

LIBERATION INTERNATIONAL

Publication of the International Information Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines

July - September 2010

New Aquino government: 100 days of perdition and servility

By Andrea Ibarra

Barely 100 days into his term, Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) President Benigno C. Aquino III has come under fire for a number of tinderbox issues.

For starters, he gave the green signal to the Armed Forces of the Philippines to continue Oplan Bantay Laya, the infamous military campaign targeting human rights advocates and political activists. He has also approved proposals to increase by 100 percent public train fares; to impose value added tax on highway toll fees; and to reduce budget appropriations for public schools, public hospitals, and assistance for overseas Filipino workers.

In the meantime, his handling of the tragic hostage incident that claimed the lives of eight tourists from Hongkong last 23 August also exposed a level of incompetence that made even his staunchest supporters cover their faces in shame.

In his first State of the Nation Address on 23 July, Aquino delivered a 45-minute tirade against the corruption and other abuses in office of his predecessor Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But in the aftermath of his speech, nothing substantial has happened.

Aquino says that the Truth Commission he created will investigate and settle corruption issues that took place during Arroyo's term. But already it's becoming evident that this new institution will fail, given that it can only recommend the filing of criminal charges against Macapagal-Arroyo and other high-ranking officials of her former government. It has no authority to proceed with its recommendations or prosecute the suspected criminals.

Expanding privatization, regressive taxation

From day one, Aquino has not mentioned any program to promote genuine and nationalist industrialization, nor has he expressed any support for the demand



"Things haven't changed, peasants are still landless". Landless peasants decry the refusal of GRP president Aquino to implement land reform in family-owned Hacienda Luisita. photo: by Ronalyn V. Olea / bulatlat.com

of industrial workers and government employees for increased wages, salaries and benefits.

All that his economic platform offers is the continuation and expansion of the bankrupt build-operate-transfer (BOT) scheme, and the strengthening of so-called "private and public partnerships", which is merely another name for privatization.

There are undeniable indications that privatization and deregulation will not only continue but expand under the new government.

Oil prices and electricity rates have already gone up as the oil cartel of Shell, Caltex and Petron just recently raised the pump prices of diesel, kerosene and gasoline by 50 centavos to P1 per liter. And the cartel announced that more price hikes are in the offing. The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) jacked its generation charge by 44 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has additionally said that it is swamped

by petitions from the big capitalists in the privatized and deregulated power industry calling for rate increases.

Instead of taking the side of consumers and the public, the Aquino administration welcomes these price increases. It reasons that rate hikes mean bigger value-added tax collections for the government. Petroleum and electricity are the two largest sources of VAT revenues, which increase in direct proportion with rising pump prices and monthly electricity bills.

The Aquino government, no different from its predecessors, utilizes regressive, anti-poor taxation schemes as a means to solve its fiscal woes.

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Anti-poor 2011 Budget Plan

The Aquino government's proposed budget for 2011 would increase the Filipino people's debt burden while effectively slashing the already minimal resources for the poor.

For instance, the proposed budget for the health sector in 2011 is lower by P1.4B, from P40B in 2010 to only P38.6B in 2011. Concretely, the Aquino administration slashed the budgets for the Lung Center, Kidney Center and Heart Center – all national-level specialized hospitals – by P970.6M.

Based on its proposal submitted to Congress, the Aquino government earmarked more than 77.6 percent of the P104.4-billion increase in the 2011 budget. The increase comes from the huge P80.99-billion rise in interest payments for government's debt. While personal services grew by P47.24 billion, maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) fell by P10.92 billion and capital outlays and net lending, by P12.8 billion.

These reflect the Aquino administration's declared policy of turning over to the private sector the vital functions of government, including the provision of services and undertaking infrastructure development.

Public infrastructure spending will fall by P21.13 billion in the 2011 budget. This policy will ultimately take its toll on the poor and marginalized in the form of, among others, exorbitant fees for using public infrastructure.

In the meantime, Aquino is determined to follow the tradition set by his predecessors when it comes to foreign debt: the proposed interest payments in the 2011 budget is pegged at P357.09 billion, or 21.7 percent of the total budget. The overall debt burden for 2011, however, could actually reach P823.27 billion if the principal amortization

of P466.18 billion is added to interest payments. All in all, the country's debt burden (interest payments plus principal amortization) represents a whopping 38.9 percent of the total 2011 budget proposal. Greater allocations for foreign debt payments mean fewer allocations for social and economic services for the public.

What makes this state of affairs even worse is the fact that the so-called development projects funded by the foreign loans and Official Development Aid (ODA) do not benefit the people. Many of these projects even proved disastrous for the livelihood and communities of many Filipinos particularly in the provinces, and wrought irrevocable damage to the environment. The primary beneficiaries of these foreign aid are private contractors, corrupt government officials, and the creditors.

Shirking away from land reform

It's impossible not to notice how Aquino continues to shirk away from issues concerning the demand of Filipino farmers for genuine land reform.

In his SONA, Aquino expounded on the need to improve post-harvest facilities. But any improvement would benefit only a miniscule fraction of poor farmers. In the meantime, big landlords, big bourgeois comprador and foreign monopoly agri-businesses readily applauded his proposal because they would greatly profit from selling and operating these facilities.

Aquino's refusal to address agrarian reform issues is directly caused by the monsters of his past: his own family's role in the bloody massacres of poor peasants in Mendiola, Manila in 1987 and in the family-owned Hacienda Luisita in 2004.

Aquino has taken a vow of silence on the issue of Hacienda Luisita after being proclaimed president. Even during the election campaign, Aquino's declared intention to redistribute the land was contradicted by his cousin who is managing Hacienda Luisita. There was no longer any mention

of the hacienda nor land distribution during his inaugural address.

The Cojuangco-Aquino family does not want to let go of the land. The Supreme Court is currently reviewing the petition of the family against the 2006 decision of the Department of Agrarian Reform ordering the distribution of the land.

In his silence, Aquino condones the actions of his family – the continued usurpation of land that the government has already earmarked for agrarian reform. He insists that he controls only 1/32 of the HCI shares, but he is still unable to let go of this even if only for symbolic purposes.

Peace Negotiations and human rights

With regard to the peace negotiations, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) has been consistent in its willingness and preparedness to negotiate peace with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP), especially now that a new administration has come to power. The NDFP continues to uphold and promote all the previously signed agreements to its constituents and allies.

Aquino exposed his ignorance when he asked "Handa na ba kayong magbigay ng mungkahi?" (Are you now ready to offer

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The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is an alliance of revolutionary organizations with roots in the various sectors and regions of the Philippines. Its goal is to build a society that enjoys national sovereignty, genuine democracy, social justice, progress and peace. It seeks to unite with all forces willing to achieve these goals.

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Liberation International is a publication of the NDFP International Information Office

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proposals?) in his first SONA. The NDFP Peace Panel has been prodding the GRP to enter into the second substantive agenda, which is the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER), drafted 12 years ago.

The burden of proving sincerity to put an end to the armed conflict and to bring about a just and lasting peace lies on Aquino's shoulders.

If his current inaction on calls for the resumption of peace negotiations with the NDFP is anything to go by, it appears that Aquino does not consider settling the armed conflict of any importance. The Aquino regime through its spokespersons in the Armed Forces of the Philippines continues to label the Communist Party of the Philippines, the New People's Army and the NDFP as terrorist groups.

Neither has it acted on the issue of political prisoners. Currently, there are at least 388 political prisoners in the country. Of these, 317 were arrested during Macapagal-Arroyo's term, including the Morong 43 who are comprised of doctors and health workers maliciously accused of being members of the NPA.

Since Aquino assumed the presidency, 16 activists of the political opposition have been assassinated, three of them members of progressive party-list groups, and four are members of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP, Peasant Movement of the Philippines).

The GRP also refuses to withdraw trumped-up criminal cases filed against 54 political activists, including progressive members of parliament and NDFP Peace Negotiating Panel members and consultants.

US imperialism's latest puppet

Very recently, Aquino made an official visit to the US with a 60-person entourage. Taxpayers are set to shoulder the expenses of the trip: P25 M for seven days. He had also authorized the hiring of a public relations firm to help in the media blitz for his visit, reportedly costing P45M.

Aquino's primary agenda in his week-long visit to the US besides speaking at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), includes the signing of the \$434-million grant by the Millennium Challenge Corp., meeting with US President Barack Obama, and attending a list of business conferences. He was expected to meet with officials of the World Bank, investment bank Citibank Corp., and information technology firm

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Aquino government pushes anti-people budget

By Ed Ladera

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) sternly criticized the PhP 1.64 trillion budget proposal for 2011 of the newly-installed Benigno Aquino III government, calling it "a counter-insurgency budget". The CPP pointed out its "counter-insurgency" framework and priority, especially as it gives priority to beefing up the military and other security agencies, alongside debt servicing.

This budget is very much in line with the US Government Counter-Insurgency Guide of 2009, the CPP declared.

The Aquino government proposes to increase the budget of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) by 81%. This unprecedented increase is scandalous. In contrast, the budget to assist Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) is going to be slashed by almost 50%.

There are some nine million overseas Filipino workers in over 160 countries worldwide. Seven thousand of them are in jails in different countries, at least ten thousand are stranded in the Middle East seeking repatriation, and 108 are in death row. All of them are in dire need of legal and diplomatic protection, and yet the Aquino government chooses to reduce funds for their assistance.

Garry Martinez of Migrant International and John Leonard Monterona of Migrant Middle East Chapter condemned the anti-OFW move of President Aquino.

Budgets for vital social services are also going to be cut. The budget for education has been reduced and is going to be at least PhP 100 billion short of the required amount to address shortages in teachers, classrooms and other facilities. The budget for health is likewise going to be slashed.

Allocations for agriculture and agrarian reform is proposed to be cut by 26%, water resources development and flood control by 21.4%, power and energy by 65.5%.

The proposed 123% increase in the budget of the Department of Social Work and Development (DSWD) is meant to make the Aquino government appear generous to the "poorest of the poor". 85.5% of its P 34 billion budget will go to cash and other dole outs. Moreover, the DSWD performs a function in counter-insurgency by assisting in the uprooting of hundreds of thousands caused by intensified militarization by the AFP. These military operations are meant to destroy suspected mass base areas of the revolutionary movement.

In a statement released to the mass media, the CPP also condemned the priority given by the Aquino government to debt servicing in adherence to the imperialist International Monetary Fund (IMF), ruling that at least a third of the national budget be allocated to foreign debt payments.

Debt servicing, which has been condemned as "legal stealing", takes up a whopping PhP 823.27 billion of the Aquino government's budget, an increase of 29.2% over the 2010 figure. ■



New GRP president Noyonoy Aquino (right) pays his respects to his master, US president Barack Obama in New York City, on 24 Sept. He was rewarded with US\$434M "development aid". photo: aseanmattersforamerica.org

Hewlett-Packard Co.

The MCC's \$434 million grant was based, among others, on a criteria of so-called adherence to the rule of law and civil liberties. If this was the real criterion, the Philippines would have been disqualified outright because of the dismal conviction rate for cases of extra-judicial killings, among others. A recent study showed that only one percent of these assassinations during the nine years of the Arroyo administration, and the first two months of the Aquino administration, have been resolved in court.

The MCC Compact Grant is in fact a foreign policy tool of the US government to impose neo-liberal policies on third world countries. Grants like this and other so-called aid are instruments to advance US economic and political interests in other parts of the world, in the guise of promoting democracy and good governance. This is particularly true now because the US economy is in crisis, and the US government will increase its efforts to extract more profits from poor countries like the Philippines. The MCC is chaired by US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton.

The straight path to greater exploitation

The first Aquino government promised to be the exact opposite of the Marcos dictatorship. But the regime change of 1986 did not lead to any significant reduction of poverty, industrialization, shift to an independent foreign policy, or redress of historical grievances.

The second Aquino regime's approach to these very same matters does not promise much improvement in the daily lives of the poor majority. Now, just like during the campaign period, Aquino is offering the Filipino people nothing but empty words, palliative and myopic solutions. The Filipino people continue to live in poverty and oppression, under the yoke of imperialism, bureaucrat capitalism and feudalism.

If Aquino's first 100 days in office is a foretaste of things to come, the next six years will see an ever increasing mass of people outraged by this regime's incompetence and subservience. The people are faced with no other option but to wage revolutionary and militant struggle in order to defend and advance their interests.

In the next six years, the people are bound to rise up in resistance against the policies of the Aquino regime and the entire ruling system. ■

Manila bus hostage crisis: the tragedy of incompetence

By Ed Ladera

Before the eyes of the world, the hostage-taking on 23 August of a busload of tourists in Manila was horribly bungled by police and civilian officials of the Benigno Aquino III government. After hours of inutile negotiations and a couple of attempts at rescuing the hostages, police agents eventually stormed the bus, resulting in the death of eight hostages and the hostage taker, ex-Police Captain Rolando Mendoza.

Among the dead were Hongkong residents and three Canadian citizens. Nine were injured, one of whom critically, and two others seriously injured.

Mendoza took the busload of tourists hostage to demand his reinstatement into the police force. He stated that he had been dismissed on false charges in 2008. He claimed that his case before the Ombudsman was unduly delayed because a deputy of the Ombudsman tried to extort money from him by demanding that he first pay P 250,000 before his motion for reconsideration could be processed. Mendoza was a bemedalled police officer, having been decorated as one of the Ten Outstanding Policemen of 2002.

The People's Republic of China and the Hongkong Government sternly criticized the Aquino government and demanded a thorough investigation. Meanwhile, Hongkong advised its residents to avoid going to the Philippines and told those in the Philippines to return immediately. Hongkong Chief Executive Donald Tsang

complained that, at the height of the hostage crisis, President Aquino did not answer his telephone calls.

A Philippine delegation led by Vice-President Jejomar Binay and Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo instructed by President Aquino to go to Beijing and Hongkong a few days after the hostage crisis, was told by China and Hongkong not to come until a thorough investigation report had been made.

Meanwhile, a huge demonstration in Hongkong on 29 August commemorated the victims and condemned the Aquino government. Filipino migrant workers' organizations, with the assistance of their allies, also held a memorial for the victims and their families. Thousands of Filipino workers attended. This mass action of solidarity won the sympathy of the Hongkong public.

Under heavy pressure from China and Hongkong, President Aquino appointed Justice Secretary Leila de Lima to head the Incident Investigation and Review Committee (IIRC). On 20 September the IIRC submitted its First Report, naming top civilian officials, Undersecretary of Interior and Local Governments Rico Puno and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, top police officers and several media personnel, as subject to administrative and/or criminal charges.

However, the report declares that the hostage taker was responsible for all eight deaths and injuries of others. This

Bus hostage, page 5, col 1 ...



"Noynoy Watch" graphic: bulatlat.com

... Bus hostage, page 4, col 3

conclusion is different from a statement of Secretary de Lima earlier in September that some of the deaths may have been caused by “friendly fire”.

On 13 September, members of the Hongkong Police invited to inspect the crime scene reported that, of the 62 impact bullet marks on the bus, 32 were caused by bullets coming from different directions outside the bus. The relation of this salient fact to the deaths and injuries is not taken up by the Aquino government’s report.

Moreover, president Aquino ordered that significant parts of the report be withheld. He said he is asking a review of the report by Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa and the Presidential Chief Legal Counsel Eduardo de Mesa. After getting this review, he himself will also review it.

The report with attachments was submitted on 20 September to China through its embassy in Manila. No response has come out as yet.

In the meantime, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, while admitting his team failed, questions the basis for naming him liable. He criticizes some parts of the report as untrue and lacking legal basis. Retired Police Director General Verzosa, meanwhile, also says he cannot be held accountable for the bungled handling of the hostage crisis.

The newly-installed Aquino government is quickly exposing itself as more interested in covering up its incompetence than seeking justice for the poor victims. ■

NPA answers OBL extension with more tactical offensives

By Bagani Dong-Ilay

Newly-installed President Benigno Aquino III of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, repeating the same mistake of his predecessors, has ordered the 6-month extension up to January 2011 of the failed counter-revolutionary military campaign Oplan Batay Laya. He has likewise ordered the Armed Forces of the Philippines to devise a new national security program to run through his term, one that hews closely to the US Counterinsurgency Guide of 2009, combining mainly military force and psychological warfare techniques, in a vain attempt to defeat the revolutionary movement.

Egged on by Aquino’s saber-rattling and promise to double the military’s budget, the AFP has intensified its military operations.

Among the most militarized part of the country is the southern island of Mindanao where four Army divisions – 40 battalions, or about 50,000 soldiers – are currently deployed. Around thirty (30) of these battalions, together with paramilitary units, have been mobilized against the New People’s Army (NPA) in the five NPA regions in Mindanao. They are using 105mm Howitzer cannons and airpower in their military offensives. But they are in fact hitting ethnic-minority and peasant communities, committing human rights abuses against the masses and dislocating whole communities.

Remarkably, it is also in Mindanao that the NPA is scoring brilliant victories and delivering lethal blows against enemy troops, thus frustrating the enemy’s counterrevolutionary objectives.

The NPA in Mindanao launched fifty (50) attritive and annihilative attacks from July to August of this year – 20 in the Southern Mindanao Region (SMR), 27 in the Northeastern Mindanao Region (NEMR), and 3 in the Far South Mindanao Region and North Central Mindanao Region.

Attritive attacks include sniping and harassment of enemy troops while they are in their isolated military detachments or while conducting military operations. Attritive actions are meant to frustrate enemy operations and deal psychological blows on their troops. Annihilative attacks, on the other hand, include ambushes and raids that are meant to waylay and put out of action enemy troops as well as seize their weapons and equipment.

Among the successful tactical offensives in the Southern Mindanao Region was the 24 August raid in Barangay (village) La Fortuna, Veruela, Agusan del Sur, where the NPA killed a lieutenant and 4 soldiers of the 26th Infantry Battalion. The Red fighters seized a K3 light machinegun, two M16 rifles and ammunition.

In another operation in August, the NPA ambushed and killed two soldiers and a notorious paramilitary leader belonging to the so-called Bagani Force. Seized were two M16 rifles. Firefights also occurred in the highlands of Davao City, in Compostela Valley and in the provinces of Davao Oriental, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur and North Cotabato.

In the Northeast Mindanao Region (NEMR), the NPA launched 27 tactical offensives against enemy troops that were conducting military operations in almost all the towns in the four provinces of NEMR. The people’s army launched two attacks on 13 August, killing four enemy troops and wounding 6 others. The casualties belong to the Scout Ranger Company (SRC) and the 30th Infantry Battalion.

On 28 August, the NPA attacked five columns of the 14th SRC, 75th Infantry Battalion and SWAG (Special Warfare Group). These troops belong to the infantry brigade deployed in Marihatag, Surigao del Sur. The enemy suffered eight casualties – five killed and three wounded.

In the North Central Mindanao Region
NPA offensives, page 7, col 1 ...



The hostage drama and the bungled “rescue” attempts made by Manila police played out on national and international television. Despite protests from Hongkong, Mr. Aquino stood by his decision not to punish any security or civilian official for the deaths and injuries to the hostages. He ordered the filing of criminal charges against the brother of the dead hostage-taker. photo: www.bangkokpost.com

Aquino government tramples on children's rights

From Ang Bayan

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) denounced the Aquino regime and its Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for the current spate of violations of children's rights as the AFP continues to implement the government's national security program Oplan Bantay Laya, which has been extended by the Aquino government up to the end of 2010.

The CPP said that children continue to be subjected to widespread abuse and violence under Oplan Bantay Laya.

"The AFP has been utilizing minors in its dirty war against the New People's Army (NPA) and the revolutionary masses. AFP units have been recruiting minors into their paramilitary units, forcing children to serve as guides in military operations."

"In their effort to hype their counterrevolutionary psywar, children are further abused by the military as they are paraded in front of the media while made to appear as 'child warriors' of the NPA."

"The entire revolutionary movement and the Filipino people hold president Benigno Aquino III responsible for such violations of children's rights committed by the AFP under his command," the CPP added.

The CPP cited the following recent cases:

1. "Rose" (not her real name), 17, was paraded before the media on 14 September by the 84th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army. The 84th IB-PA falsely claimed that she was a "would-be recruit" of the NPA who escaped. The Philippine Army unit violated her rights in its desperate effort to taint the NPA's reputation after suffering a big loss in the battlefield on 10 September.
2. "Boy" (not his real name), 17, of Brgy. Tagaytay, Magsaysay, Davao del Sur was forced to join a special operation of the 39th IB-PA last July to penetrate an NPA camp and steal weapons.
3. "Jerry" (not his real name), 17, of Brgy. Malawanit, Magsaysay, Davao del Sur was abducted and tortured to force him to admit to being an "NPA child warrior." Fortunately, Jerry was able to escape his captors and reveal his ordeal to the public.
4. Another minor, "Donna" (not her real name) of Dungan Pekong, Matanao, Davao del Sur, was misrepresented before the media as an "NPA child warrior," in violation of her rights.



Artwork created by a child who was victimized by the aerial bombardment done by the Armed Forces of the Philippines on civilian communities. The child participated in a workshop for children victims of human rights violations. The Aquino government will increase the budget of the military and extend its notorious Oplan Bantay Laya national security program. photo: Joan Garcia / bulatlat.com

5. "Jomar" (not his real name) was not even 16 years old when he and his friends were recruited and made to undergo a 45-day military training in October 2008 by the 1001st Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army, in its headquarters then located at Brgy. Tuburan, Mawab, Compostela Valley. He was formally admitted as a member of the paramilitary Citizens Armed Geographical Unit in December 2008. As a CAFGU element, Jomar was accosted by the NPA last June but was promptly released after determining his age.
 6. A 17-year old boy from Brgy. Old Bulatucan, Makilala, North Cotabato was accosted and tortured by elements of the 57th IB-PA last March following an NPA harassment operation against the soldiers. He was presented to the media as a "child warrior" of the NPA before being turned over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).
 7. "Michelle" (not her real name), 17, was abducted by elements of the 34th IB-PA from her home in San Juan de Buan, Western Samar last February. She was taken by government soldiers as part of their dirty tactic to force her parents (both members of the NPA) to surrender to the AFP. Michelle continues to be detained by the DWSD under the authority of the AFP.
 8. "Jose" (not his real name), 13, a mentally challenged child from Montalban, Matuguinao, Western Samar continues to be detained by the DSWD. Elements of the Philippine Army's 8th Infantry Division accosted Jose in June 2009, provided him with a firearm and forced him to join military operations. He was subsequently paraded before the media as a "child warrior" of the NPA.
- "These and many other cases of violations of children's rights are being committed by the AFP with impunity in its desperation to suppress the people's revolutionary resistance with utter brutality, terror and psywar," said the CPP.
- The CPP reiterated its policy of upholding the rights of children as stipulated in the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CAHRIHL) as well as in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CPP has a standing policy prohibiting the recruitment into the NPA of anyone below 18 years old.
- "We urge all advocates of children's rights in the country and the world, including the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict to look into these cases involving the ruling reactionary state and its army's violations of children's rights," said the CPP. ■

Massive protest actions rock Europe, workers say NO to austerity measures

By Isah Antonio

Europe reverberated with massive protest actions of workers and their supporters when Europe-wide coordinated strikes and demonstrations were held on 29 September 2010 in different European countries in Belgium, Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Called the Day of Action, the workers staged strikes, walkouts, slowdowns, and other industrial protest actions to express their outrage against a new series of austerity measures imposed by European governments. The protesters declared that such measures will have disastrous effects on the already worsening economic and social conditions of the workers, and will cause further inequalities and insecurity of work.

Responding to the call for protest actions, tens of thousands of workers and their supporters marched and demonstrated at the Parc du Cinquenaire in Brussels. They carried placards and banners calling out “No to Austerity, Priority for Jobs and Growth!”, “We did not cause this crisis!” and “The bill has to be paid by banks, not by workers!”.

The demonstration, participated in by delegations from 50 trade unions

EU protests, page 8, col 1 ...



Tens of thousands of workers across Europe converged in Brussels, 29 Sept to say "NO to austerity measures". Photo: Georges Gobet / www.cnbc.com

... NPA offensives, page 5, col 3

(NCMR), the NPA inflicted 24 casualties on the battalion belonging to the Tabak Division under the AFP Western Mindanao Command in tactical offensives launched in the period from April to August.

NPA offensives in other parts of the country

Responding to the call of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines and of the National Operational Command of the New People’s Army, the NPA has intensified the armed struggle and launched tactical offensives in other parts of the country.

In Negros Occidental in central Philippines, the NPA seized 21 weapons when they raided a detachment of the Delta Company of the 12th “Cadre” Infantry Battalion on 28 August. The Red fighters confiscated 11 M1 Garand rifles, eight M14s and two M16s, aside from ammunition and other military supplies.

The enemy troops had just come back from conducting military operations when the Red fighters from the Roselyn “Ka Jean”

Pelle Command of the NPA Northern Negros Guerrilla Front attacked the said detachment. Previous to this, the NPA had arrested a certain Sgt. Efraim Bagonoc, the detachment commander in a cockfight arena.

This successful tactical offensive was carried out just five days after Maj. Gen. Vicente Porto, chief of the 3rd AFP Infantry Division, boasted that the NPA had been greatly weakened in Negros.

In Bontoc, Mountain Province in northern Philippines, the NPA wiped out a seven-man strike force under the 52nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) on 9 July. The Red fighters seized four M203, an M14, and an M4 Carbine rifle, and other military supplies. Among those killed was the strike force commander 1stLt. Lito Punio.

On 16 July, Senior Inspector Alfonso Derraco, municipal police chief of Benito Soliven, Isabela, was killed and five others were wounded in an NPA ambush. The policemen were responding to reports that the NPA had burned down a tractor of a despotic landlord when they were ambushed.

On 21 August in Catarman, Northern

Samar, the NPA confiscated five M16 rifles and three pistols when an NPA unit under the Rodante Urtal Command ambushed and killed five policemen while they were carrying out combat operations. The guerrillas used an improvised explosive device to blow up the police vehicle.

Earlier, the NPA was able to ambush and kill T/Sgt. Rolando de Guia of the 63rd Infantry Battalion. He disguised himself as a civilian village official while building and running a spy network in Catarman. He was also in charge of forming the paramilitary units of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) while he was assigned to the 19th Infantry Battalion. A .45 caliber pistol was seized from him.

These are some of the successful tactical offensives launched by the NPA in the past three months. There will be more in the coming months and years as the NPA responds to the general call of the Party and the NPA Command to step up the armed struggle on the way to making the transition from the strategic defensive to the strategic stalemate in the protracted people’s war. ■

... EU protests, page 7, col 3

representing 30 countries, was held while the European finance ministers were meeting in Brussels.

In Spain, workers from the industrial sector, transportation and heavy industry held a general strike and demonstrations that paralyzed city centers across the country. Buses, trains and planes stopped running or slowed down their operations. About 10 million people participated in protest actions in Madrid, Sevilla, Asturias, Barcelona, Cordova, and other parts of Spain, belying the reports and statements of right wing parties and media that the general strike was not felt in Spain. The marchers chanted "Se nota, se siente, la huelga esta presente!" ("It is noticed, it is felt, the strike is here!") The strike was Spain's first general strike in eight years.

In Latvia, more than 1,000 people demonstrated in front of government buildings in the capital Riga, to protest against cuts to the health and education sectors. Public sector workers in Latvia have already seen their wages cut by more than a third, and pensions are frozen.

In Poland, thousands of workers marched in Warsaw to protest further wage cuts and freezing of wages. Demonstrators railed against the planned budget cuts, freeze on wages in the public sector, increase of value-added tax, and increase in excise tax. The protesters also demanded security in employment and minimum wage hike.

In Greece, workers from the transport industry and health workers went on strike in support of the Day of Action. Bus, tram, rail

and metro workers walked off their jobs, while doctors and pharmacists went on a 24-hour strike.

In Romania, several strikes were staged in a span of two weeks against government cuts. Romanian trade unions have resisted pay cuts by as much as 25 % on state workers. Even police officers have joined in some of these strikes.

In France, workers launched demonstrations against the government plan to increase the minimum retirement age.

In Ireland, protesters gathered outside the Leinster House in Dublin and the Anglo Irish Bank headquarters to oppose government cuts and the support being offered to banking institutions. While this was going on, a man rammed a cement mixer – with the words "Toxic Bank Anglo" – into the gates of the Irish parliament to protest the country's expensive bank bailout.

In Cyprus, trade unionists demonstrated in the capital city of Nicosia to demand a stop of shoving the burden of the economic crisis on the shoulders of the working people. They are protesting against the high unemployment, pension cuts and unjust taxation of basic goods. They also demanded higher salaries and pensions and new jobs.

Austerity measures benefit monopoly capitalists and financial oligarchy

The Europe-wide actions by workers and their trade unions manifest the solidarity and unity of the working class against any measures bound to drive them further to exploitation, oppression and poverty.

The European governments are poised to implement austerity measures through budget cuts amounting to €200 billion, arguing that such measures are necessary to keep the economy afloat and stave off the intensification of the crisis now plaguing their economies.

The workers countered that the crisis was caused by the capitalist corporations' investment decisions, especially those of the financial oligarchy and the monopoly capitalists. These decisions have already caused huge job losses, reduced outputs of goods and services, and immense new government debt. Once again, the monopoly capitalists are shifting the burden of the economic and financial crisis to the workers and the people. The measures imposed by the monopoly capitalist states will result in more wage cuts, lowering of wage levels, greater unemployment (with 23 million people across EU jobless), attack on pension and more cut backs on social services. Economies will further stagnate and go into depression with the reduction of employment and incomes for the workers.

In his message to the protesting workers on the Day of Action, International League of Peoples' Struggle (ILPS) Chairperson Prof. Jose Maria Sison stated that in the last three decades of "neoliberal globalization", the banks, investment houses and major corporations have used growing amounts of debt financing, entailing the speculative creation of money, credit and derivatives, in order to continue making profits and ride over the recurrent and worsening crisis of overproduction and the chronic tendency of the economy to stagnate and the profit rate to fall.

"In order to deflect the intensification of the economic and financial crisis after the bursting of the financial bubble, the states of the world capitalist system used public money to bail out the banks and the big corporations, on the pretext of stimulating the economy."

Prof. Sison stated that, on the contrary, "The bailouts have not resulted in the revival of production and employment. They have only served to improve the balance sheets of the banks and big corporations and to conjure momentarily the illusion of recovery in the financial markets. The fiscal deficits and public debt have ballooned. Now this huge financial bubble is bursting and the states are frantically adopting austerity measures and further passing on the burden of crisis to the workers and the people at large.

States are setting aside huge amounts of funds for debt service and are raising new taxes and fees at the expense of the people and cutting government payrolls and public

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Trade unions in Spain declared a 24-hour general strike on 29 Sept to protest the cutbacks in social benefits and other so-called austerity measures of the government. photo: Pedro Armestre / blogs.sacbee.com

US guilty of far worse terrorism than 9/11 terrorists -- ILPS

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

US imperialism hijacked the sorrow and outrage of the people as a result of 9/11 and used it to justify its own far worse crimes of terrorism.

Thus stressed the International League of People's Struggle (ILPS) in a statement released by its chairperson Prof. Jose Maria Sison, commemorating the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and condemning its perpetrators as well as US imperialism.

The ILPS also demanded justice for the nearly 3000 victims of the attacks as well as the millions of victims of US wars of aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan, and in many other parts of the world.

Providing a historical background, Sison said that the US, through the Central Intelligence Agency, promoted and funded Islamic fundamentalism and Al-Qaeda in fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s. When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the US adopted the policy of letting the Afghan warlords fight each other and further destroy Afghanistan. As a consequence, Al-Qaeda felt betrayed by the US.

The US and Pakistan decided to install the Taliban in power as their puppet in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the Al Qaeda

developed its own influence within the Taliban in opposition to the US.

The ILPS also said: "Under the policy of the 'global war on terror', the US has wantonly engaged in wars of aggression, deployed US forces for military intervention on a global scale, whipped up state terrorism in the US and abroad, promoted racism and religious bigotry, and misrepresented national liberation movements as mere 'insurgents' and 'terrorists', in order to provide itself, its allies and its puppets the license to violate with impunity the UN charter, international law and the laws on human rights and humanitarian conduct under conditions of war."

The ILPS also said that US president Barack Obama merely re-labeled Bush's "war on terrorism" policy as a "war of global counter-insurgency" and has equated "terrorism" and "insurgency", in order to deny the character of national liberation movements as political movements of the people and violate their rights under the international law on armed conflict.

Obama is now pushing US aggression, military intervention and provocation to an unprecedented scale to further expand and consolidate US hegemony and preserve its supremacy amid the continuing global depression, the ILPS added.

The global anti-imperialist alliance also cited the US security establishment's flurry of "new" tactical and strategic materials and doctrinal revisions on "counter-insurgency".

These include a new Army Counter-insurgency Field Manual in 2006, a new Joint Operating Concept on Irregular Warfare in 2007, a new Army Field Manual on Stability Operations in 2008, the US Government Counterinsurgency Guide (US COIN) in 2009, and the renewed Joint Vision 2020, the conceptual framework for continued US imperialist military dominance worldwide for the next decade.

These tracts draw heavily from the US experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as from its previous counterrevolutionary wars in Vietnam, Korea, Philippines, El Salvador, Colombia and Guatemala, among others.

The US Counterinsurgency Guide and the Joint Vision 2020, said the ILPS, both purport to stress the primacy of non-military aspects of US military engagements everywhere.

The US COIN admits that it is primarily focused on "develop(ing) civilian literature on counter-insurgency to complement existing military doctrine. Similarly, the

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services. In Europe, the governments openly apply the austerity measures. In the US, the federal government is babbling about prudent financial management, while the local states and municipal governments are running ahead in openly applying austerity measures."

The workers are not fooled by the lies and manipulation of the monopoly capitalists. The labor confederation Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU-May 1st Movement) of the Philippines aptly stated in its solidarity message with the striking workers in Europe, "It is just for the workers and peoples of Europe and the world to fight the efforts of the monopoly-bourgeoisie and the finance oligarchy to pass on the greatest burden of the current crisis on them. We call on the workers and peoples of the world to carry our present protests to their logical conclusion, to the struggle to end imperialism and bring forth socialism through our collective and militant struggles!" ■



Victims of US military aggression. photo: picassaweb.google.com



Women from more than 30 countries around the world converged in Canada on 13-16 August for the Montreal International Women's Conference. The Conference became the venue for launching the International Women's Alliance, a global anti-imperialist women's movement for the 21st century. (Story begins on page 12) photo: MIWC2010 - CIFM2010 www.flickr.com/photos/51908792@N07/

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the development of classes, and that the process of removing the conditions that have made women unequal to men will be fully developed during the building of socialism. Socialism, she declares, is the system that will eradicate the exploitation and oppression of women.

By citing facts and figures, Ledesma showed the great advances in the women's movement during the last century when the Soviet Union and China were undertaking socialist construction. She also noted that, tragically, the gains of the women's movement under socialism were lost upon the return of capitalism in said countries. Thus the never-ending need for the women's movement to defend and be vigilant of their rights and victories.

The Montreal Conference endorsed a declaration supporting 490 Tamils from Sri Lanka who recently arrived in Vancouver, Canada by boat, in order to ask for political asylum and who were being detained by the Canadian government.

Participants also affirmed their solidarity with the Algonquin indigenous community of Barriere Lake, Quebec, and called for the release of 43 community health workers illegally detained by the government of the Republic of the Philippines.

The holding of the Montreal International Conference of Women and the founding of the International Women's Alliance are indeed meaningful ways of commemorating the centennial of the International Women's Day and advancing the cause of women's liberation and rights on a global scale.

The International Women's Alliance is a response to the needs of the times: when exploited and oppressed women must link and share efforts and fight the common enemy, challenge imperialism and its local cohorts. It is a time to support women's struggles in their respective countries and around the world. This is the highest tribute women and men can render to those who trail-blazed in the struggle of women against imperialism and reaction and for genuine emancipation. ■

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military field manuals pay lip service to the importance of combining military and non-military aspects and components, ostensibly reaffirming that "winning the people's hearts and minds" is the key to defeating the "insurgency".

"But the US forces and their surrogates are everywhere preserving the oppressive and exploitative status quo and suppressing the people's aspirations for change. Thus they invariably and increasingly resort to the use of force as the people rise up in greater numbers and strength. Clearly, the tenets laid down in the 'new' counter-insurgency doctrine serve to prettify the brutal and naked force of US imperialism and to cloak US military intervention and aggression", the ILPS further stressed.

"But the US is confronted by rising multitudes of freedom-loving peoples all across the world who are fed up with the escalation of oppression and exploitation and who aspire and struggle to for a better world with greater freedom, social justice, development and peace", the ILPS concluded.

The ILPS called on its allies and more than 200 member organizations from 40 countries around the world to intensify the anti-imperialist and democratic struggle, and bring it to a new and higher level. ■

US heightens aggression in Korean peninsula

By Jose Emilio Jacinto III

The sinking of a south Korean naval ship last 26 March in which 38 people died, and which the US, its south Korean puppet state and other imperialist countries blamed on north Korea, has only heightened the US threat of direct imperialist aggression on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The south Korean navy ship Cheonan sank last 26 March and left 38 south Korean navy men dead after it was allegedly hit by a torpedo. The sinking took place off Baengnyeong Island, a highly sensitive area where the two sides' naval forces have exchanged fire twice in the last six months. It happened in the area designated as the Northern Limit Line.

The NLL is a disputed maritime demarcation line in the West Sea between north and south Korea. It acts as the de facto maritime boundary between the two Koreas.

The line was unilaterally set by the US-led United Nations military forces on 30 August 1953 after the United Nations Command and north Korea failed to reach an agreement.

It is not officially recognized by the DPRK. In particular, it is not included in the Armistice Agreement of 1953 between the two states. It was originally drawn to prevent southern incursions into the north, however its role has since transformed to prevent north Korean ships heading south.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff initially

said that there was insufficient evidence to implicate the DPRK in the sinking, as there was no indication of military activity in the area from the north. However, when the US and other western imperialists conducted an investigation, they pointed the blame at north Korea.

Immediately after the report was publicly released, the US and south Korea announced that they would conduct a joint military naval exercise as a response to the sinking.

In response, a military officer of the DPRK was quoted by the state-run news agency KCNA as saying that, "The puppet military warmongers, right-wing conservative politicians and the group of other traitors in south Korea are now foolishly seeking to link the accident with the North at any cost."

However, independent investigations coming from outside the US-led anti-DPRK imperialist alliance, including some US newspapers and analysts, have doubted the report blaming north Korea for the sinking.

They said the sinking did not fit any pattern. They also questioned how a supposed north Korean submarine torpedo could have eluded the supposed US-supplied high-tech military surveillance equipment of south Korea in a very closely watched militarized region in the Korean peninsula, while easily monitoring an express train crossing the border to China, that allegedly transported north Korea's leader Kim Jong-il in a secret visit to China recently.

Other independent analysts claimed the evidence(s) in the US-led report were tampered with.

In September, the US and south Korea went ahead with their joint naval exercises by rationalizing on the findings of the US imperialist-led investigative committee. But the militant and battle-ready DPRK continues to hold its ground against the ever-growing threat of US imperialist aggression.

In a recent statement on the war exercises, north Korea declared: "The provocative war exercises being staged by the south Korean war-like forces, in collusion with the US, are increasing the military threat to the DPRK and escalating tensions. These anti-dialogue and anti-peace actions diametrically run counter to the trend of times."

"Should the south Korean authorities persist in their provocative war exercises in conspiracy with foreign forces, peace and stability will never settle on the Korean Peninsula but confrontation and distrust between the north and the south will further fester and this will lead to the outbreak of a nuclear war," it further stressed. ■



The wrecked remains of the ROK Navy corvette Cheonan, hoisted from the waters off north Korea. graphic: maps.google.com / www.prlog.org

Women's movement responds to the needs of the times, launches International Women's Alliance

By Coni Ledesma and Isah Antonio

August 16, 2010 is a historic day for the women's anti-imperialist movement. On this day, the International Women's Alliance (IWA) held its Founding Assembly in Montreal, Canada. More than 150 women, representing more than 25 mass organizations and networks from around the world were present during the assembly, forming the core of the Alliance.

The anti-imperialist Alliance aims to coordinate local, regional and international campaigns, promote mutual support and sharing of resistance strategies, and mobilize women around the world in the struggle against imperialism and capitalist globalization.

Remembering the collective struggle for women's political, economic and cultural rights for the past 100 years, the IWA's Basis of Unity stressed that the struggle of the exploited and oppressed women show their desire and persistence to build an alternate system that is humane, equitable and just.

"An alternative system where the world's resources serve the needs of the people and not for the profit of a few and where people of all nations enjoy genuine freedom, democracy and equality among women and men," declared the document.

The Assembly addressed the major problems besetting women in various situations, as well as current and potential forms of resistance being waged by women of today.

The IWA is planning to hold its First General Assembly next year. Among the immediate tasks for this assembly is the promulgation of the Constitution and By-Laws of IWA and the election of its officers. Meanwhile, the IWA called on its member organizations to actively encourage other anti-imperialist mass organizations and networks of women to join and participate in the IWA and its First General Assembly. IWA members were called on to organize regional conferences wherein issues and resolutions taken up during such conferences could be brought up in the General Assembly.

The launching of the International Women's Alliance came on the heels of the immensely successful two-day Montreal International Women's Conference (MIWC). United in



photo: MIWC2010 - CIFM2010 www.flickr.com/photos/51908792@N07/

the theme "Moving Forward the Militant Global Women's Movement in the 21st Century", more than 350 participants from 32 countries attended the conference, including women from Pakistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines, Mali, the Czech Republic, Germany, Cuba, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico, the Netherlands, Canada and the United States of America.

From 13-15 August, delegates participated in plenary and workshop discussions about a wide range of topics that included indigenous struggles, developmental aggression, violence against women, racism, discrimination and genocide, as well as resistance to imperialist wars and aggression.

In her Keynote Speech to the conference, Liza Maza, President of the Philippines' Gabriela Women's Party, spoke of the achievements of women's struggles amidst setbacks and deviations, and their continuing commitment to the cause of genuine freedom for all working women and peoples of the world.

She reminded the participants that seeing the world divided between men and women and not by classes results in the myopic understanding that women should only care for specific women's issues and fight for equality of women alone. "Such thinking," she states, "obscures the reality of the root causes of the exploitation and oppression of

women and men, which is imperialism.

She continues, "Imperialism shapes, intensifies and gives patriarchy its current form to serve the imperialists and ruling elites, and makes women more vulnerable to exploitation, oppression, discrimination and violence."

Maza stressed that among most important and urgent tasks of the women's movement in the 21st century are to educate and arouse women and men on the rights of women; to raise the political consciousness of women; to build an alliance that will mobilize women and men from all over the world; and to build a society where women's rights are guaranteed and women's meaningful participation and development are ensured.

Meanwhile, Coni Ledesma, International Spokesperson of the revolutionary women's organization MAKIBAKA (Patriotic Movement of New Women), stressed that it is important for women to find the correct analysis and understanding of the cause of oppression of women. The correct orientation, according to her, will enable the women's movement to determine the strategy and tactics in the struggle for women's liberation.

According to Ledesma, the exploitation and oppression of women started with

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