



EDITORIAL:

Peaceful dialogue, not war in resolving South China Sea row

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EDITORIAL:

Peaceful dialogue, not war in resolving South China Sea row

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) joins the Filipino people in marking the 8th anniversary of the 2016 ruling of the International Arbitral Tribunal (IAT). This ruling is considered a milestone legal victory which recognizes the maritime rights of the Philippines under the United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS). The 2016 arbitral ruling should serve as the starting point and framework for peaceful dialogue between the Philippines and China.

As a signatory to the UNCLOS, China should be enjoined to recognize the arbitral ruling, manifest its intention to peacefully settle disputes, and minimize aggressive actions in defending its claims that run counter to the arbitral ruling. As an economic and military superpower, China can easily demonstrate goodwill to the Filipino people, especially to small Filipino fisherfolk, without losing anything with regard its claims or posturing. In particular, while China can continue to insist on maintaining presence at the Scarborough Shoal, it must do so without hampering Filipino fisherfolk access to the fishing grounds. Although lying within the Philippine EEZ, the territorial seas of the Scarborough Shoal were declared by the IAT as a shared fishing ground for Filipino, Chinese, and Vietnamese traditional fishermen.


On the other hand, the Filipino people must reject agitation by the US and pro-US militarists that the arbitral ruling is a license to go to war against China, and that in order to win, the country must seek the aid of the US and its allied military forces. The US-Marcos regime and agents of US psywar have been engaged in war agitation and fomenting anti-Chinese hysteria.

The Filipino people must also guard against the spread of baseless misleading statements that the arbitral ruling prohibits any country from sailing in the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), which is being used to portray China as an intruder and aggressor, and to demand the expulsion of all its vessels in the area.

The Duterte regime wasted the legal victory of the Philippines when it set aside the arbitral ruling in order to kowtow to China, in exchange for promises to fund government-contracted infrastructure projects and political support. At the same time, Duterte allowed US military forces to continue using the country for war exercises and power projection, to which China responded with heightened presence in the South China Sea.

The subservience of the Marcos regime to the US government has become the biggest impediment to advancing a peaceful resolution based on the 2016 arbitral ruling. Marcos has allowed the US to increase its military presence, stockpile missiles and other weapons in the Philippines, and deploy its naval ships in surrounding seas to project power against China. Presently, there are 15,000 to 20,000 American troops sailing at any given time from the South China Sea to the Sea of Japan, provoking its imperialist rival to become more restive and aggressive and increasingly hostile.

It is thus crucial for the Filipino people to first demand an end to US military intervention and war provocations, in order to create the conditions for peaceful dialogue. They must call on the dismantling of all US military bases, the withdrawal of all US troops and the removal of all US weapons stockpile in the country.

At the same time, they must demand the Marcos government to stop maritime operations that escalate tensions, to pursue dialogue and other legal options. They must also urge China to reduce its overwhelming presence in the Philippine EEZ and ECS in order to allow the country to peacefully exercise its sovereign rights and manage its marine resources, and pave the way for resolution of disputes across the South China Sea. 

Groups denounce new Japan-PH military agreement

Various mass organizations led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) and the Asia-Wide Campaign against US-Japanese Domination and Aggression of Asia marched to the Japanese embassy in Pasay City last 8 July to condemn Japan and the Philippines for signing the military agreement Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA).

Bayan emphasized that the agreement furthers the US imperialist's "pivot in Asia" in which Japan and the Philippines are used to serve as "partners" in its efforts to contain rival imperialist China.

"The constant warmongering by the US escalates tensions in the region and increases the dangers of an open military conflict erupting in the region," the group added.

The Filipino people should be concerned about Japan's desire to expand its military presence without fully addressing and providing justice for its wartime victims, "particularly the horrific system of comfort women that devastated countless lives across Asia," the group said.

Women members of Gabriela and Lila Pilipina, a group representing comfort women and their struggle for justice, joined the action at the embassy.

For Lila Pilipina, the return of Japan's armed forces to the country and the Philippines' agreement for military activities is a great injustice. Japan has yet to be held accountable for its crimes during World War II, and there has been no justice for the comfort women, but here they are again.

According to the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP)

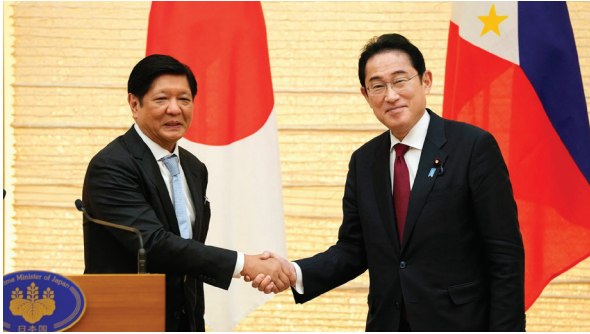



image: philippinerevolution.nu

International Office (NDFP IO), the RAA “betrays the victims of Japanese war crimes against the Filipino people during World War II and dangerously positions the country on the front lines of war.”

“The Japan-Philippines Reciprocal Access Agreement marks a dangerous precedent, undermining prospects for a peaceful resolution of territorial conflicts in the region while stoking the flames of war. The path to just and lasting peace lies not in the buildup of military personnel and materiel that serve US war designs against Asia,” the NDFP IO concluded. 

Progressives to field own candidates in Senatorial race amid US-Marcos demolition schemes

Progressive and patriotic political parties under the Makabayan coalition will field a full 12-person slate in next years Senatorial elections. Makabayan is a political coalition of eight Philippine progressive parties, including Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Gabriela, ACT Teachers, and Kabataan.

In a press conference last July 11, 2024, the Makabayan coalition announced it will field candidates who represent the interest of the workers, peasants, women, youth, fisherfolk, indigenous people and other sectors deprived of a voice in the Philippine legislature.

They stressed that they are the national democratic people’s opposition not only to the dominant and rotten political parties of Marcos and Duterte, but also as opposition to the rotten political and economic system in the country.

Makabayan declared: “In the significant fight in the 2025 election, Makabayan is ready to field not just one, or two senators but a whole slate of patriotic and progressive candidates who will promote a comprehensive national-democratic program that will meet the aspirations of the Filipino people for development for the all, respect for rights, and full national sovereignty.”

“At a time when the people need a genuine Opposition that will present a real alternative to change, we are ready to assume this role,” Makabayan said.

They added that the Marcoses and Dutertes are the same, and pursue only their personal interests. They further said that they are ready to work with individual candidates who advocate genuine land reform, wage increases, national industrialization, strengthening national sovereignty, defending human rights, fighting corruption and promoting peace talks.

It announced that among its initial candidates are its incumbent members of the House of Representatives, Rep. France Castro of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers partylist, and Rep. Arlene Brosas of the Gabriela partylist.

The coalition currently has three incumbent lawmakers at the House of




image: philippinerevolution.nu

Representatives (lower house).

The progressives and their political parties have always been targeted by the reactionaries and fascists – from downright cheating, black propaganda, black operations and legal and political persecution and threats. Their electoral mass base has been subject to open fascist repression.

A day after the coalition announced it is fielding candidates in the elections next year, a local court in southern Philippines convicted two Makabayan leaders, namely former congressman Satur Ocampo, incumbent congresswoman France Castro, together with 14 others of child abuse. The case stemmed from a case filed against them in November 2018 wherein they, upon the request of the students and teachers, rescued the latter from the continued harassment of the Lumad schools by military and paramilitary forces in Talaingod, Davao del Norte in southern Philippines.

Ocampo and Castro, together with the Makabayan coalition and other democratic organizations, denounced the court's decision as unacceptable and unjust. They stressed that the wrongful conviction speaks of the continuing persecution of those who are helping and advocating for the rights of Lumad children and the persistent attacks on Lumad schools and communities.

In a statement, CPP chief information officer, Marco Valbuena, said the unjust guilty verdict against Rep. Castro and former Rep. Ocampo and several other individuals, is a direct attack of the fascist US-Marcos regime against the democratic and patriotic forces of the Filipino people. 

79th IB siezes and holds children hostage in Northern Samar



image: philippinerevolution.nu

Troopers of the Philippine Army's 74th Infantry Battalion opened fire on 11 farmers, including seven minors, in Barangay Osmeña, Palapag municipality in the province of Northern Samar, on 2 June, 2024. The farmers were at that time processing coconuts in the village. After the shooting, they were arrested and brought to the army headquarters.

Eluding responsibility for this crime and violation of international humanitarian law, the 74th IB concocted a false encounter with the New People's Army (NPA)-Northern Samar on that day. The soldiers even lied when they declared they "rescued" minors who had been "food couriers" of the people's army.

The 74th IB physically and mentally tortured the children while in their custody. They used the young captives as "hostages" or "bait" to pressure their parents to "surrender" despite there being only civilian farmers

in the community.

The children were reportedly in the custody of the Municipal Social and Welfare agency, though the 74th IB have authority over their situation. Vilifying the children's parents, the troops tried to turn the children against their relatives, hoping to train them as spies or assets for the army's counterinsurgency campaign.

These are just the latest of a series of militarization operations relentlessly conducted by the 74th IB since January this year, in line with the Marcos regime's desperate attempts to beat the deadline of destroying the revolutionary movement this year 2024.

In the first week of February, soldiers arrested a farmer, Sami Arnesto, in his home in Barangay Osmeña. They released him a month later as a "surrenderee". Gabi Arnesto, Sami's uncle, was shot while being forced to surrender. Soldiers had been forcing farmers' families to attend meetings to "clear" their names up to May, 2024.

The 74th IB put the barangay under "lockdown", forcing residents to sign "logbooks" to monitor their activities, prohibiting them to work on their fields at night and forbidding them to bring uncooked rice, and forcing the stores to list down the villagers purchases of food and other items.

More than a dozen civilian residents of the barangay were successively arrested and detained at length in May and June in Barangay Osmeña to "clear" their names.

The army also fired artillery near the municipality's fields, terrorizing the residents and destroying fields and forests. 