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TACTICS IN THE UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE US-ESTRADA REGIME

Memorandum
from the Executive Committee of the Central Committee (EC-CC)
December 4, 2000

Significance of the anti-Estrada front

The explosion of crisis and protests has brought forth an anti-Estrada front with a breadth and militancy that history has seldom seen. It includes workers, peasants, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the middle bourgeoisie and anti-Estrada sections of the ruling classes. Its extraordinary breadth can particularly be seen in the broadness of sections from business, churches, the academe and the mass media that openly call for Estrada's resignation.

The front's basis of unity is the immediate ouster of Estrada through resignation, impeachment or other means. It has succeeded in severely isolating the Estrada regime. Exposes continue through street protests, the mass media, congress, the internet, text messages and others. The pressure continues to mount for Estrada's immediate removal from power.

The front's special political relevance lies in its arousing and mobilizing large numbers from among the masses in the quickest way; and assiduously isolating and dealing the most intense blows against the despicable ruling regime.

For these reasons, it is necessary to deal appropriately with the various forces fighting the regime. Compared to other considerations, we give greater weight to arousing millions of people and intensifying protests and struggles to overthrow the ruling regime. For instance, although we are waging an intense struggle against yellow unionism in the workers' movement, it is correct to

cooperate with anti-Estrada yellow unions in launching general strikes and massive protest actions seeking Estrada's resignation.

From the revolutionary movement's point of view, the anti-Estrada front attains more relevance as it delivers more stinging blows against the ruling regime and as it mobilizes broader sections of the masses of the people to wage resistance. As people's actions become more militant, more confrontational and more massive, the actual and potential benefits increase in terms of developing the masses' consciousness and practice, weakening the rabid reactionaries, advocating relevant reforms and advancing the revolution.

The overall front is an informal one. Linkages and coordination revolve around the conduct of joint actions. It is the intensity of resistance that pushes anti-Estrada forces to cooperate and assiduously expand and intensify mass protests. On the other hand, because the front is an informal one, independent initiatives predominate when it comes to analyzing issues, formulating calls, mobilizing forces, linking with the broad masses, forming organizations and forging multilateral and bilateral ties.

In accordance with the front's informal character, it has no common political program and no fixed structures of leadership and coordination. Its advantage: attention and linkages are focused on the immediate intensification of protests and struggles. Disagreements are handled with maximum flexibility and disputes over ideology and territory are avoided in the interest of intensifying the struggle.

Slogan for Estrada's ouster

The Party's general call for the current situation is "Overthrow the reactionary US-Estrada regime, expand and intensify the revolution!" This clarifies the principal task of overthrowing the ruling regime and the need to accomplish this through means that shall bring the revolution closer to victory. In accordance with the actual level of revolutionary advance, the overall balance of forces and the people's level of consciousness and practice the objective is not overall victory but a major advance in the revolution.

The general call also recognizes the primary and secondary arenas of struggle to overthrow Estrada. The primary arena consists of street protests, meaning, the legal arena and struggles. Armed and illegal struggles are secondary.

The slogan of oust/impeach/resign are legal slogans for the overthrow of the US-Estrada regime.

The overall stress of these legal calls is to expand and intensify mass protests and other legal struggles to remove the Estrada regime from power. The highest stage they could reach is massive civil disobedience, including the people's siege of Malacañang to force Estrada to resign. Of course, if the crisis is not resolved through legal means, the issue of non-constitutional means (assassination, coup d'etat, armed revolution) of overthrowing the loathsome regime shall come to the fore. Even now, talk is rife over moves by military and police forces to support the call for Estrada's resignation.

In order to advance the legal struggle against the reactionary US-Estrada regime in a manner that advocates the line of people's democratic revolution, there is need to:

Massively mobilize the people for protests and other mass struggles; disseminate national-democratic propaganda along with, and in relation to, agitation against the Estrada regime; advance anti-Estrada struggles as anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist struggles; vigorously expand and strengthen national-democratic organizations; daringly expand the Party and the revolutionary underground movement in order to link legal and illegal forces and struggles and strengthen various types of support for the armed struggle in the countryside.

Tactical alliance with anti-Estrada reactionaries

The correct way of dealing with contradictions and rivalries among reactionaries is a basic question in revolutionary tactics. It is a serious error for revolutionaries to ignore this issue. We must actively take advantage of, and further intensify divisions and rivalries among, reactionaries to accelerate the weakening of reaction and the strengthening of the revolution.

There is currently a need to broadly and more aggressively forge tactical alliances because divisions and rivalries among reactionaries are so intense. These rivalries are factional rivalries related to the crisis of the semifeudal system. The spoils that reactionary factions can divide among themselves continue to dwindle and the fighting is so intense as to who among them will prevail. Such rivalries are exacerbated by the extreme avarice, brazen abuse of power, plunder, corruption, cronyism, militarism and the incompetent administration of the ruling Estrada clique.

Is it correct for the current struggle to narrow its target of attack to the ruling Estrada clique? It is correct and necessary, contrary to the claim that some pseudo-leftists have been mouthing, that it is supposedly more revolutionary to attack several enemies all at the same time. It is a fundamental policy in the united front to win over the many, struggle against the few and defeat the enemy one by one.

This policy relies on making correct distinctions among friends as well as enemies. We must distinguish between long-term and reliable friends and friends who are temporary and unreliable. We must make distinctions among big, middle and small enemies, between those who are in and out of power and between current and future enemies.

Narrowing the target of attack does not mean terminating the struggle against secondary and future enemies. A tactical alliance does not mean that the struggle against unreliable, temporary and reactionary allies has stopped. We continue to struggle with them to protect the ideological and organizational integrity of the Party and the revolutionary movement. This is also necessary in order to expand and develop our linkages with, and leadership over, the masses. Nonetheless, we struggle with restraint and in consideration of the need for unity and cooperative struggle against a common enemy.

While bilateral and multilateral consultation and coordination are being advanced within the tactical alliance, we strengthen the initiative of the revolutionary forces. Thus, we avoid being

mere tails of reactionary allies and ensure that we can pursue the struggle even if they vacillate or turn against us and that we can continue to strengthen the revolutionary forces.

With their slogan "Resign All", the pseudo-leftists wish to expand, instead of narrow down, the target of the people's struggle and push the formation of a supposed third "leftist" front that is ramming itself against the broad anti-Estrada front. They serve Estrada's divisive tactics and blunt the aim of the people's attack against the reactionary ruling regime. They attempt to confuse the revolutionary and progressive forces by muddling ideological and political issues and through the dogmatist superimposition of fundamental and long-term issues on tactical situations and issues aside from spreading intrigues and blatant distortions.

Fomenting trouble and casting aspersion on the Party and the revolutionary movement continue to be the predominant activity of these counterrevolutionary renegades. They must continuously be exposed, isolated and dismantled.

There are instances when these impostors are able, against our will, to sneak into alliances or joint activities by latching onto allies. We do not let this interfere with our alliance work and the intensification of protests so long as we ensure that they occupy a minor place and that they are unable to vilify us or cause us harm.

On the issue of Estrada's successor

As a replacement for the hated ruling regime, the national-democratic forces are advocating the formation of a national council of unity and change that has appropriate representation from workers, peasants and other democratic classes and sectors aside from other anti-Estrada forces, and advances an anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist program. This is most certainly better than the "united opposition" that is composed only of reactionary political parties. Even if this does not push through, we will be able to clarify to the masses the national-democratic movement's own stand and program.

For so long as the primary arena and means of overthrowing the Estrada regime are legal, Macapagal-Arroyo and the "united opposition" will be first in line among those who will take over the reins of power. Her resignation from the Estrada cabinet was an important turning point in the isolation of the Estrada regime and the intensification of anti-Estrada struggles. There is no doubt that Macapagal-Arroyo is a representative of the local reactionary classes and her political record speaks of her being a leading advocate of pro-imperialist, antipeople and anti-democratic policies. But because she has allied herself with the anti-Estrada front and is seeking the support of the protest movement, she is obliged to adopt a posture of openness to the progressive forces and promise relevant reforms.

Within the framework of the informal tactical alliance to overthrow the reactionary Estrada regime, the national-democratic forces, including the legal national-democratic forces, are not obliged to formally endorse Macapagal-Arroyo as Estrada's successor. In fact, it is the right and duty of the national-democratic forces to clarify to the masses Macapagal-Arroyo's reactionary stance and political record and the need for continued militancy and struggles after Estrada is overthrown. Along with this, it is neither necessary nor correct to raise the exposure of

Macapagal-Arroyo's reactionary character to the level of opposing and resisting her as Estrada's successor so as not to blunt the isolation of, and the struggle against, the ruling Estrada clique.

At present, even as we neither endorse nor oppose Macapagal-Arroyo's succession, the legal national-democratic forces are conducting public exchanges of views to present the policies and programs that a Macapagal-Arroyo government should advocate. Thus, the national-democratic forces clearly declare their stand and continue fighting for it. Along with this, we do not stop struggling for reforms, advancing legal and parliamentary struggles and working within reactionary institutions with the aim of conducting political exposes and fighting for relevant benefits and concessions for the people's welfare.

Threats of a coup d'etat

Calls by retired generals for the AFP-PNP to turn their back on the despicable ruling regime, talk of a coup d'etat as well as intensifying surveillance, harassment, violence and threats of violence against anti-Estrada forces, including Estrada's political rivals (the most striking example of which is Dacer's abduction), are manifestations of a further deepening of the political crisis.

We must roundly condemn and resist any intervention or use of the counterrevolutionary AFP-PNP to suppress the democratic forces resisting the loathsome ruling regime.

Along with this, we must avoid the bourgeois pacifist and constitutionalist posture on the issue of the involvement of military officials and personnel in the anti-Estrada struggle. We must encourage patriotic and democratic military officials and personnel to make a stand and align themselves with the people's struggle against the ruling regime.

Crisis and the armed struggle

The armed and illegal revolutionary forces are part of the anti-Estrada front. But the overall focus of struggles to overthrow Estrada is on the mass protests in the streets. And besides, the linkages, coordination and cooperation between the armed and illegal revolutionary forces and the legal forces, alliances and struggles are indirect.

Tactical offensives are among the most stinging blows that may be dealt against the reactionary ruling regime and thus, they must be expanded and strengthened to accelerate the weakening and overthrow of the regime. Severe defeats in battles are sure to accelerate the shattering of support by the counterrevolutionary military and police for Estrada. The people's army is also necessary in order to punish and bring to justice the worst and biggest criminals and people's enemies.

It is through armed struggle (army-building, agrarian revolution and base-building) that the people and the revolution can attain the most solid benefits in the struggle against the hated ruling US-Estrada regime. Thus, advancing the armed struggle is crucial to the accumulation of strength by the revolutionary and progressive forces for waging protracted struggle.

Instead of saving itself, the ruling regime's desperate schemes can only deepen the grave it is already in. The bankrupt government's coffers are being further depleted, the forces of an already

overextended AFP-PNP further spread thinly and the flames of the people's wrath and resistance further stoked. There is greater need to tighten our grip on our weapons and daringly advance people's war. #

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