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US Counterinsurgency Guide 2009

Guide to imperialist intervention and aggression and counterrevolutionary war

*Executive Committee-Central Committee
Communist Party of the Philippines*

The US COIN Guide was issued by the US government in January 2009. It presents US imperialism's current official doctrine in fighting revolutionary armed struggle in colonial and semicolonial countries.

It is allegedly the product of summed-up experiences in implementing "counterinsurgency" in various parts of the globe for the past 40 years and was the result of collaborative efforts of nine US government agencies and/or offices led by the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Department of State.

The agencies involved in writing the US COIN Guide 2009 are the Department of State, Department of Defense, Department of Justice, Department of The Treasury, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Agriculture, Department of Transportation, Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the US Agency for International Development.

Through the document, the US government speaks as a sole super-power and self-appointed international policeman. It unabashedly presents the various types and levels of interference and intervention,

which are undertaken with or without the permission of the targeted subject of 'assistance' or client government, in the name of fighting "insurgency."

US imperialism estimates that it is armed revolutions that pose major and growing threats to the US' international power in the 21st century. With the crash of the international capitalist system in the Long Depression since 2008, the US anticipates the explosion of widespread people's dissent, armed revolutions and upheavals. US planners also anticipate only a remote possibility that the US will be

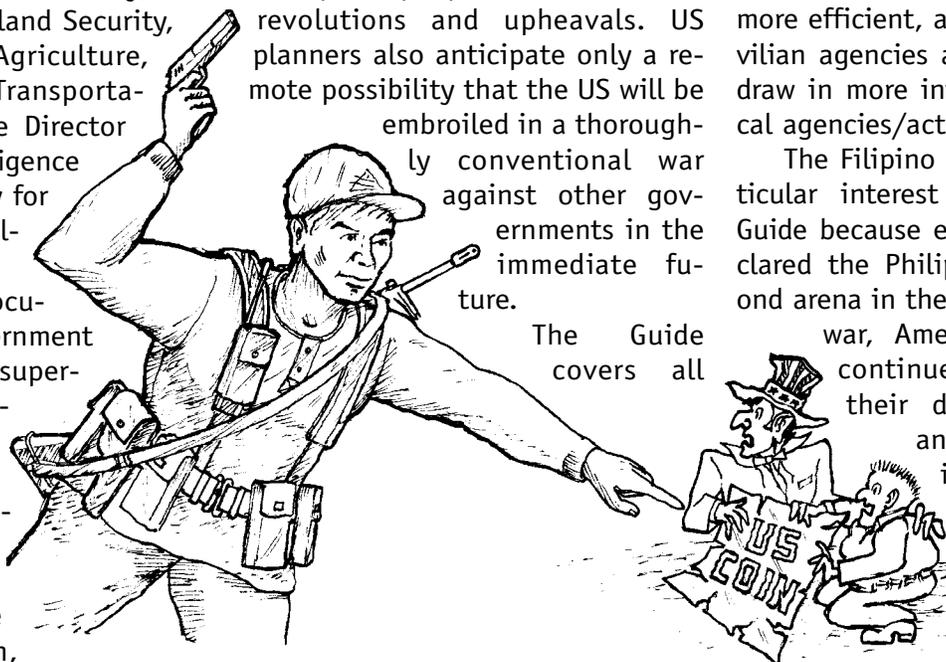
embroiled in a thoroughly conventional war against other governments in the immediate future.

The Guide covers all

aspects of COIN and intervention by the US' military and non-military agencies although it stresses the non-military components and tasks of civilian agencies. It clarifies that these are complementary to existing COIN manuals and guides issued by the US military.

In providing guidelines for US intervention, it noticeably avoids being colored by the jingoism, arrogance and unilateralism of Bush's "global war on terror." As a guide to COIN, it strikingly avoids Vietnam War-era terms and presentations. Its goal is to refurbish imperialist intervention to make it broader and more efficient, actively mobilize civilian agencies and personnel, and draw in more international and local agencies/actors.

The Filipino people have a particular interest in the US COIN Guide because ever since Bush declared the Philippines as the second arena in the "counter-terrorist" war, American troops have continued and expanded their direct intervention and permanent basing as well as their civil and military operations and foreign internal defense in the country. Al-



though claiming to fight the terrorism of the Abu Sayaf bandit group, the growing targets of US intervention are the MILF and NDFP, with the COIN Guide being applied to the hilt against them.

The COIN Guide must be studied to enable us to more sharply monitor and grasp the operations and schemes not only of US troops but the aggressive networking being done by US Ambassador Harry Thomas Jr., the successive visits of high-ranking US officials, the USAID's prominent role, the enhanced military and economic aid, the psywar experts' hype of "Cory's legacy" upon her death and the support for Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III's candidacy and the aggressive promotion of reformist illusions after the election.

We also anticipate that the COIN Guide will likely have a major influence on the COIN plan that the Aquino regime will be drafting in place of OBL.

The use of the terms "insurgency" and "counterinsurgency" was purposely done by the imperialists and their puppets to evade the historic-political, national and class-societal bases and framework for the struggle between revolution and reaction. Such terms are also instruments in the effort to criminalize and isolate the armed revolution. It is part of the bureaucratic, technocratic and technique-oriented style, concept and presentation and muddles the issue of imperialist intervention and control and the suppression of the just and revolutionary struggle of oppressed nations and peoples.

Massive psywar operations simultaneous with violent armed repression

The document presents the counterinsurgency doctrine's formula—conducting massive psywar operations alongside violent armed repression with US imperialism playing a direct and calibrated role depending on its estimate of the needed level of intervention. The counterinsurgency doctrine has been redesigned and promoted in the name of counterterrorism, defense of democracy, reforming and stabilizing weak governments, resolving the peo-

ple's poverty, long-term economic development and winning the people's support.

The massive psywar operations and violent armed repression formula should supposedly be undertaken simultaneously and molded into a single counterinsurgency strategy in every affected country. The counterinsurgency strategy has five components—the four tasks ("politics," "economy," "security," and "information") that all redound to "control" as the fifth component.

Of the four, the US COIN Guide states that "politics" is the key, and at its center lies the establishment of a prevailing political setup where formal democratic processes are credible and acceptable to the people. This is the key in a "counterinsurgency" strategy in the sense that it allegedly plays a decisive role in winning back the people from the insurgency to the fold of government and serves as the main framework for implementing the other components of the "counterinsurgency strategy."

If the illusion of a government that implements reforms, addresses the people's interests and advances the agenda of economic development can be created, they can sup-

posedly "eliminate the reason for the insurgency's existence," win the people's support, marginalize the "insurgent" armed force and violently suppress it.

The components of the massive psywar operation, dubbed in the document as the "population-centric approach" are the following:

1. setting up a credible government
2. creating so-called genuine indicators of economic development
3. mobilizing the reactionary armed forces in non-traditional military tasks such as participating in socio-economic projects and providing assistance during calamities in order to create an image of public service
4. implementing so-called reforms in the security sector which comprises the police, armed forces and judiciary in order to strengthen the reactionary state
5. actively seeking and collating information from the population to shape their psywar propaganda in the mass media and manipulate public opinion in favor of reactionary rule and against armed uprising

The violent armed repression of the people's armed resistance com-



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prises the so-called “enemy-centric approach” and covers the usual military parameters—number of “insurgents” killed, number of firearms recovered, extent of reduction of areas covered, neutralization of the leadership, destruction of identified centers of gravity of the enemy; use of various strategies against the revolutionary armed forces: “soft” and “hard,” direct and indirect, violent and non-violent, decapitation

and marginalization.

The US will thus continue providing aid to the armed forces of affected governments in the form of financial assistance, equipment and resources, training and if needed, forces directly operating within the affected country as part of civil-military assistance or direct assistance in internal defense or direct military intervention by US troops.

The favored political atmosphere in a counterinsurgency strategy

US counterinsurgency strategy favors a political atmosphere that cultivates an image of reform in order to assert the legitimacy of the ruling system and government.

In determining the different ways of dealing with various forms of people's resistance, US imperialism presumes that it would be best for its interests if the political atmosphere is one that always provides opportunities to pacify dissent and resistance from the oppressed and exploited people. US imperialism also calls this the “release valve,” a way of channeling heat whenever dissent intensifies and the people are determined to wage resistance. Among the “tried and tested” methods of US imperialism and its local



praise for the automated polls as an example of a clean and successful election.

■ choosing a puppet who is acceptable to the people and is able to project a reformist image. This type of puppet can be used to continue creating the illusion among the exploited and oppressed people that there is “hope for change.”

■ implementing selective reforms that will not touch on substantive social issues, but are designed to deceive the people and lead them to “believe” in the ruling regime.

Among the examples that can be cited are President Aquino's pronouncements and steps focusing on small and shallow reforms—a ban on the use of sirens by VIPs, the revocation of midnight appointments, an alleged call to respect human rights, the implementation of economic projects mainly attuned to providing infrastructural support for foreign investments, the establishment of a Truth Commission—while purposely avoiding the issues of implementing genuine land reform and genuine industrialization, raising workers' wages and defending national sovereignty.

US imperialism considers an acceptable political atmosphere as the key or the decisive component in ending or defeating “insurgency” in a country. Using such an atmosphere, it aims to accomplish the following:

1. To have an effective channel

for various types of US imperialist assistance to the ruling system, among them financial aid, economic projects and military assistance.

2. To facilitate the legal basis for further and more unencumbered US imperialist intervention in the country's economy, politics and military.

A particular agenda of US imperialism in the Philippines is changing the reactionary constitution to eradicate obstacles to its unhampered control of the country's economy, politics and military

3. Win over what it calls the “insurgency's soft support” among the people. (They consider as “soft support” those who they believe only sympathize with the “insurgency” not for reasons of ideology or adherence to its political program but due to personal circumstances).

4. Forge effective unity among the different government units and agencies.

5. Mobilize the middle forces (especially the urban petty bourgeoisie) as the voice of their support among the people.

6. Isolate the revolutionary movement through “psywar operations” in the mass media and among the people in accordance with the line that “there is no longer any reason to fight.”

7. Achieve the armed suppression of the revolutionary forces with a minimum of disquiet or opposition from the middle forces and the people.

Parallel implementation and the right relationship between psywar operations and violent armed suppression

Identifying an acceptable political atmosphere as the key component of “counter-insurgency” does not mean that the armed mode of eliminating the revolutionary forces shall take second priority to “reforms” and the “soft” approach.

Different sections of the US COIN Guide repeatedly point out that the right relationship between the various components is not sequential or serial but rather parallel and emphasize that the subject is armed resistance. It thus points out that the establishment of an acceptable political atmosphere should be accomplished alongside economic reforms (actually economic projects in accordance with the policy of globalization), armed suppression of revolutionary forces and mass intelligence and information gathering among the populace to be used against revolutionary forces and employed by the political entity in its ‘psywar operations’ against the people.

In fact, among the important roles of an acceptable political atmosphere is to make the armed elimination of the revolutionary forces acceptable to the people.

The US COIN Guide is the doctrine now being applied by the AFP and used in guiding the extended OBL. The following operational principles of the AFP therefore remain: “holistic approach” which means the simultaneous conduct of operations in rural and urban areas, “operations in depth,” identifying and striking supposed centers-of-gravity of the revolutionary movement, dissemination of what they consider as successful models of “counterinsurgency” such as the Palparan model, the Gomez model, the de Mesa model, the Bustillo model, and the “Cougar concept of clearing the RA and WA.” But in accordance with the US COIN Guide, these principles will be made more deceptive and their psywar or CMO component enhanced.

The US has increased and upgraded its military assistance to the

Aquino government and the AFP in the form of modern weapons, precision-guided missiles, state of the art equipment and training in intelligence gathering and the regular conduct of the Joint US-RP Balikatan military exercises.

The program of the reactionary and puppet Aquino government also includes the expansion of the AFP and the police in order to achieve a 10:1 ratio of reactionary troops to NPA fighters without abandoning the Abu Sayyaf and the MILF problem, and ostensibly to protect the country’s growing population.

The US COIN Guide teaches quick adaptability and flexibility of strategy.

US imperialism prescribes psywar operations as the center of gravity of the counterinsurgency strategy against “protracted and complex insurgencies.” But it immediately points out that the doctrine is only a guide and it expects that the strategy in the actual stage of conflict would not take a “linear” course but a combination of different approaches, strategies and methods.

Calibrated US intervention

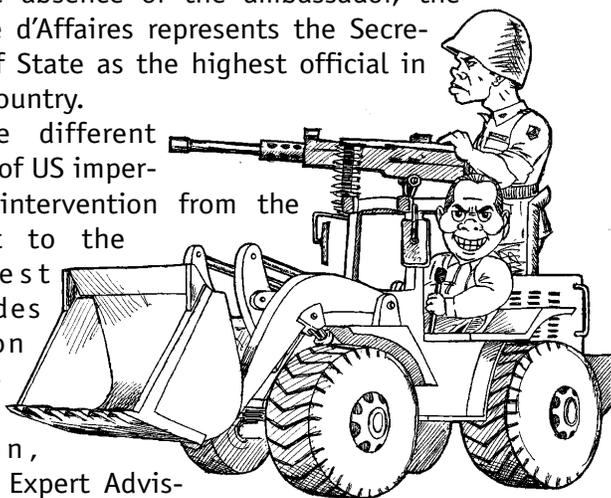
The US defines various levels of intervention, from the lowest to the highest, in implementing the adopted counterinsurgency strategy in a particular country. Direct and open intervention is a sensitive matter that the US would not resort to as long as “low-profile” and “low-cost, small footprint” intervention works. It is always wary of public opinion in the US regarding direct armed intervention and the associated costs.

The US Mission’s Country Team, in close coordination with the State Department, is the central element in managing the implementation of US COIN strategies, plans and programs in the target countries. The Country Team is headed by the Chief of Mission (COM) in coordination with the Department of State. The US ambassador himself acts as COM and represents the US president in the country concerned and is responsible for endorsing and implementing US policies as well as

supervising all government employees in that country.

The US ambassador has extraordinary authority as the highest official in the country being subjected to intervention in times of crisis and unstable situations. In the absence of the ambassador, the Charge d’Affaires represents the Secretary of State as the highest official in that country.

The different levels of US imperialist intervention from the lowest to the highest includes Mission Augmentation, Single Expert Advis-



or, Civil-Military Assistance, Foreign Internal Defense, and Direct COIN Intervention.

Mission Augmentation. Mission Augmentation involves the deployment of an additional team of specialists on civil and military affairs to assist the Country Team in its tasks. The entry of the augmentation mission is covert. It is considered to be most suitable when the "insurgency" in a certain country is at its early stages. It is also the method of choice if the other levels of US intervention are too sensitive politically.

Single Expert Advisor. The Single Expert Advisor (SEA) is an adviser (either military or civilian) who is directly embedded in the staff of the government involved. The SEA shall be in close consultation with the affected government to give advice and training and assist elected government officials in handling the insurgency. He or she assesses the situation, develops plans and capabilities to support the affected government and gives advice in employing and tasking additional US personnel.

Civil-Military Assistance. Civil-Military Assistance involves the deployment of specialists as a Joint Inter-agency Task Force that will directly work with civilian and

military agencies of the government involved. It can embed group members or set up detachments in key positions in the affected government to extend support, advice, technical assistance, education and training.

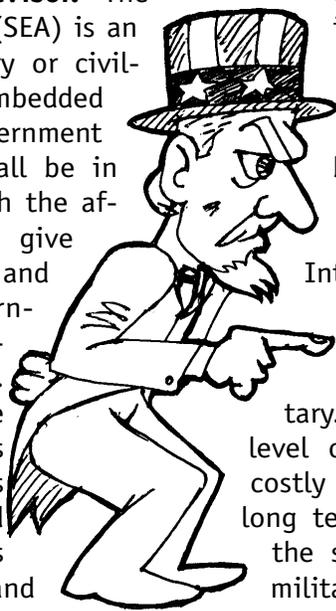
However, team members usually do not engage in direct confrontation with the "insurgency." It uses the Civil-Military Assistance Program to develop an Internal Defense and Development Strategy in consultation with the affected government and serve as conduit for assistance from the international community. It operates independently of the Country Team but under the COM. If the security threat is assessed to be severe, it can operate under a military authority. Unlike Foreign Internal Defense, it remains under civilian leadership and is just supported by the military. The US considers this level of intervention as less costly and sustainable in the long term. It intends to keep the small size of the civil-military assistance team and give it enough time before relief to increase its effectivity relative to cost.

In the Philippines, the level of US intervention can be assessed to be in the third level (Civil-Military

Assistance) based on the US' own statement about its mission in the southern Philippines (Mindanao) against the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah and supposed al Qaeda operatives in the area. Also present in different parts of the country is the so-called US Humanitarian Mission being enforced by US troops along with the AFP. It has also been proven in several instances that US troops are directly engaging in combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf, MILF and the NPA.

Foreign Internal Defense. Foreign Internal Defense involves the deployment of military teams usually from the US Special Operations Command to support the affected government. Its difference from Civil-Military Assistance is its military leadership although it also receives substantial support from various agencies of the US government. The scope, size, budget allocation and level of direct open intervention may vary but the level is definitely lower than Direct COIN Intervention.

Direct COIN Intervention. Direct COIN Intervention involves the outright deployment of sizable US troops to undertake a military counterinsurgency campaign in the affected country. Depending upon the objectives of the US, this can be the first option or measure (as in Iraq and Afghanistan) or the last resort if the intervention levels discussed above fail.



The US COIN strategy is bound to fail

The US COIN strategy is bound to fail in eliminating the legitimate and just resistance of the people against the domination of US imperialism and the local ruling class. It can be compared to a swimmer diving into the water with a heavy rock tied to his neck.

The heavy rock is precisely the objective of eliminating the people's legitimate and just resistance in order to perpetuate their rule, exploitation and oppression. No real change can be expected so long as the people are oppressed and exploited. The US only in-

tends to deceive them through token schemes in order to further squeeze and impoverish the people and weaken their struggle.

The severe crisis besetting the world and the country is unmistakable. As exploitation and oppression worsen, the people's resistance will also intensify. Whatever volume of resources or number of personnel the US pours in will end up in the dustbin of history as it confronts a people determined to gain their freedom and achieve genuine democracy.

Our tasks

Although we are certain that the US COIN strategy will fail, it requires considerable effort to expose, fight and frustrate the scheme in part and in whole, in the short and the long run.

To be able to expose, resist and frustrate the US COIN strategy, we must accomplish the following urgent tasks:

1. Sharply draw the line between revolution and reformism. Firmly grasp, uphold and put to practice in every revolutionary undertaking the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and antifascist line. Reformism and any pretensions at instituting reforms can only be exposed and defanged by upholding the class struggle, the real and basic interests of the people against

their class enemies.

2. Establish closer links with the masses through the advancement of the basic mass movement and mass struggles. Through this, we can reach the people in their millions, draw them to the path of armed revolution and strengthen the just basis of armed struggle.

3. Resolutely raise the people's war to a higher level. Fulfill the requirements to advance to the stage of full-scale guerrilla warfare and lay down the basis for advancing to the strategic stalemate.

4. Tirelessly raise the level of political consciousness of the people through intensive and extensive political education, propaganda work and cultural work.

5. Establish the broad united front of the oppressed and exploit-

ed, divide the ranks of the enemy, isolate and fight one chief puppet of the reactionary state after another.

6. Intensify tit-for-tat and intensive and extensive propaganda work in order to shatter all kinds of deception, expose the fascist crimes and counterrevolutionary designs of the US and its local puppet and other local ruling classes.

7. Expose and oppose US imperialist schemes in the country and bring these issues to the US and international arenas.

The leading Party organs and committees at the national and regional levels will formulate particular plans to direct the entire Party organization and the revolutionary movement at various levels. AB

History of US armed intervention in the Philippines

Armed intervention in the Philippines was massive and brutal as the US colonized the country in 1899. The US poured and directly unleashed its military forces in counterinsurgency operations against the revolutionary forces fighting foreign occupation. It was one of the most violent of all of the US' wars of aggression.

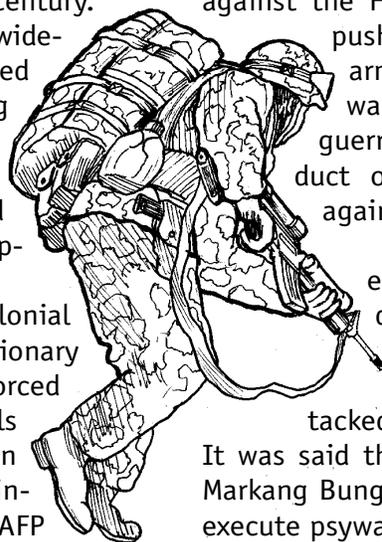
More than one million Filipinos were killed from 1899 up to the early years of the 20th century. The US tried to assuage the people's widespread and intense anger against armed suppression through the succeeding "pacification" campaign and spread of pro-US culture. The combination of killings and sugar-coated bullets formed the first US COIN program in the Philippines.

Since the establishment of the neocolonial republic in 1946, the US counterrevolutionary war in the Philippines has been enforced through puppet governments. US officials and troops have strongly intervened in military campaigns of suppression by training, supervising and providing advice to AFP officers and designing, monitoring and outrightly directing COIN plans and campaigns.

Lt. Col Edward Lansdale became the first imple-

mentor of the US counterinsurgency war in the Philippines, using the Joint US Military Assistance Group (JUSMAG) in the later part of the 1940s until his transfer to Vietnam in 1953. A former member of the OSS (now the Central Intelligence Agency), Lansdale served as the closest adviser of Ramon Magsaysay who was then Quirino's Defense Secretary before succeeding him as the new puppet president. The operation against the HMB (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan) pushed by Lansdale in the local puppet armed forces and dubbed the "Black War" was marked by the killing of suspected guerrillas and their supporters, and the conduct of the most brutal psywar operations against the masses.

Lansdale and his group of "expert advisers" formed, trained and deployed murderous paramilitary units like the Nenita Unit (the notorious "Markang Bungo") of Maj. Napoleon Valeriano, which attacked and massacred suspected HMB bases. It was said that rivers turned red with the blood of Markang Bungo victims. Lansdale also helped the AFP execute psywar operations, including the implementation of showcase "civic action" and economic projects like the Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) to bait the guerrillas into surrendering.



In the face of the brutal counterrevolutionary war in the 1950s, the revisionist leadership of the old party did nothing but retreat and hide, until it was thoroughly isolated and vanquished. The old army eventually disbanded, with its remnants becoming "roving rebel bands."

People's war advanced anew when the Communist Party of the Philippines was reestablished under the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist framework and formed the New People's Army. US imperialism and its puppet reactionary state have failed to defeat it despite various versions of



the COIN campaign: Oplan Katatagan under Marcos, Oplan Mamamayan under Cory Aquino, Oplan Lambat Bitag and Oplan Unlad-Bayan under Ramos, Oplan Makabayan and Oplan Balangai under Estrada, and Oplan Bantay Laya under Gloria Arroyo.

In the process of facing and overcoming the grave hardships resulting from these oplans, the revolutionary movement has accumulated a wealth of lessons, avoided serious setbacks, dealt heavy blows on the enemy and advanced the people's war with utmost determination. **AB**

The US COIN and the US-Aquino regime

US imperialism expects that through the new puppet government of Benigno Aquino III, its COIN will be advanced in the Philippines, the people's anger assuaged, their struggle for national independence crushed, and its political, military, economic, diplomatic and other interests further upheld.

Aquino faithfully toes the US COIN line. In his speech at the Peace and Security Forum last April 22, 2010, he formulated his national security policies culled from the US COIN Guide. He boasted that he would make the government credible, deliver basic services, develop the economy and strengthen the military and security forces. These are the so-called "four pillars" invoked by the Aquino government as its framework in entering the peace talks.

Aquino rides on the people's broad aspirations for change, using the slogan "*kung walang korap, walang mahirap*" (there's no poverty when there's no corruption). This posturing perfectly corresponds to the political offensive the US COIN Guide has been advocating. The so-called political offensive seeks to lull the people with bogus promises. Aquino puts premium on this with his formation of an expanded Communications Group which has been tasked to

think of the gimmicks needed to divert the people's attention from their basic problems and portray the regime as a "government for change."

The US-Aquino regime brings in nothing but shallow and pretentious posturing to cover up the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system. As soon as Aquino took power as the new president, the image of his "government for change" was quickly torn to shreds. The rottenness he tried so hard to obscure, the anomalies, and inutility all emitted their stench, so much so that his government has proven to be no different from the previous puppet regimes.

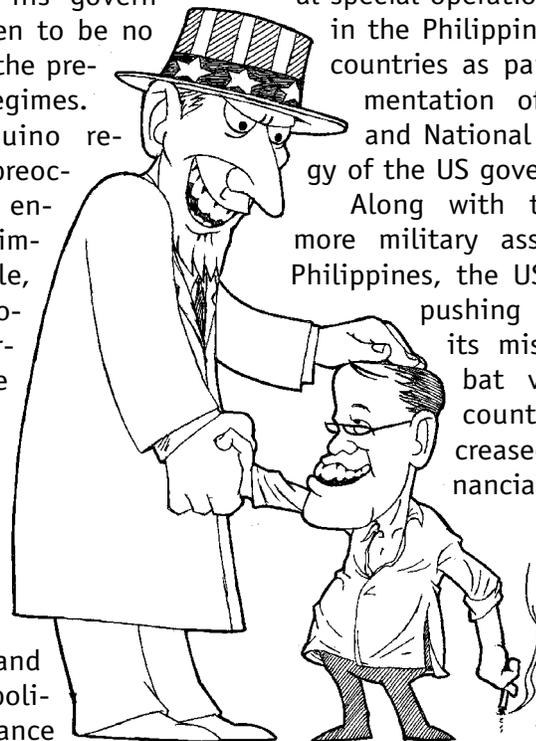
The US-Aquino regime's main preoccupation is to ensure that US imperialist rule, policies and programs are perpetuated in the Philippines.

Aquino is currently intensifying the neoliberalization, denationalization, privatization and deregulation policies in consonance

with the "private-public partnership" program, contrary to the need for national industrialization and economic development, and to the detriment of the people's interests.

Aquino refuses to address the issue of permanent US military presence in the Philippines because of his heavy dependence on US military and financial assistance. High-ranking US security officials have been visiting the country to pave the way for intensified US military intervention. Recently, the US secretly deployed additional special operations forces (SOFs) in the Philippines and 69 other countries as part of the implementation of the US COIN and National Security Strategy of the US government.

Along with the promise of more military assistance to the Philippines, the US has also been pushing for the sale of its missiles and combat vehicles in the country. It has increased its annual financial assistance to the Philippine National Police (PNP) from P400 million to P600 million. The funding comes from



the US International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP). Rightist institutions (like the Heritage Foundation) have also been pushing the US government to continue supporting the modernization program of the puppet army, in accordance with Aquino's plans to further strengthen the AFP.

The US has also approved the appropriation of \$434 million from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). A big portion of this will go to the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (a local version of the US Conditional Cash Transfer scheme), Kapit Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) and Self-Employment Assistance-Kaunlaran (SEA-K).

Faced with intensifying people's war, Aquino is more partial to using armed counterrevolution to suppress the people's anti-imperialist and democratic struggle. He babbles about "peace," but has practically doubled the budget of the fascist military. He has not shown any interest in addressing the people's longstanding demand

to give justice to the victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the reactionary armed forces. He has not provided a quick resolution nor has he shown serious concern for the cases of extrajudicial killings that arose immediately upon his assumption to power.

Aquino has not repudiated OBL and has instead extended it until January 2011 even as he prepares a new COIN campaign for next year. In accordance with the stipulations of the US COIN Guide, the new COIN campaign will allegedly stress Civilian-Military Operations and other cosmetic measures with the aim of winning over the people. In fact, Aquino cannot deny that COIN's principal and brutal foundation is military might and military operations.

Aquino has made an immediate ceasefire a condition before formal peace talks could be resumed with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. This violates The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992 that sets the principles, framework, agenda and sequence of the talks. For Aquino (and also according to his US COIN Guide reference), peace talks are not essential in



crushing the armed revolution and can be used only as a deceptive and cosmetic instrument of fascist armed counterrevolution along with other types of gimmickry and showcase programs. He is currently advancing "local peace talks" in an attempt to show that his puppet regime has taken some so-called peace initiatives, even if this is a case of a government talking only to itself. AB