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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FILIPINO PEOPLE, CARRY THE STRUGGLE THROUGH TO THE END

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Joseph Ejercito Estrada, alias Jose Velarde, was finished yesterday as president of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) as a result of the overwhelming mass actions of the Filipino people in Metro Manila and nationwide.

Terrified by the anticipated siege on the palace by at least a million people, key cabinet members and the top brass of the military and police have withdrawn support from him.

He has no choice but to resign and he is in no position to demand immunity from prosecution. Moreover, whether he formally resigns or not, vice president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo can take over the presidency.

I congratulate the entire Filipino people, all the patriotic and progressive forces and the broad united front for the brilliant victory in ousting Estrada and his ruling clique from power. I praise their courage and wisdom.

I admire the tenacity and militancy of the forces of the national-democratic movement in seeking the overthrow of the Estrada regime since the beginning, well ahead of other forces in the broad united front.

I am glad to have foreseen as early as in 1998 that Estrada would not last long in power, like El Loco of Ecuador, because of his overweening arrogance, shameless rapacity, wanton brutality and unbridled servility to the foreign monopoly capitalists.

We are happy with our success in defeating an immoral, corrupt and repressive regime. But let us not indulge in euphoria and complacency. The struggle against the fallen ruling clique is not yet complete even as a new president comes to power. We must carry this struggle through to the end.

It can be completed only by arresting Estrada, his fellow plunderers and human rights violators, subjecting them to criminal proceedings and punishing them for their crimes. We must not let them go scot-free and enjoy the fruits of their crimes.

The people cannot tolerate any shady compromise deal between the outgoing and the incoming presidents. The change of president, from Estrada to Arroyo, should not be merely a change of chief oppressor and chief exploiter.

The people demand that criminal proceedings must be undertaken against Estrada and his cronies as well as the Marcoses and the big Marcos cronies, like Eduardo Cojuangco and Lucio Tan. All these must be held to account for their crime of plunder and compelled to surrender their loot to the people.

The forces of the national-democratic movement may continue its critical alliance with the new president, if immediately she does the following, among others:

1. Arrest and subject to criminal proceedings Estrada, the Marcoses and the big cronies and make them yield their ill-gotten wealth.
2. Reverse the antinational and antipeople policy of liberalization, privatization and deregulation.
3. Repudiate the antipeasant policy of misrepresenting land reform as voluntary sale of land or corporate shares by the landlords.
4. Give justice and indemnification to all the victims of human rights violations since the time of Marcos.
5. Release all political prisoners in the spirit of goodwill.
6. Revive all the bilateral agreements of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).
7. Resume the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations through which basic social, economic and political reforms can be discussed and agreed upon.
8. Cease the military campaigns of suppression against the people in the countryside.

The new GRP president should be mindful that the socioeconomic and political crisis of the ruling system shall continue to worsen even after the fall of Estrada and to provide the fertile conditions for armed revolution.

The crisis is not due simply to the corruption and repressiveness of the Estrada ruling clique. These are in fact the consequences of imperialist domination. The crisis is due to the fundamentally oppressive and exploitative workings of the ruling system of big compradors and landlords who are servile to foreign monopoly capitalism.

The evils of this system will continue to inflict suffering on the people and incite them to wage all forms of revolutionary struggle. The revolutionary forces and people will continue the struggle for national liberation and democracy against foreign monopoly capitalism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. #

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