

ANG

Pahayagan ng Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
Pinapatnubayan ng Marxismo-Leninismo-Maoismo

Bayan

English Edition
Vol. XLIII No. 4
February 21, 2012
www.philippinerevolution.net

Editorial

The US-Aquino regime is keeping the peace talks in a quagmire

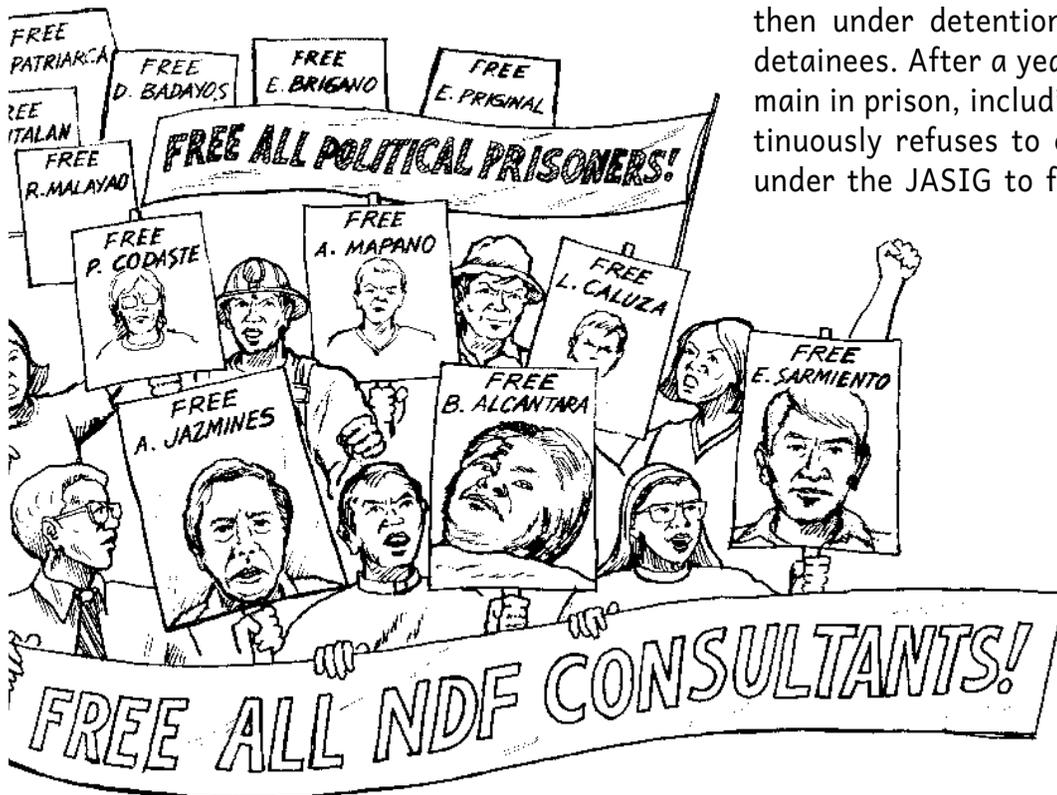
It has been more than a year since formal peace talks between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Government of the Philippines (GPH) resumed on February 15-21 in Oslo, Norway. But the negotiations have not progressed because of the outstanding issue of the arrest and continued detention by the GPH of key NDFP peace talks consultants and staff in violation of previous agreements.

The possibility of any significant advance has become even more remote under the US-Aquino regime in the face of the GPH's refusal to respect previous accords and the utter lack of interest it has shown in addressing the issues that are at the roots of the armed conflict and in resolving

these through negotiations.

From the beginning, it has been clear that the GPH is not genuinely interested in talking with the NDFP. On February 14, 2011, the very eve of the resumption of formal negotiations, it treacherously arrested Alan Jazmines, a valued consultant of the NDFP and a key figure in its negotiations for a Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms. Despite Comrade Jazmines' undeniable identity as an NDFP consultant, the GPH outrightly refused to recognize his rights under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). The JASIG is an agreement signed in 1995 that guarantees the safety of persons involved in the negotiations.

At the conclusion of the first round of formal talks in February 2011, the GPH pledged to undertake steps to release 17 NDFP consultants then under detention, aside from 349 political detainees. After a year, 13 NDFP consultants remain in prison, including Jazmines. The GPH continuously refuses to comply with its obligations under the JASIG to free Jazmines and 12 other



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NDFP consultants.

Lately, the GPH has even had the gall to accuse the NDFP of using the JASIG as a means of securing the release of CPP officials. It stubbornly declared that it would only recognize NDFP consultants if the NDFP could show the original list of consultants along with their true names and photographs.

The GPH has been exploiting the issue of JASIG verification to justify its refusal to abide by the agreement, prolong the detention of NDFP consultants it has captured and cover up their persecution. This also serves to obscure the GPH's responsibility for trampling on the JASIG by abducting and forcibly disappearing NDFP leaders in the past.

The GPH claims that the JASIG is merely a side issue. On the contrary, the JASIG is one of the key agreements designed to create favorable conditions for negotiations. Without its guarantees, negotiators will constantly fear for

their safety and the talks would not be able to proceed smoothly. Respect for the JASIG is crucial to the continuation of the peace negotiations.

The more than 12 formal agreements—including the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) that was signed in 1998—were all forged within the framework of international laws and rules. As belligerent forces in a civil war, the NDFP and GPH are obliged to respect them. The GPH's compliance or non-compliance with its obligations under the JASIG is indicative of its readiness to implement any future agreements it may enter into. It is a matter of *palabra de honor*.

Instead of complying with its obligations and keeping its promises, the GPH has been relentlessly maligning the NDFP and concocting one lie after another. Its chief negotiator Alexander Padilla has demon-

strated his utterly reactionary character by endlessly spewing counterrevolutionary venom against the NDFP. The NDFP has nothing but profound disappointment for Padilla, a former human rights advocate, for the contempt he has been showing for the peace negotiations.

After a year, the peace talks are caught in a quagmire due to the GPH's complete lack of interest in fulfilling its obligations. It has become plain as day that the GPH does not value its peace talks with the NDFP at all and its catchwords of peace and human rights are all empty blabber.

The NDFP and the entire revolutionary movement are acutely aware that the GPH's priority lies in crushing the New People's Army and suppressing the people's mass struggles through armed repression, psywar and intelligence operations. This priority is in line with the 2009 Counterinsurgency Guide laid down by the US-Aquino regime's imperialist master. Under this framework, the peace talks only serve to camouflage the all-out war it is unleashing against the people.

The Aquino regime has been further emboldened to cast the peace talks aside in the face of intensifying US imperialist intervention in the country, the growing presence of American troops and bigger military assistance to the puppet government. US intervention in the Philippines' internal affairs is currently one of the biggest obstacles to the advance of the peace negotiations. Intensifying US intervention and the Aquino regime's puppetry stand in the way of forging agreements to resolve the people's fundamental problems. **AB**



Vol. XLIII No. 4 February 21, 2012

Ang Bayan is published in Pilipino, Bisaya, Iloko, Hiligaynon, Waray and English editions.

It is available for downloading at the Philippine Revolution Web Central located at:

www.philippinerevolution.net

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Ang Bayan is published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines

Detention of Jazmines et al is a continuing violation of the JASIG

The arrest by the Government of the Philippines (GPH) of Alan Jazmines on February 14, 2011 is a grave violation of the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG). His continued detention and that of 12 other consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) aggravate GPH violations of the JASIG and do not help create conditions for the resumption of formal peace negotiations between the NDFP and the GPH.

Statements by the GPH that it has abided by the JASIG are complete falsehoods. The GPH has exaggerated the importance of verifying the identities of NDFP consultants and claims that the problem lies with the NDFP and its failure to provide proof that the detained consultants are the persons whose names are contained in a list of JASIG-protected person-

nel. The GPH is merely trying to cover up its brazen violations of the JASIG, especially in the outstanding case of Jazmines' detention and arrest. When Jazmines was arrested, he presented his Document of Identification that had the reference number ND 978213 and the name Dodi Lapida. He insisted on his rights as an NDFP Peace Panel consultant enjoying immunity



from arrest and detention.

The military and police personnel dismissed the JASIG and Jazmines' rights as a JASIG holder. He was immediately detained at the PNP Custodial Center and slapped with trumped-up criminal charges. This serious violation becomes graver the longer he is kept in detention. His prolonged incarceration is in violation of JASIG provisions calling for the suspension of all legal proceedings against persons covered by the agreement. On top of all this, Jazmines likewise faces persecution from abusive police officials.

The GPH must be held accountable for its refusal to free the consultants it has illegally arrested and continues to detain. It should also be held responsible for the abduction and forced disappearance of Leo Velasco, Prudencio Calubid, Rogelio Calubad and other key consultants of the NDFP. **AB**

The GPH wants to do away with The Hague Joint Declaration

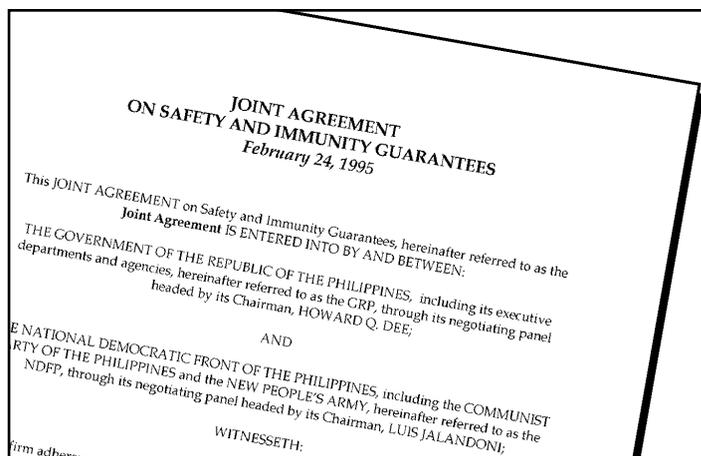
It is not only the JASIG that the GPH wants to set aside. Also under attack are other key agreements like The Hague Joint Declaration (THJD) which was signed by the NDFP and GPH in 1992.

In February 2011, the GPH feigned recognition of the 12 previously signed agreements with the NDFP that were the fruits of decades of negotiations. At the same time, however, it dismissed THJD as a mere mechanism, and refused to see it as the foundation document that defined the character of the entire talks.

The GPH's stand is contrary to the actual role of THJD. All agreements signed by the NDFP and the GPH in close to 20 years of talks were forged on the basis of THJD. THJD is a key agreement because it sets the framework on how two parties representing diametrically opposed interests could engage in talks. THJD avers that peace negotiations must be conducted in accordance with mutually acceptable principles, among them national sovereignty, democracy and social justice and that no conditions should be set that would contradict

the character and objective of the peace talks.

In refusing to recognize THJD as a fundamental agreement, the GPH has deviously invalidated all previous agreements forged on this basis, including the JASIG and the CARHRIHL. It wants to negate all the victories attained in the peace negotiations in the past two decades and set new bases for the talks, with the aim of having the revolutionary forces surrender their weapons and submit to the reactionaries. **AB**





Military kills two hunters

Military forces mercilessly killed two hunters even as two members of an urban poor group were illegally arrested.

February 16. A team of Philippine Army Special Forces gunned down four hunters in Barangay Ilayang Atungay, Magdalena, Laguna. Residents who know the four victims denied the military's allegations that they are members of the New People's Army (NPA) and were carrying high-powered firearms. Jessie Perez, 15, and Christian Luceto, 35, were killed on the spot. Their two other companions were brought

to a hospital where they are in critical condition.

February 13. Personnel and security guards of the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod City harassed Jan Earl Enerlan, a student at the university, because of his participation in a campaign against tuition fee hikes. The students launched mass actions to protest impending tuition fee increases and the school's failure to conduct consultations on the matter. The

League of Filipino Students-Negros assailed the school officials' repression of the protesting students.

February 12. At least 12 journalists from Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur were accosted and detained by paramilitary elements while they were on their way to cover a reported demolition of houses near a

mining site of TVI Resources in Sitio Balabag, Barangay Depore in Bayog town. The journalists were released only on the following day by the Special Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit which is on the TVI's payroll, according to the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP). The media people were with members of a human rights advocacy group when they were blocked by the paramilitaries. Bayog residents have been opposing mining operations in their communities for several months now.

February 7. Combined police and military operatives illegally arrested two members of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap-Southern Tagalog (Kadamay-ST) in Barangay Maitim, Bai, Laguna. The victims were Evelyn Legaspi, 53, a member of Kadamay's regional council and Pastora Latagan, 33, a staff of the regional chapter. The military planted alleged subversive documents, 14 explosive devices, four blasting caps and various medicines at the scene to make it appear that the two women are rebels. The members of the raiding team failed to present an arrest warrant.

February 3. Two men killed Loida Pagatpat, 51, a teacher at the Antipolo Elementary School in Palanas, Masbate. Pagatpat was gunned down inside a classroom and in front of her students. She sustained two gunshot wounds to the head. Her assailants fled aboard a motorcycle.

Pagatpat was earlier accused by the military of supporting the New People's Army. She was also implicated in the killing of a barangay official in 2011. She is the third teacher killed in Masbate under the Aquino regime. AB



9th IB rapists must be punished

GABRIELA condemned the rape of a 21-year old woman by seven soldiers from the 9th IB inside a military camp in Masbate on February 12. The victim has identified the rapists as Cpl. Gilbert Quinito alias "Jeric" and six other elements of Bravo Company based in Barangay Puro, Aroroy, Masbate.

GABRIELA secretary-general Lana Linaban said that the concerned government agencies should immediately investigate this heinous crime. GABRIELA also warned the Armed Forces of the Philippines against intervening in the case to cover up the incident and protect the rapists among its ranks. AB



Villagers succeed in battling militarization in Central Panay

Under the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) repressive Oplan Bayanihan (OPB), fascist soldiers conduct so-called civil-military operations in order to "win over" the people. Under this program, the military maintains its presence in population centers.

The AFP builds detachments in the middle of communities or near schools, chapels, clinics and other civilian facilities in violation of the provisions of international humanitarian law and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). The militarization of communities has the objective of allowing a reign of terror, crime and antisocial activities, destroying the masses' livelihood, trampling on their human rights, forcing them to submit to the military's might and suppressing their struggles.

Contrary to the AFP and the US-Aquino regime's objectives, however, Filipinos nationwide are standing up to defy militarization and



defend their democratic rights. In Ta-paz, Capiz and Calinog, Iloilo, the people refused to be cowed by the AFP and resisted the terrorism of the 61st IB in a campaign that

"Panay..." follow on page 6

AFP-bandit group collusion denounced

The Herminio Alfonso Command-Guerrilla Front 53 Operations Command of the New People's Army in Southern Mindanao strongly condemned the wanton violations of the Federation of Manobo-Matigsalog Tribal Council (Femmatric) of the human rights of Lumad in Marilog District, in Bukidnon province and in Arakan Valley.

Femmatric is led by Lito Gawilan, who is involved in landgrabbing, robbery, selling of fake gold bars and extortion activities against small businessmen along the national highway in Bukidnon.

Gawilan claims to represent the Matigsalog and Manobo tribes in saying that he defends their ancestral lands. In fact, he has been facilitating the plunderous operations of rubber plantations and mining concessions because he holds the Certificate of Ancestral Domain covering resource-rich areas like Kitaotao town in Bukidnon province, Arakan municipality in North Cotabato and Marilog District in Davao City.

Colluding with the Femmatric-Gawilan group is the Bunsuran group which is behind the establishment of

the Alsa Lumad and Bandido groups. The Blackfighter group is likewise being revived in Salaysay, Marilog and Tambobong, Baguio, Davao City.

The Gawilan group and other bandit syndicates enjoy the protection of the 403rd Brigade and the 8th IB which utilize the Special Operations Teams ostensibly for peace and development in order to suppress Lumad and non-Lumad settlers and organize fake surrenders. The military thus gives the Gawilan group a free hand in sowing terror along the Bukidnon highway.

Due to the Gawilan group's grave violations of the Lumad's human rights, the 403rd Brigade has been suffering serious casualties in successive NPA tactical offensives in Bukidnon. The military has been venting its ire on the Lumad by accusing the leaders of the Bukidnon tribe of supporting the NPA.

Nonetheless, it is only a matter of time before the Lumad masses become fully aware of the Gawilan group's crimes such as the landgrabbing of ancestral lands and the betrayal of ancestral lands in Bukidnon in favor of big multinational mining companies, commercial plantations, logging firms and the like. **AB**

stretched from June to October 2011.

The 61st IB had a long and bloody record of human rights violations against the people of Negros. Due to the Negrenses' struggle, the 3rd ID was forced to transfer the butcher battalion to Panay at the end of 2010. Even in Panay, the 61st IB's record has been no less notorious. But the people of Tapaz and Calinog confronted the battalion head-on.

In Barangay Katipunan, Tapaz, villagers faced the soldiers twice to demand their pullout. Barangay officers, mass leaders and other barriofolk joined in confronting the military. Up to 50 villagers participated in the confrontation at Barangay La-

hug where they gave the fascist soldiers up to two weeks to leave their village. In Barangay Tacayan, village leaders likewise led in confronting the soldiers and demanding their departure. Residents of Sitio Laugan, Barangay Aglinab also made a stand and told the AFP soldiers to leave.

To further dramatize their stand against militarization, the people drafted a petition against the soldiers' encampments at the village centers and circulated this among seven barangays from June to July. After the petition-signing, they brought the document to the office of the Tapaz town mayor and from here, to the office of the Capiz provincial governor in July.

They continued and expanded their petition-signing cam-

paigned up to the upland villages and brought up the issue before the Eighth Assembly of the TUMANDUK (Tumanduk nga mga Mangunguma nga Nagapangapin sa Duta kag Kabuhi) held in Calinog town in October. The progressive organization representing Central Panay's minority people had earlier held a march-rally at the Calinog town center joined by 1,000 indigenous people and their supporters.

The military troops were thus compelled to leave the village centers of Katipunan, Lahug and Tacayan.

Nonetheless, the military remains in the centers of many other barangays. The people's struggle therefore continues against the AFP's terrorism and military detachments in other village centers. **AB**



CPDF hails NPA in Abra and Kalinga

The Cordillera People's Democratic Front (CPDF) hailed two New People's Army (NPA) commands in Ilocos-Cordillera Region—the Agustin Begnalen Command (ABC) of Abra for successfully foiling a military attack and the Lejo Cawilan Command (LCC) of Kalinga for launching a tactical offensive against the 77th IB-CAFGU detachment on February 3.

The CPDF belied the military's claims that the NPA suffered three dead and one wounded in Abra. According to the Saulo Lumadao Front (NPA-South Central Abra), two troopers of the 52nd Division Reconnaissance Company (52nd DRC) were wounded when the so-called elite fighting unit attempted to attack a temporary NPA encampment in Sitio Nagasaan, Barangay Ud-udiao in Sallapadan, Abra at around

11 a.m. on February 3.

On the same day, an NPA team under the LCC harassed the 77th IB-CAFGU detachment at Cagalian Gate in Pasil town, Kalinga, wounding two soldiers and a CAFGU element.

The military operations in the area are aimed at suppressing the people's antimining struggles in the province.

Meanwhile, the Jovito Raray Command of the New People's Army in Samar province reported that nine enemy sol-

diers and a CAFGU element were killed in successive battles in Calbiga town on January 23 and 25. Comrades successfully thwarted a raid by the 34th IB on an NPA base in Barangay Ginbanga on January 23. Killed in this firefight were two regular soldiers and paramilitary element Luis Gacuma. The comrades were able to retreat without suffering a single casualty.

The NPA launched a counter-offensive by harassing 34th IB soldiers in Barangay Hubasan on January 25 at 10 a.m. A misencounter ensued among the severely demoralized and confused soldiers, resulting in the death of seven troopers. The NPA again was able to retreat unscathed.

Too embarrassed to admit its losses, the military claimed before the media that its lone casualty was a paramilitary element killed in its offensive operations in Calbiga town. **AB**

Aquino regime wants to set up 'new Subic' for US military

US imperialism needs a Subic Naval Base-like military facility to serve as a docking area for its warships, a landing pad for its spy planes and a rest and recreation area for American troops forming part of thousands of US soldiers to be deployed on a rotation basis in various countries in the Asia-Pacific in the next several years.

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta had insinuated in a recent US Senate Armed Forces Committee Hearing that the Obama and Aquino governments were working on an agreement for the accommodation of US military troops and equipment in the Philippines. The US would like to pattern the accord after a newly signed agreement with Australia that allows US warships to dock regularly at Darwin City and grants access to 2,500 US Marines.

The regular docking of US battleships is part of US plans to use the Philippines as a platform for its power-projection, China containment and interventionist operations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Prior to the US Senate hearing, officials of the Obama and Aquino governments had already met about setting up military facilities for the US in the Philippines during the Strategic Defense Dialogue (SDD) in January. The talks were disclosed in an article published in the *Washington Post* despite initial attempts to keep the meeting under wraps. US officials have said that they are merely awaiting the Aquino government's concrete proposals on the matter. Like a true puppet, the Aquino regime has responded by saying that plans are already underway. It has placed all the facilities needed

by its imperialist master at the disposal of US troops. High-ranking US officials are expected to arrive in the country to sign the agreement as soon as it is completed.

US officials had announced plans to transfer 8,000 soldiers currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan to an American military base in Guam, a US territory. (The plan was spurred by the Okinawans' widespread opposition to the presence of the abusive American troops and by the Obama government's own desire to cut back on military spending due to the economic and financial crisis), The US has shelved this plan of late, however. It has instead decided to transfer only 4,700 troops to Guam

and send the more than 3,300 remaining troops "on rotation" to Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Hawaii.

Plans to build new military facilities for the regular port calls of US warships bring to mind bitter memories of the Philippines' long experience with military bases. The presence of US troops inevitably involves the abuse of women as well as prostitution and violence against children. The people have not quite forgotten Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith's rape of "Nicole" in 2005 and how he was able to avoid imprisonment in the Philippines.

The people's patriotic movement is sure to be kindled with American soldiers free to leave and enter the country at will and use the country as a launching pad for military operations and efforts to impose US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific. The struggle for national liberation will further intensify in the face of US interventionism and the Aquino regime's puppetry. **AB**



Progressive groups slam US military intervention

Various progressive organizations launched protest actions last week to assail the continued presence of US soldiers in the country. The protesters said that American soldiers freely entering and leaving the Philippines signalled impending military intervention not only in the country but in the entire Asia-Pacific.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) said the US was in the process of expanding its military presence in the country by invoking laws and agreements that allow such presence. It cited the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) that permits American troops to access facilities and services in their former military bases. The MLSA obliges the Philippines to provide services to “visiting” US troops.

On the other hand, GABRIELA and the International Women's Alliance (IWA) said that the presence of more US troops under the RP-US Mutual Defense Treaty stokes the fires of conflict between the US and China. They added that the US has

been strengthening its troop deployment to control the Asia-Pacific and shift its foreign policy focus after waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan in the past decades. GABRIELA and IWA also raised concerns that US-instigated wars in the Asia-Pacific region would lead not only to violence but the plunder of natural resources, as what happened in the two countries.



The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) slammed US plans to rotate 4,500 US Marines all over the Asia-Pacific to project its geopolitical influence. The KMP cited the obviousness of the US' desire to make its dominant presence felt by positioning its forces in the region. It also assailed the Aquino regime for having virtually ceded the country's sovereignty because of its puppetry to the US.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno accused the US of using its puppet governments to strengthen its political and economic interests in the region.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño has filed a resolution in Congress to investigate the US' plans to increase the number of American troops in the country.

The progressive groups called on the Filipino people to oppose US military intervention in the country and revive the tradition of patriotism against any threat of aggression. AB

The relentless hikes in the prices of crude and refined oil have benefited none other than the big capitalists monopolizing the international oil industry and their big finance capitalist co-conspirators.

The five biggest oil companies earned combined profits of \$136.8 billion in 2011, almost equivalent to 60% of what the Philippine economy is worth. This means that the monopoly capitalists raked in close to \$16 million in profits per hour. Aside from British Petroleum, the three biggest oil companies pocketed 32% more in profits compared to the previous year. AB

The oil industry's superprofits in 2011



Companies	Profits (in billion dollars)
Exxon Mobil	41.1
Royal Dutch Shell	28.6
Chevron-Texaco	26.9
British Petroleum	23.9
Total Petroleum	16.3
Total	136.8

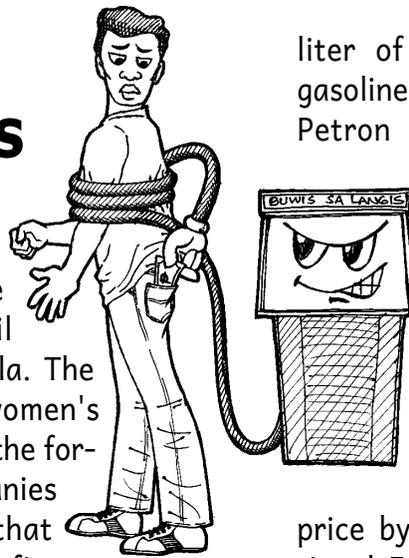
Protests greet latest round of oil price hikes

A series of protest actions greeted the latest oil price hikes on February 14—dubbed as “Heartless Valentine” by the protesters. The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and its allies rallied at the Quezon City Welcome Rotunda and accused Benigno Aquino III of having no compassion for the people. BAYAN asserted that the oil price hikes were without basis since oil prices were merely the result of speculation and manipulation by the foreign oil cartel.

GABRIELA likewise launched its own protest actions at Divisoria, Manila and San Pedro Street in Davao City on the same day. The following day,

GABRIELA picketed the Pandacan Oil Depot in Manila. The progressive women's group likened the foreign oil companies to leeches that sucked in profits while the people suffered. Its members called on the Aquino government to junk the Oil Deregulation Law and the Value Added Tax on petroleum products.

The latest round of oil price hikes is the sixth to hit the country in the last two months. Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum, Chevron Philippines, SeaOil Philippines and Total Philippines raised the price per



liter of regular and premium gasoline by 50 centavos. Shell, Petron and Chevron likewise raised the price per liter of kerosene by the same amount.

The oil price increases have led the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) to demand a hike in the palay procurement price by P20 per kilo. The National Food Authority currently buys palay from farmers at P17 per kilo.

KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos said that the cost of rice production has risen due to incessant oil price hikes. He said it was but just to raise the palay procurement price because peasants now have to shell out up to P75,000 per hectare, considering expenses for land rent, fertilizers, pesticides and rental of farm machinery. **AB**