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## **MOBILIZE THE BROAD MASSES OF THE PEOPLE TO DELIVER THE DEATH BLOW TO THE ESTRADA REGIME**

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As we celebrate the 32nd anniversary of the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines under the theoretical guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, we resolve to mobilize the broad masses of the people in order to deliver the death blow to the US-Estrada regime, strengthen all revolutionary forces and intensify all forms of revolutionary struggle.

As a result of the successful Second Great Rectification Movement, we are in a position to carry out the short-term objective of overthrowing the regime and advance the long-term objective of overthrowing the entire ruling system of the big compradors and landlords and establishing the people's democratic system of the workers and peasants under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

We render today the highest tribute to Comrade Armando Teng, member of the Central Committee, Political Bureau and Executive Committee and secretary of the Southern Luzon Commission of the Party, who recently died of illness, and to all our revolutionary martyrs and heroes. And we convey our warmest congratulations to all the Party cadres and members, the Red commanders and fighters of the New People's Army (NPA), the allies in the National Democratic Front (NDFP) and the broad masses of the people for all the victories scored in the past year.

We have made great advances in building the Party ideologically, politically and organizationally. In more than 100 guerrilla fronts nationwide, the NPA has strengthened its ranks, carried out land reform and mass work and scored brilliant victories in armed struggle. In both urban and rural areas, we have built mass organizations of various types and brought the mass movement to a new and higher level of development.

Since coming to power in 1998, the US-Estrada regime has aggravated the oppression and exploitation of the people by its subservience to foreign monopoly capitalism, exacerbation of feudal and semifeudal conditions and unbridled bureaucratic corruption. It has acted flagrantly as the enemy of the people even as it has demagogically decked itself out as pro-poor.

With overweening arrogance, Estrada scuttled the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and vowed to destroy the revolutionary movement. Now charged with the most brazen crimes of corruption and plunder, he is desperately fighting for his political survival. The broad masses of the people, including our compatriots abroad, are incensed by his crimes and are clamoring for his removal from power. A broad united front has isolated him and his clique and is capable of ousting him.

The US-Estrada regime is in the throes of political death while the revolutionary mass movement is vigorously surging forward. The Party plays a crucial role in mobilizing the broad masses of the people and in delivering the death blow to the regime. The people are in the process of consigning one more reactionary regime to the garbage heap of history.

## **I. The culpability of the Estrada regime and the entire ruling system**

The Estrada regime is both the product and the aggravation of the chronic crisis of the rotten ruling system. It is a glaring proof of the decadent and moribund character of the system that someone like Estrada has become the president of the neocolonial republic. He blends the rapacity of the imperialists, the worst of the local reactionaries and criminal syndicates.

In the aftermath of the 1997 financial and economic crisis, Estrada was elected from a field of so many reactionary candidates by hypocritically touting himself as the champion of the poor and denouncing the crimes and failures of the US-Ramos regime. Since the beginning of his term, Estrada has shown contempt for the people, especially the impoverished toiling masses of workers and peasants.

He has flaunted the patronage and company of the Marcoses, the most notorious cronies of Marcos like Eduardo Cojuangco and Lucio Tan and criminal gangsters like Atong Ang. He has adopted the policy dictates of the IMF, World Bank and WTO in a sell-out of economic sovereignty and the national patrimony. In violation of Philippine national sovereignty and territorial integrity, he has rammed through the Senate the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

In less than half of his 6-year term, he has been impeached by the House of Representatives and is now on the dock in the Senate trial for gross acts of bribery, graft and corruption, betrayal of public trust and culpable violation of the 1987 constitution. The people are outraged and are engaged in nationwide mass actions to oust him or compel his resignation. The consensus in the

broad united front of organized forces is to remove him from power for immorality, corruption, incompetence and repressiveness.

It is correct to focus on the culpability of Estrada and his ruling clique and the necessity of overthrowing them. But we do not lose sight of the fact that the entire ruling system has become more exploitative and oppressive because of the "free market" policy dictates of the imperialist firms, banks and multilateral agencies such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO. These have accelerated and aggravated imperialist profit-taking, feudal and semifeudal accumulation of land and bureaucratic corruption. These have rapidly resulted in the fierce resistance of the people and the isolation of the Estrada regime.

The neocolonial ruling system has been bankrupted faster by the "neoliberal" policy bias than the "Keynesian" policy bias which peaked during the Marcos fascist regime through graft-ridden public works and unbridled foreign borrowing. The "neoliberal" policy bias has further deepened the semicolonial and semifeudal character of society through the plundering flows of finance capital, the liberalization of imports, the privatization of state assets and deregulation at the expense of the nation, labor and the environment.

The economy is more agrarian and semifeudal than ever before. It is more than ever dependent on the export of raw materials and low value-added semimanufactures and on foreign loans to finance the trade deficits and debt service. The promotion of import-dependent semimanufacturing and private construction and dependence on foreign commercial credit and portfolio investments have sapped the financial and economic system. Rather than the export of any product, the export of contract workers yields the most foreign exchange. This is gobbled up by the multinational banks and firms and exploiting classes.

The mantra of all the reactionaries is to "compete globally". But the Philippine economy has nothing to export but raw materials, semimanufactured reexports and contract workers. These are now squeezed by global oversupply and recessionary trend. Even the export of men and women is under growing pressure by economic and legal restrictions abroad, due to the general stagnation and crisis of overproduction of the world capitalist system.

Because of its "neoliberal" policy bias and growing bankruptcy, the neocolonial ruling system does not even promise or pretend to undertake any major industrial project and land reform. The regime has been reduced to promoting gambling enterprises as its "flagship" projects. It leaves everything to the so-called free market and is reduced to the role of manipulating the interest rate, increasing the tax burden of the people and giving priority to the free flow of finance capital, to debt service and to military expenditures over social services.

The broad masses of the people are forcibly placed under austerity measures, while the exploiting classes indulge themselves in the most conspicuous forms of import-dependent consumerism, such as mansions, high-rise buildings, cars and high-tech consumer products. Regular employment is being wiped out both by the downsizing and closure of enterprises. At least 77 percent of the labor force is officially acknowledged as without regular employment. They are categorized as unemployed, underemployed, casuals and self-employed.

Due to the powerful resistance of the broad masses of the people, the US-Estrada regime has been unable to amend the 1987 constitution for purposes of deleting its provisions on conserving the national patrimony and restricting foreign investments. But it has used Congress to give the most extraordinary privileges to the imperialist banks and firms. Every type of business is wide open to the foreign monopolies. The regime and the oil monopolies collude in frequently hiking oil prices and in effect the prices of all basic goods and services.

Inflation is generated by the cost push of debt service, deficit spending, imports and corruption as well as by the scarcity of basic consumer goods as a result of the breakdown of local production. Under the slogan of free trade, big compradors take profits from the import and export of sugar, rice, corn and vegetable oil, with the import side pressing down the income of peasants and farm workers and on local production.

In exchange for the servility of the regime, the imperialists have given Estrada and his cronies a wide latitude for bureaucratic corruption and repression. But the puppets have run afoul of the IMF by repeatedly exceeding the ceiling on deficit spending and the World Bank by excessive graft and corruption, now amounting to 44 percent of all government spending. Imperialism promotes corruption and cronyism among the puppets but when the puppet chieftain begins to stink too much and becomes more of a liability than an asset the imperialist masters are ready to adopt a new puppet chieftain.

The budgetary and trade deficits are mounting. At the same time, international credit is drying up. The reduction of interest rate during the first two years of the regime has been unsustainable. Local public borrowing is accelerated and inflation is consequently soaring. The crisis of the domestic ruling system is inextricably connected to the worsening crisis of overproduction in the world capitalist system. Every type of goods is now overproduced relative to the shrinking global market. This has been constricted due to the effect of the "neoliberal" policy of pressing down the wage and living conditions of the working people.

The crisis of overproduction is now hitting hard even the high-tech electronic goods for production and consumption. This type of goods assured the US of the lead in the world capitalist economy throughout the last decade and attracted foreign investments to the US. Now the bursting of the US "new economy" bubble (overvaluation of assets, jobkilling growth and high-tech hype) can cause the flight of European and Japanese capital from the US and an unprecedented financial and economic crisis on a global scale.

In the Philippines, the toiling masses of workers and peasants and the middle social strata suffer acutely the intolerable rigors of mass unemployment, the fall of real incomes, inflation, depreciation of the peso, the mounting tax burden and the breakdown of infrastructure and social services. Even the upper class and upper-middle class are complaining of the rising costs of their import-dependent conspicuous consumption. Thus, they are scandalized by Estrada's frenzy of providing mansions and limousines to his many wives.

The economic crisis is at the base of the current political crisis. The contradictions among the reactionaries have become more bitter because the spoils available for division among them have been much reduced and the Estrada ruling clique has tended to monopolize the loot. The main

beneficiaries of bureaucrat capitalism are Estrada himself, Eduardo Cojuangco, an assortment of Filipino-Chinese businessmen and Estrada's multiple families.

Estrada takes bribes in the course of the following: the issuance of permits and licenses, the disposition of state loans, supply contracts with the reactionary government, big cases of tax evasion, technical smuggling, stockmarket manipulation and the distribution of pork barrel funds which he monopolizes.

In the style of the Mafia lord, he takes the lion's share from the numbers game racket, kidnap-for-ransom operations and domestic sale and transit of prohibited drugs to the US and US military bases. The personal rapacity of Estrada is such that a key member of his criminal "midnight cabinet" has broken away from him and exposed his role as the criminal overlord.

The corruption of Estrada is so unbridled and blatant that most sections of the exploiting classes have condemned his moral turpitude and have joined the broad united front to remove him from power. Nearly all the business organizations, the Catholic and Protestant clergy and Islamic ulamas, civic and professional organizations, the yellow trade union organizations and most of the major bourgeois mass media are calling for Estrada's resignation. The Catholic bishops, clergy and laity are mobilizing to counter the support of El Shaddai (a "charismatic" group) and the Iglesia ni Cristo for Estrada.

Cardinal Sin, former presidents Aquino and Ramos, the LAKAS-NUCD and United Opposition are vigorously demanding that vice-president Macapagal-Arroyo replace Estrada. Other significant groups of the anti-Estrada reactionaries are the Council of Philippine Affairs (COPA), headed by Jose Cojuangco, the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA), pushed by former president Ramos, Kangkong Brigade (consisting of governors and mayors in Southern Tagalog, Metro Manila and Central Luzon) and Kompil II, initiated by Jesuit-inspired "social-democrats" who are in fact upper-class Christian-democrats.

Lapian ng Masang Pilipino (LAMP), the pro-Estrada coalition, is in the process of disintegration. Key leaders of LAMP, headed by the speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate president defected to the opposition and called for Estrada's resignation. Congressmen previously belonging to LAMP joined the opposition to impeach Estrada. LAMP-lining senators failed to stop the Senate trial.

Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), the largest component of LAMP, is set to break away completely from LAMP upon the fall of Estrada. The most rabid followers of Estrada in LAMP are his own Partido ng Masang Pilipino and Eduardo Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition. These are now being isolated by the mounting Estrada resign movement.

Estrada does not have any strong grip on the military and police forces as Marcos did. His most rabid armed followers are in the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF). This is his GESTAPO under his chief hatchetman Gen. Panfilo Lacson. It is the most favored armed agency, with huge unaudited intelligence funds. It enjoys an unlimited license to kill and acts as the coordinator of criminal syndicates.

There is a bitter split between the Lacson clique in the PAOCTF and regular police and military forces. The issues involve PAOCTF monopoly of protection money, lion's share in intelligence funds, favoritism in promotions, undue interference by Lacson even in military promotions, corruption in supply contracts and delayed payment of salaries to the rank and file outside PAOCTF.

The Federation of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (FORCES) and several underground groups of active military and police officers have arisen to call for the resignation of Estrada. They urge the active military and police officers to withdraw support from him and respect the people's right to assemble. A big number of military and police officers are increasingly manifesting their opposition to Estrada and Gen. Lacson and are in a position to neutralize them.

BAYAN has long had the lead over the anti-Estrada reactionaries in calling for Estrada's removal from power. It is the most formidable legal democratic coalition of the patriotic and progressive forces of the working class, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie taking the line of struggle for national liberation and democracy. It is the most conscious, most militant and most reliable force in the broad united front for the ouster of the Estrada ruling clique.

BAYAN encompasses sectoral alliances and organizations which are predominantly of the toiling masses, such as Kilusang Mayo Uno (workers), COURAGE (government employees), Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (peasants), PAMALAKAYA (fishermen) Kadamay (urban poor), GABRIELA (women) and Anakbayan (youth). It also encompasses urban petty bourgeois formations, such as the League of Filipino Students (LFS), Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), CONTEND (university and college teachers), KARAPATAN (human rights), Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR) and so many other professional and issue-based sectoral alliances and organizations.

BAYAN covers the Left and Middle forces that adhere to the national-democratic line. In the broad united front, it has also cooperated with the workers, peasants and middle social strata that are unorganized or who belong to organizations and institutions whose leadership is ideologically and politically either Middle or Right.

The broad united front consists of the Left, Middle and anti-Estrada Right. It is a loose alliance bound by the single purpose of removing Estrada from power. It has been easier for the Left and Middle to unite with the forces of the Right, that are frankly reactionary but are anti-Estrada, than with certain grouplets that misrepresent themselves as Left but try to deflect the concentrated fire on Estrada and sabotage the broad united front.

Sanlakas and other Trotskyite grouplets are acting under the instructions of the military psywar experts of the regime (specifically the Intelligence Services of the AFP) to push the "resign all" line to save Estrada. In the case of Akbayan, some of its leaders are diehards in the Estrada regime, while others have called for the impeachment or resignation of Estrada. Sanlakas and Akbayan have run counter to the broad united front and thus have isolated themselves from the mass movement. The renegades have found their political graveyard under the US-Estrada regime.

Such scoundrels as Horacio Morales and Edicio de la Torre, who are stalwarts of both Akbayan and Estrada's JEEP, are among the top psy-war agents of the Estrada regime. They are responsible for such lines as that Estrada deserves to get off the hook like the "subversives" during the Marcos regime through "technicalities" and that the regime should not fall because supposedly it is not repressive.

The US-Estrada regime is both corrupt and repressive. It has used the military, police, paramilitary forces and private armed gangs to enforce the antilabor policy, deprive the peasant masses and national minorities of their land and attack mass protest actions. It has intensified military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary mass base and forces of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

In the preceding year, under "Oplan Makabayan" and related campaign plans, the regime launched massive military campaigns of suppression against the revolutionary forces nationwide, with emphasis on three to five regions at every given time. It has carried out large attacks on the camps or areas of the MILF in a futile effort to whip up Christian chauvinism, paint itself as strong and divert public attention from the corruption scandals.

But the NPA has victoriously carried out brilliant guerrilla tactical offensives against the soft points of the enemy, while wisely evading militarily superior units of the enemy. The army of the MILF has also adopted the tactics of guerrilla warfare and is likewise dealing deadly blows on the enemy.

The soaring costs of military and police equipment and operations have conjoined with bureaucratic corruption and have resulted in an untenable level of deficit spending. The wanton military spending, the destruction of lives and property and the massive displacement of more than one million people have wrought havoc on the economy. Thus, the payment of salaries to low-level bureaucrats and the troops have been delayed by many months.

The military, police and paramilitary forces of the enemy are deeply demoralized by the corruption of the Estrada regime, the erosion of the value of their salaries, fatigue from incessant but futile counterrevolutionary operations, the revolutionaries' accelerating capture of arms from them, and heavy casualties inflicted on them by the tactical offensives of the New People's Army and the army of the MILF.

The toiling masses of workers and peasants, the middle social strata and most sections of the exploiting classes are for the removal of the Estrada ruling clique from power. Even the imperialist masters have signaled that the clique has outlived its usefulness. The Estrada ruling clique is doomed. It has no way of extricating itself from its isolation amidst the worsening crisis of the ruling system. The revolutionary forces and the masses led by the Party have before them great opportunities for growing in strength and scoring greater victories.

## **II. Urgent task of overthrowing the Estrada regime**

The Party, the New People's Army and the revolutionary masses resolutely and militantly pursue the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war in connection with the broad

united front and the mass movement that have arisen for the specific short-term purpose of removing the Estrada ruling clique from power.

While the reactionaries are preoccupied with their split and struggle for political power and the broad united front to remove Estrada from power is advancing, the revolutionary forces of the people can accelerate their mass work in the countryside and in the cities and do solid mass organizing amidst the sweeping mass movement for the ouster of Estrada.

The broad united front is facilitating the work of the revolutionary forces in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the broad masses of the people in their millions. Both the legal democratic movement and the armed revolutionary movement benefit from the Party's united front policy.

While the broad mass movement is on the upsurge throughout the country and the enemy is compelled to secure himself with more troops in the urban areas, the New People's Army can take advantage of the reduction of enemy troops from the countryside and intensify armed tactical offensives.

Mustering a broad united front of forces against the narrowest target, which is the current ruling clique, does not mean changing the program of new-democratic revolution and the strategic line of protracted people's war. It means stepping up the tempo of mass protests and revolutionary resistance by which the revolutionary forces can gain strength and advance.

The Party strives to exercise leadership and maintain independence and initiative by pursuing the long-term program of new democratic revolution even as it cooperates with a broad range of allies by carrying out with them the urgent task of removing the Estrada ruling clique from power. The upsurge of the legal mass movement complements the intensification of armed struggle as the main form of struggle.

Maintaining independence and initiative, the Party ceaselessly propagates the line of new-democratic revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, widens and deepens the revolutionary mass base, intensifies the people's war within capabilities and encourages the patriotic and progressive forces in the legal mass movement to rally quickly the people in their millions.

The revolutionary forces have a clear understanding of the immediate and long-term objectives of the mass movement. There is no confusion among them about the modes of action to be taken in the urban and rural areas. The "Left" and Right opportunists who in the 1980s held high positions and spread confusion within the Party have long deserted to the side of the enemy.

The "Left" opportunists had the illusion that they could actually bring down the entire ruling system with the Marcos ruling clique through urban insurrection or rural militarism cum urban insurrection. Now, they are open psy-war and intelligence agents of the enemy like Romulo Kintanar, Arturo Tabara and Benjamin de Vera. Filemon Lagman and other Trotskyites still pretend to be more "Left" than the Left by demanding the immediate resignation of all reactionary officials in a futile attempt to split the broad united front and deflect the concentrated fire on the Estrada ruling clique.

The long-running Right opportunists of the past, like Horacio Morales and Edicio de la Torre, shamelessly wallow in bureaucratic corruption with their "populist" idol Estrada and are among the most active psy-war agents of the regime in fighting the broad united front and the broad mass movement. Morales is the most notorious for collaborating with Estrada and Eduardo Cojuangco in robbing the coconut farmers of the coconut levy funds and in misrepresenting as land reform the latter's corporate landgrabbing.

The revolutionary forces and people under the leadership of the Party have a clear grasp of the current balance of forces between the armed revolution and the armed counterrevolution. They have no opportunist illusion whatsoever that the movement to oust Estrada provides them the chance to either seize power from the reactionaries or share power with them as an immediate result of realizing the short-term objective of ousting Estrada.

They are aware that they cannot as yet overthrow the entire ruling system but they can take advantage of the crisis of the ruling system and the split among the reactionaries, overthrow and punish the current ruling clique, strengthen themselves in the process and thus take a step forward in the new-democratic revolution.

In pursuing the united front policy at every given period, the Party concentrates the broadest range of forces against the worst reactionary in power as the narrowest target. It is in fighting and defeating one enemy after another that the Party and the masses can grow in strength and advance until the time comes that they can overthrow the entire ruling system.

To overthrow the entire ruling system, it is necessary to break the backbone of the enemy armed forces in the countryside and smash the bureaucratic and military apparatuses of the reactionary state. To overthrow the Estrada ruling clique in particular, it is even possible for the legal broad united front and the legal mass movement to do so, as in the case of Marcos in 1986.

It is "Left" opportunism to have the illusion that the long-term objective of overthrowing the ruling system can be accomplished in the course of realizing the short-term objective of overthrowing the Estrada ruling clique. On the other hand, it is Right opportunism to forget about the long-term objective of overthrowing the ruling system and to lose the independence and initiative of the Party in the broad united front.

We must exert all efforts to maintain and further strengthen the broad united front for ousting the Estrada ruling clique or compelling it to resign. But while they promote the broad united front, the legal patriotic and progressive forces must condemn the basic ills of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and put forward the national and democratic demands of the people.

As the broad united front stands today, especially in the legal arena, it isolates the Estrada regime and has a high potential of overthrowing it through peaceful, massive and militant mass actions nationwide until these culminate in a siege on the presidential palace by at least one million people until Estrada resigns. The key forces for realizing such a gigantic mobilization include BAYAN, the Estrada Resign Movement, the Catholic Church, the United Opposition, COPA, PCA, the Kangkong Brigade and Kompil II.

The climactic event of at least one million people laying siege on the presidential palace and paralyzing the operations of the system must be comparable in magnitude to the 1986 mass uprising that brought down the Marcos fascist regime and must surpass the recent phony prayer rally staged by the El Shaddai and the INC to support the Estrada regime.

In maintaining and strengthening the broad united front, we must consciously apply the revolutionary class line consisting of the following:

1. The working class must have the leadership through the Communist Party of the Philippines. The underground party must exercise leadership by using correct methods and style, especially in the urban areas.
2. The basic alliance of the working class and peasantry must be strengthened. The mass movement must strengthen the trade union movement in the urban areas and the armed revolution in the countryside.
3. The alliance of progressive forces must put into full play the forces of the urban petty bourgeoisie. The mass movement must bring about further political education, organization and mobilization of the urban petty bourgeoisie in concert with the toiling masses.
4. The alliance of positive forces must put into play the forces of the middle bourgeoisie. The middle bourgeois are not numerous but they must be encouraged to support the mass movement.
5. The temporary alliance with the anti-Estrada reactionaries must be promoted, even as such allies are unstable and unreliable. Such alliance arises from the contradictions among the reactionaries. It accelerates the isolation of the enemy and yields considerable direct and indirect support for the mass movement.
6. Succeeding in all the foregoing five points, we can isolate to the utmost the Estrada ruling clique as the enemy and overthrow it. In the process, the revolutionary forces and the people gain in strength and advance.

In the broad united front to overthrow the Estrada regime, the Left includes the basic mass organizations, the sectoral and multisectoral alliances that truly stand for the rights, interests and aspirations of the working class, peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie. These are the basic forces of the national democratic movement.

The Middle includes those forces of the petty bourgeoisie in general and the middle bourgeoisie who seek reforms within the ruling system for their "middle class" sake and in the name of the people. They are critical of the evils of the big comprador-landlord social system but still fall short of the revolutionary stand to overthrow the ruling system and establish the people's democratic system.

The anti-Estrada Right includes the forces that represent the reactionary classes of big compradors and landlords, regard Estrada as an intolerable liability to the ruling system and wish to replace him in order to strengthen the ruling system. Such forces can remain in the broad

united front for as long as their contradictions with the Estrada ruling clique are not resolved through the ouster of the latter.

The scheme of Estrada for staying in power includes the following:

1. Red-baiting, intimidation and intrigue for the purpose of splitting the broad united front and the mass movement and using the power and resources of his office against the mass movement,
2. Exercising control over at least eight senators through past favors, renewed bribes and pork barrel fund releases and harping on the claim that the Senate trial is the sole "constitutional process" for dealing with the charges against him,
3. Cheating in the May 14, 2001 elections after getting an acquittal from the Senate trial or after disabling it from making any judgment before the 2001 electoral campaign period.

There is a general consensus in the broad united front that Estrada can and should be removed from power through nationwide mass actions that result in the encirclement of the presidential palace until Estrada resigns. But there are certain special groups within the anti-Estrada Right who have strong illusions that Estrada can be removed from power without the masses encircling the palace or that he can be convicted by the Senate.

Factors for the conviction of Estrada by the required two-thirds Senate majority include: the impact of mounting mass actions, the strength of evidence and advice of US operatives to the senators to junk him. At the same time, factors for nonconviction and even acquittal include the protraction of the trial until it is overtaken by the electoral campaign period, bribes from Estrada and Eduardo Cojuangco, a Bush reversal of what is apparently the current US position and Estrada's false promise to the senators that he would resign after acquittal or after the elections if his senatorial candidates would lose.

The evidence already presented in the Senate trial against Estrada is overwhelming and incontrovertible. It is more than enough to convict him for bribery and graft and corruption. Most damning against him are the testimonies of Governor Chavit Singson, bank vice-president Clarissa Ocampo and other witnesses and related bank documents. It is conclusively proven that Estrada uses the alias, Jose Velarde, to accumulate and deploy his loot in bank transactions.

But still there is no certainty that Estrada will be convicted. If he cannot be acquitted by his rabid followers in the Senate before the beginning of the electoral campaign period, his counsel can protract the trial until it is overtaken by the aforesaid period. The slackening of the anti-Estrada mass actions will certainly pave the way for Estrada's stay in power and allow him to wreak vengeance on various forces in the broad united front, especially after the 2001 elections.

To ensure the removal of Estrada from power, within the first quarter of 2001, the mass movement in accordance with the broad united front against him must stay on course and intensify. There must be a gigantic mass action to serve notice to the Senate that acquittal of Estrada or evasion of decision before the beginning of the electoral campaign period will rouse

far greater and more militant mass actions than ever before against the regime and its dwindling supporters.

If the Senate fails to convict Estrada, mass actions comparable to those that felled the Marcos regime must be undertaken. Let us not forget that Marcos fell despite his claim to victory in the 1986 presidential snap election. It is probable though that Estrada would threaten to use force in a desperate bid to hold the broad united front at bay and split it, while he fixes the results of the 2001 elections to "vindicate" himself.

The Left must maintain its own independence and initiative, take advantage of the crisis of the ruling system, win over the Middle in mass actions and keep the cooperation of the anti-Estrada Right. The forces of the national-democratic movement have correctly made common agreements with other forces and have assured them that mass actions will continue to be peaceful and increase in magnitude and militancy.

The Party has announced repeatedly that in accordance with its own line it does not deploy units of the New People's Army to join the legal mass actions in the urban areas because the proper role of the NPA is to intensify armed tactical offensives in the countryside. Active and retired military and police officers have also called for the resignation of Estrada and have declared that they would respect the right of the people to assemble and express themselves. It is therefore possible, as in the dying days of the Marcos fascist regime, to prevent the Estrada ruling clique from using the military and police forces against the rising masses.

It is even possible for a chain of delegations of foreign creditors and the active generals to tell Estrada to resign. In recent memory, Suharto meekly yielded his power in such a manner. The Estrada ruling clique expects the newly elected US president to save it. It forgets that since the Republican administration of Reagan, puppets have generally been disposed of through the application of a credit squeeze and an ultimate notice of removal relayed by a local military delegation.

While possibilities for the peaceful removal of Estrada exist, the possibility remains for the Estrada loyalists in the military and police, headed by Gen. Panfilo Lacson, to terrorize key forces or elements of the broad united front, disrupt or assault the mass actions or even go so far as to stage a coup under one pretext or another, especially against vice-president Macapagal-Arroyo.

In this regard, FORCES and underground groups of active military and police personnel are justified in undertaking countermeasures against the Estrada diehards. Without having to stage a coup d'etat to install a military or military-civilian junta, they can countersurveil, isolate and arrest the Estrada loyalists for criminal acts.

If the Estrada regime should unleash violence against the unarmed masses exercising their democratic right to assemble, the Party, the NPA and NDFP are prepared to absorb those forced to go underground, to intensify the people's war and to undertake certain tactical offensives that would clearly prove the inability of the Estrada clique to govern.

More repressive acts of Estrada to keep himself in power would not only incite the people to wage larger and more intense mass actions but would also justify the people's army to undertake punitive actions against the worst elements of the ruling clique, especially the plunderers and human rights violators, wherever they are in the Philippines.

If somehow the Estrada ruling clique remains in power beyond the first quarter of 2001, the political and economic crisis of the ruling system will worsen and the revolutionary resistance will mount. The bursting of the US "new economy" bubble is already impacting on the Philippine economy. Already crippled by the exposure of his crimes, Estrada will certainly fail to govern the country.

It will be self-defeating for the imperialists and the local reactionaries to keep him in power any longer and forsake their old tactic of replacing a worn-out puppet with a relatively fresh one to cover up their own culpability. It will even be more favorable for the revolutionary movement if they decide to keep him in power indefinitely than if they replaced him soon.

### **III. Prospects after the ouster of Estrada**

If the Estrada ruling clique falls, vice-president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo would assume the puppet presidency by virtue of the 1987 constitution of the reactionary state. She would thus become the new chief political representative of the local exploiting classes of big compradors and landlords.

Aware of the gravity of the crisis of the ruling system, she is likely to seek support from some council of some sort and of some breadth if only to consolidate her rule. She has made preparations for the purpose by forming the United Opposition, retaining her foothold in the Lakas-NUCD, encouraging the Council of Philippine Affairs, the People's Consultative Assembly and Kompil II and consulting with the leaders of the churches, business and military as well as with BAYAN and Bayan Muna.

Between now and the fall of Estrada, if he were to fall soon, there is not enough time to make any radical change in the balance of forces between the armed counterrevolution and the armed revolution or to create and strengthen any governing council that can truly serve the national and democratic interests of the people.

The promises that Macapagal-Arroyo makes to the legal Left in the course of the movement to remove Estrada from power will recede in importance to her as she follows the dictates of the imperialists and serves the interests of the local reactionaries. She will tend to base her rule on the support of LAKAS-NUCD and the United Opposition.

While consolidating her position, she will try to create an atmosphere of support by paying lip service to land reform, development and a social safety net while she submits to the neocolonial and "neoliberal" impositions of the imperialists, the IMF, World Bank and WTO. Acting under good advice, she might release all political prisoners, promise justice and indemnification for the victims of human rights violations, revive the agreements in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and resume said negotiations.

The crisis of the ruling system is so grave that the new regime is under compulsion to yield further to the dictates of the imperialists and at the same time to avoid the wrath of the people by some token measures and deceptive tactics, without which her isolation will come fast. The same crisis of the ruling system encourages the legal democratic forces to press for reforms beneficial to the people, while the Party and the revolutionary masses continue the struggle for national liberation and democracy through protracted people's war.

The continued aggravation of the basic problems of the people by the new regime and the worsening of the social and economic crisis of the ruling system will generate graver political crisis. As fast as that regime bares its antipeople, antinational and antidemocratic character, the revolutionary resistance of the people will intensify and a broad united front against it will certainly arise.

The imperialist banks, firms and multilateral lending agencies (IMF, World Bank, WTO, etc.) will further make impositions that put their puppet in an untenable position. The worsening crisis of the world capitalist system will result in the worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and will render futile any attempt of the new regime to appease, deceive or intimidate the people.

In the wake of the bursting of the "new economy" bubble in the US, the recessionary trend in the entire world capitalist system will deepen. It will mean less demand in the imperialist countries for the raw material and semimanufactured exports from the Philippines and less ability of the puppet regime to service the foreign debt. The new ruling clique would only sink deeper in crisis and rouse the people's wrath by following the dictates of the imperialists and mouthing the slogan of "free market".

When the puppet regime is once more discredited and isolated as a result of the worsening crisis and people's resistance, the imperialists pretend to have no responsibility for the crisis and even try to take the initiative in denouncing the regime, usually for bureaucratic corruption. But in fighting one regime after another, the people raise the level of their revolutionary consciousness, militancy and strength against foreign monopoly capitalism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism.

The Communist Party of the Philippines is ideologically, politically and organizationally prepared to confront the new ruling clique as this assumes the role of being the enemy of the people. The strength accumulated by the revolutionary forces and the people in the course of fighting the entire ruling system and overthrowing the US-Estrada regime will be available against the new ruling clique. The crisis of the moribund ruling system will not end but will worsen. It will continue to favor the advance of the new-democratic revolution. #

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