



EDITORIAL:

Balikatan war games escalate tensions, US is using PH as pawn vs China

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The Marcos Jr. administration serves the Filipino people on a silver platter to the US by allowing the country to be dragged into the massive US-led military build-up against China, threatening to engulf the whole region in an all-out war.

The 39th “Balikatan” (meaning shoulder-to-shoulder) joint military exercises involve 16,000 combined troops of the US military and Armed Forces of the Philippines, contingents from the Australian Defense Force and the French Navy. The war drills began on 22 April and will end on 10 May.


In a calculated move to provoke further military tension with China, the US Army touts the deployment of its newest ground-based Typhon mid-range capability (MRC) missile system capable of firing Tomahawk and SM-6 missiles in the Balikatan 2024 war exercises. These medium range missiles have the capacity to hit targets at sea and China.

The Balikatan war games form part of the broader US containment strategy to encircle China by fortifying a chain of islands from the Kuril Islands, the Japanese archipelago, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, Northern Philippines and Borneo extending all the way to the Malay Peninsula.

Amidst the failure of the US proxy war in Ukraine and unpopular support to the Israeli genocidal war against the Palestinians, Joe Biden seeks to open a new warfront in Asia in a bid to project an image of “defending small countries against China” – in order to boost his reelection campaign this November.

To this effect, the US seeks to exploit the territorial conflict in the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea, emboldening Marcos Jr. to resort to military measures against the Chinese “gray zone” tactics (aggressive non-armed attack) in the contested waters. This is intended to prod China into a miscalculation which the US can use to further escalate military actions by invoking the Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT) it has with the Philippines.

Despite the humanitarian crisis that wars create, war is good business for the US military-industrial complex. Marcos Jr. is oblivious of the billions of pesos from public coffers being used to purchase second-hand military hardware from the US and other US allies. Kowtowing to US dictates bolster US support for his regime.

Meanwhile, with full US-backing, the Marcos family is assured from prosecution over a long-standing contempt order from US courts worth \$353 million pertaining to their ill-gotten wealth. 

‘Marcos is the real terrorist,’ says CPP on recent ATC designation

Last April 17, 2024, the Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines published the statement of the Anti-Terrorism Council redesignating the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People’s Army (NPA) as ‘terrorist organizations.’

In a separate seven-page resolution, the ATC also designated a certain Elizabeth Pineda Principe as a ‘terrorist’ for being a member of the CPP and the NPA.

Marco Valbuena, CPP Information Officer in a statement responded: “By insisting on its ‘terrorist’ designation of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the Marcos regime wants the people to see the world through upside-down lenses that reverses their perception of reality. In truth, it is the Marcos regime, with the support of the US, that is the real terrorist.”

Valbuena further stated that in less than two years in office, Marcos has “unleashed terrorist attacks on the Filipino people to fulfill his goal of ending the revolutionary armed resistance.”

Valbuena cited Marcos Jr.’s multi-million-peso nationwide bombing campaign in recent months that have terrorized communities, especially the elderly and children.

Valbuena also pointed out the spate of civilian killings and summary executions of revolutionaries committed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

He also mentioned the “growing pattern of illegal abductions and disappearances of activists who are given the choice of renouncing their



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principles or remaining under secret detention or being extrajudicially killed.”

“The above cases are just the tip of the iceberg,” Valbuena added pointing out how similar cases of aerial bombings, civilian massacres and enforced disappearances continue to grow.

According to Valbuena, Marcos Jr.’s “utter disregard of international humanitarian law has earned Ferdinand Marcos, Jr, the moniker “The Terrible Terrorist”.”

“Under the leadership of the CPP, the NPA will continue to wage revolutionary armed struggle to fight alongside the people and defend their socioeconomic and political rights, especially in the face of the aggressive push of the Marcos regime to dispossess them of their land and livelihood in favor of foreign multinational corporations. In the face of Marcos fascist terrorism, the people have no other choice but to intensify their armed struggle,” concluded the CPP. ▲

NDFP represents Red political power – CPP on NDFP’s 51st anniversary

On the 51st founding anniversary of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) last 24 April 2024, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) affirmed the NDFP’s representation as “the totality of the organs of political power, until the People’s Democratic Government can be formally established upon nationwide victory.”

“The NDFP is the most consolidated united front organization of all progressive and patriotic classes —the workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie. It has the Party at its core and leadership. The 18 organizations allied with the NDFP represent the various sectors of the toiling people in the Philippines. They all hold high the banner of national democracy and are committed to the struggle to overthrow the neo-colonial state through revolutionary armed struggle,” the CPP said.

Luis Jalandoni, NDFP Chief International Representative, meanwhile extended greetings to the NDFP’s allied organizations and “especially to the fighting Filipino masses whose unwavering spirit and determination to achieve genuine national liberation and democracy serve as the eternal wellspring of our revolutionary strength.”


Jalandoni points out that the Filipino people and the revolutionary forces are threatened by inter-imperialist armed confrontation because of US war provocations against China.

“Maneuvers like the Balikatan war games, and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) intend to transform the Philippines as a forward military base where the US can station its military personnel warships and other war materiel to encircle China. US troops in the



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country directly undermines national sovereignty and threatens the lives of the Filipino masses,” Jalandoni stated. In addition to the threat of US warmongering, Jalandoni said the Filipino masses are subjected to worsening economic conditions as the chronic crisis of the semifeudal and semicolonial system intensifies.

The CPP said that the strength of the NDFP is based on the organized force of its allied organizations. In the countryside, the NDFP-allied organizations of peasants, youth, women and others, together with and led by the Party that wields the NPA, form the foundations of the organs of political power that exercise leadership in areas covering millions of people. 

Envi activists tortured by probable state agents during abduction, enforced disappearance



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Environmental activist and abduction survivor Francisco “Eco” Dangla III recounted in a press conference last 26 April how he and fellow activist Joxelle “Jak” Tiaong were tortured by probable elements of the state.

Last 24 March, Dangla and Tiaong were violently kidnapped in San Carlos City, Pangasinan while on board a tricycle on their way home from a consultation with community leaders. After three days, both of them were surfaced.

“After some time in the hands of our abductors, we really thought we would be killed,” said Dangla.

Both victims were convenors of the Pangasinan People’s Strike for the Environment which campaigns against offshore black sand mining and the construction of coal power plants opposed by many residents of Pangasinan. Dangla said he tried using his mobile phone but was ordered at gunpoint to stop. After a prolonged struggle with his abductors that left him with wounds and bruises, he also shouted for help from the residents. Dangla said they were blindfolded in all the three days and nights they were kept in a safe house, leaving him with deep scars around his eyes.

“The first night of the abduction was the worse because they did not allow us to sleep with their incessant questioning,” he said.

Dangla and Tiaong are part of a growing list of cases of enforced disappearances in the less than three years since Marcos took power. According to Karapatan, there have been 13 victims of enforced disappearances between July 2022 to December 2023.

In January 2023, labor rights activists Dyan Gumanao and Armand Dayoha were abducted in Cebu City only to surface a few days later.

In April 2023, activists Gene Roz Jamil “Bazoo” de Jesus and Dexter Capuyan were abducted by government operatives in Taytay, Rizal. They remain missing today. In September 2023, two environmental activists Jonila Castro and Jhed Tamano went missing and was later on publicly presented by the military as “NPA surrenderees.”

This recent spate of enforced disappearances will be part of cases filed against the US-backed Marcos and Duterte regimes in the upcoming International Peoples Tribunal on 17-18 May in Europe. 