Meanwhile, in the northernmost part of Luzon, in Mavulis and Basco, the people are bracing themselves for the holding of the “Balikatan 39-2024”. In October 2023, the puppet AFP established the Mavulis island detachment. It also built a Naval Forward Operating Base on Batan Island.

In addition, a “civilian sea port” on the island will reportedly be built by American soldiers this April. These facilities are in addition to the existing US military camp in Calayan island and “EDCA sites” in Lallo and Sta. Ana, Cagayan and not far from these two military bases is another “EDCA site” in Gamu, Isabela. These US bases and facilities are the closest to Taiwan and that war games conducted there are clear provocations to China.

Ang Bayan said: “The upcoming Balikatan is a big threat to the livelihood of the Ivatans and Cagayanons. This causes more unease in their communities...They also fear that the residents and fisherfolk in Batanes and Cagayan will be restricted, similar to what is happening to fisherfolk in Palawan and other areas in the West Philippine Sea.”

(Culled from Ang Bayan, with reports from Baringkuas, the revolutionary newspaper of the people of Cagayan, January-March 2024). ▲

## Groups condemn US-Japan-PH trilateral summit

On April 11, 2024 Marcos Jr. joined US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in the first trilateral summit in Washington. Over 100 Filipino-American activists staged protests outside the White House in Washington D.C. against the recent trilateral meeting. The protests, led by BAYAN USA, were mounted simultaneously in cities including Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Honolulu, to denounce what the activists describe as President Biden’s detrimental “ironclad alliance” with the Philippines.

In the Philippines, national-democratic groups protested in front of the US embassy to denounce the “trilateral summit”. This meeting is held within the US framework of expanding its presence in the first-island chain, which includes the Philippines and Japan, under the veil of “security” and “freedom in the South China Sea” to promote “maritime peace” according to the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) which led the action.

Antonio Tinio, spokesperson of Pilipinong Nagkakaisa para sa Soberanya (PiNAS) condemned the “Joint Vision Statement” released by the summit, which reaffirmed the commitment to a “free and open Indo-Pacific.”

“We reject the very use, imposition, and propagation by the US of the so-called ‘Indo-Pacific’ as the all-encompassing framework by which the numerous countries in Asia are supposed to define their relationships with each other,” Tinio said. “The ‘Indo-Pacific’ is a relatively new-fangled construct adopted by the US to maintain itself as the dominant superpower...[and] is no different from China’s bogus Nine-Dash Line, a hegemonic construct imposed on geography by military might.”

Meanwhile, BAYAN secretary-general Raymond Palatino voiced opposition to what is being termed the “Luzon Corridor,” which is perceived as an extension of EDCA. This plan involves turning Luzon into a hub for foreign military operations, which according to the group, compromises Philippine sovereignty and poses risks to local communities. “The unveiling of the ‘Luzon Corridor’ during the trilateral summit




image: philippinerevolution.nu

signals the intensified foreign military buildup in the island,” Palatino warned. “It practically turns the country’s biggest island into an EDCA site servicing thousands of foreign troops at any given time. It is purported to be an economic zone but it is linked to the installation of EDCA sites and the repurposing of Subic and Clark into military hubs for joint exercises with foreign troops,” he explained.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines International Office (NDFP IO) criticized Marcos Jr. for “willingly offering the Philippine archipelago to serve as a ‘theater of war’ by allowing the US to position its military arsenal on land, sea, and air.” “The Philippines’ strategic location allows the US to constrict regional waterways and position readily deployable military air power in close proximity to China,” the NDFP IO added.

The NDFP IO stated that “Marcos Jr. seeks to further increase US military footprint in Philippine soil while talks are underway with Japan for a reciprocal access agreement that will allow Japanese military presence in the country.” The statement also referred to the Balikatan war exercises which aims to hold its biggest ever operations this April with at least 16,000 troops expected to participate.

“Marcos Jr. must be held accountable for his reprehensible sell-out of Philippine sovereignty and his blatant disregard for the lives of the Filipino masses,” the NDFP IO concluded. 

## AFP drops more bombs in Abra, Ilocos Sur amid El Niño crisis



image: philippinerevolution.nu

On April 2, 2024, the Philippine Air Force bombed and fired rockets in the area of Gapay Village, Pilar, Abra Province, a mountainous area near the boundary with Ilocos Sur Province. The bombings displaced and affected the livelihood of 212 families. It also forced the closure of schools and evacuation of families.

The bombing is the most recent in the 22,391 recorded incidents of bombing under the Marcos administration. “The indiscriminate bombings by the AFP cause massive physical and economic displacement, and wreak havoc on farmlands, which are the main source of livelihood of the majority of the peasant population in the Philippines” the human rights organization, Karapatan wrote in its year-end report.

The aerial attacks are supposed to have taken place after clashes between the New People’s Army and the 50th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. One soldier was reported wounded.

Officials said the aerial bombardment was to support their troops on the ground and ensure the safe retrieval of the wounded soldier from the area of the firefight.

According to the posts in social media of residents, bombs rained down on them and the airstrikes were

near their communities. Their grain, corn and tobacco crops were affected by the bombings. This will make their livelihood more difficult, especially now that they are suffering from El Niño. Because of the military operations, they cannot return to their fields, especially since some of these crops are ready for harvest.

On April 5, human rights organizations and indigenous groups protested in front of AFP headquarters. The demonstrators demanded the immediate cessation of bombings. They described the bombings as overkill and a reckless display of force. They called on the AFP to uphold international humanitarian law and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), an agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

“[President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s] administration and the AFP continue to carelessly and cruelly put civilian lives in danger through indiscriminate aerial bombings. They openly show us that their military counterinsurgency operations matter more to them than the lives of Filipino citizens,” said Amihan National Chairperson Zenaida Soriano.

Meanwhile, Ilocos farmers’ group Solidarity of Peasants Against Exploitation (Stop Exploitation) pointed out the government could have used the funds for bombs to support drought-stricken farmers

NDF-Ilocos has called for medical and psychosocial support for the victims of the aerial bombings and military operations. It also called for “...human rights groups and organizations to investigate the bombings.”

The Armed Forces of the Philippines unabated bombings in the Philippine countryside are supposed to hasten their goal to defeat the New People’s Army (NPA). This will supposedly allow them to focus their attention to territorial defense against the incursions of China, especially in the West Philippine sea. 