



EDITORIAL:

## **Marcos Jr.'s SONA is an exercise of wishful thinking**

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## EDITORIAL:

**Marcos Jr.'s SONA is an exercise of wishful thinking**

In his latest State of the Nation Address (SONA), Marcos Jr. presented what appeared to be a product of fanciful imagination rather than a reflection of the realities facing ordinary Filipinos. Marcos Jr.'s third SONA, full of lofty promises and rosy projections of his administration's so-called 'achievements' glaringly downplayed the urgent and escalating crises of insufficient wages, skyrocketing prices of basic goods and services, widespread landlessness and pervasive poverty.


He spoke with an apparent confidence about economic growth and stability – yet again falsely claiming that the Philippines was “among the best in Asia”. Marcos Jr. talked about millions of Filipinos supposedly lifted from poverty, but his words ring hollow to millions of Filipinos struggling to make ends meet. He made these claims based on understated poverty and employment figures conjured with statistical magic.

The price of basic necessities including rice has reached alarming heights, leaving Filipino masses in a constant state of economic distress. In his address, Marcos Jr. deliberately glossed over the fact that many Filipinos now face the impossible choice between putting food on the table and paying for essential services like paying for their electricity and water bills, healthcare and education. His assurances of economic improvement provide little comfort to those who see their purchasing power eroded month over month. It must be noted that the rice crisis in the Philippines is not simply a matter caused by a simple imbalance in supply and demand, but a direct result of the Marcos Jr. administration's policy of import dependence and systemic neglect to develop the country's local rice production. Further, the ongoing rice and food crisis happened under his watch as secretary of agriculture.

Perhaps the most glaring omission in his address was the issue of landlessness. Despite his platitudes about agricultural development and support for farmers, he failed to acknowledge the systemic problems that leave farmers without land to cultivate. The lack of genuine land reform continues to disenfranchise millions, trapping them in a cycle of poverty and destitute conditions.

Marcos Jr. boasted the completion of more than 5,500 flood control projects. But just days after his speech, Typhoon Carina bolstered by the southwest monsoon winds swept through Luzon, causing massive flooding that killed 39 people and affected 4.8 million Filipinos. His claims of disaster preparedness and the billions of pesos of taxpayer's money spent on these so-called 'projects' therefore become questionable when faced with the undeniable evidence of widespread devastation.

In his speech, Marcos Jr. mentioned once again how there are “no guerilla fronts” active across the country and that “only seven weakened groups remain” all of which are subject to focused military operations. But what Marcos Jr. fails to understand is that the worsening economic conditions and intensifying political repression is pushing more and more Filipinos to fight and take up arms in the countryside. Indeed, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) recently stated that “recruitment by the New People's Army (NPA) continues steadily and is certain to rise in the coming months and years.”

Overall, Marcos Jr.'s address was an exercise in wishful thinking, a narrative constructed to obscure the harsh truths that millions of Filipinos confront on a daily basis. The same realities he seeks to obscure however (poverty, low wages, landlessness) are the same conditions that will bring about his downfall as the people's war continues to advance in the Philippine countryside. 

**Austin-Blinken visit signals heightened US war campaign - CPP**

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), through its Chief Information Officer Marco Valbuena on 24 July 2024, urges the Filipino, Japanese and Korean people and all other peoples of the world who stand against US war preparations and provocations, to come together to protest the visit of US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and State Secretary Antony Blinken, the biggest war monsters of the US government.

The CPP says, the war-obsessed duo's scheduled three-country trip signals a heightened campaign of US intervention in the Philippines. The US will pursue its Indo-Pacific Strategy to encircle its imperialist rival China and thus contain its economic and military growth, aggravating military tensions in the area.

The CPP further says that the visit comes a few days after after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) issued belligerent declarations against China. The US and NATO, which are actively waging a proxy war in Ukraine against Russia, have effectively drawn China into the conflict by declaring it to be a “decisive enabler” of Russia.

US imperialism intends to consolidate its military stronghold in Japan, South Korean and the Philippines, especially after the Reciprocal Access Agreement between Japan and the Philippines. This will pave the way for the involvement of NATO countries like France, Italy Canada, and others. The CPP says, the US is orchestrating a psywar campaign favoring US military intervention in the Philippines. “The Marcos government, US-funded groups and institutions, and US-minded politicians and individuals are deliberately exaggerating claims





image: philippinerevolution.nu

over the Philippine exclusive economic zone by hyping up the line “defend the West Philippine Sea.” The aim is to falsely depict the presence of China’s coast guard ships in the EEZ as “armed intrusions” and portray maritime disputes between the Philippines and China as a military conflict. This “China invasion” fear-mongering is designed to make Filipinos believe the country’s only option is to seek US “protection” and invoke the Mutual Defense Treaty.”

“All of this serves to heighten tensions and increase the possibility of sparking an armed conflict. This will benefit only the US and its military-industrial complex, and bring only greater misery to the Filipino people,” concludes the CPP. ▲

## NDFP congratulates President Maduro and the Venezuelan people

On July 30, the International Relations Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) sent its congratulations to President Nicolás Maduro and the courageous Venezuelan people on their clear electoral victory against the US-backed opposition led by Edmundo Gonzales last July 28. The letter was signed by Luis Jalandoni, member of the National Executive Committee of the NDFP.

The NDFP declared that President Maduro’s victory was a victory of the Venezuelan people and “a clear rejection of the US imperialist plan of restoring a neocolonial puppet state thru the reactionary opposition.” President Maduro is a former bus driver who succeeded the late Hugo Chavez and continued his nationalist and democratic policies. Hugo Chavez was a Venezuelan military officer and politician. From 1999 until his death in 2013, he was the 62nd president of Venezuela.

Chávez invoked his role model Simón Bolívar and his commitment to a united South America leading to the establishment of the underground movement Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200 in the early 1980s. He later on founded the Movimiento Quinta República party and won the presidential elections in 1998. He was re-elected three times in a row in the 2000, 2006 and 2012 elections.

Chávez’s Bolivarian Revolution incorporated socialist and Marxist ideas and Venezuela’s key industries including iron ore, oil and gas. The Venezuelan government stressed import-substitution policies, using protective tariffs to limit imports of manufactured goods and subsidies to promote the growth of domestic manufacturing. They also implemented a comprehensive land reform program to correct the imbalance of land ownership. By the end of the 20th century, Venezuelan industries had diversified, and the country developed additional natural resources.

Meanwhile, the US planned several attempts to remove Chávez from power:


- A failed US backed coup d’état on 11 April 2002 ousted Hugo Chávez for 47 hours before being restored to power. Chávez was aided in his return to power by popular support and mobilization against the coup by loyal ranks in the military.



image: philippinerevolution.nu

- On 23 January 2019 Juan Guaidó declared himself the interim president of Venezuela. He was supported by the US and other western imperialist allies.
- Operation Gideon, an unsuccessful coup attempt against President Maduro in 2020 was organized by Jordan Goudreau, a former trooper of the US Army Special Forces.

Unable to restore its neocolonial control of Venezuela, the US and its allied western imperialists imposed crippling economic sanctions which generated a humanitarian crisis in the country. The dire difficulties experienced by the Venezuelan people today is being hyped by the western press and the US-funded reactionary opposition as proof that the Bolivarian government should therefore be replaced - a classic example of the victims being blamed by the perpetrators, according to the NDFP.

The NDFP statement concluded that the revolutionary Bolivarian government led by Maduro has the right to defend itself against US imperialism and its reactionary cohorts. 

## CNL dares Marcos Jr. to end military ops and seriously engage peace talks



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The Christians for National Liberation (CNL) – the underground political organization of revolutionary Christians, and allied organization of the NDFP, recently chastised Carlito Galvez Jr. for saying that Marcos Jr. is “committed to peace.” Galvez Jr. is the head of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines’ (GRP) Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity.

In a statement released 29 July, the CNL cited Marcos Jr.’s several claims in his recent state of the nation address (SONA) professing his so-called commitment to peace. The CNL stressed that his regime’s war crimes against the Filipino people belie this and said that contrary to these claims, the Marcos administration’s continued use of military force against Filipino communities, with the full support of the US government including through the Balikatan war exercises, contradicts any semblance of peace he claims to pursue.

“The Balikatan exercises have been increasingly used

in operations that devastate local communities, destroy homes, and disrupt livelihoods. Last May, fishing communities in Ilocos Norte were forbidden to fish in the seas declared as “no-sail zones” to give way for the 2024 Balikatan war games effectively displacing fisherfolk in the area from their only source of livelihood.

The said war games are also being used as cover for the direct involvement of US military in “counterinsurgency” operations such as in the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Trident commanded by US military that killed and tortured NDFP peace consultants Benito and Wilma Tiamzon and eight others in 2022,” the CNL emphasized.

The CNL said that if Marcos Jr. was truly “committed to peace” as Secretary Galvez puts it, his regime should cease the fascist Armed Forces of the Philippines’ (AFP) counterrevolutionary operations that have been devastating rural communities since he took power three years ago. The relentless bombing campaigns in Bohol, Cagayan Valley, Masbate, Mindoro, Negros, Panay Island and other parts of the country in recent months, the CNL said, not only betrays the very principles of peace and justice but also violates international humanitarian law that protects civilians in the context of armed conflict.

The CNL cited the AFP’s continued lockdowns of several barangays in Catubig, Northern Samar since May this year as part of the 20th Infantry Battalion’s focused military operations. Reports from the ground indicate how the AFP have forcibly prevented farmers in Barangay Hitapian and Barangay San Vicente from accessing their farms since July 19, 2024. Similar lockdowns have been imposed on these barangays in November 2023 and February earlier this year.

“For true peace to be realized, the Marcos Jr. administration must halt its relentless military operations immediately and seriously engage in peace negotiations with the NDFP,” the CNL stressed. 