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SEIZE EVERY MOMENT, ADVANCE THE PEOPLE'S WAR

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On the 32nd anniversary of the founding of the New People's Army by the Communist Party of the Philippines, we salute the Red commanders and fighters and congratulate them for the historical and current victories that they have won through arduous struggle and selfless sacrifice.

Let us render the highest tribute to our revolutionary martyrs and heroes. They inspire us to struggle more resolutely and vigorously than ever before for the revolutionary cause of national liberation and democracy.

The New People's Army is the main organization for carrying out the principal form of revolutionary struggle, which is the armed struggle. This is the only way by which we can overthrow the state power of the exploiting classes and establish the people's democratic power.

Since its founding on March 29, 1969, the NPA has won resounding victories under the leadership of the Party, which is guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It has carried forward the new-democratic revolution of the Filipino proletariat and people through protracted people's war against the US-dominated ruling system of big compradors and landlords.

Since the Second Great Rectification Movement, the NPA has rectified the grave errors of "Left" and Right opportunism. As a result, it has consolidated and expanded its revolutionary ranks and mass base and delivered lethal blows to the enemy.

The NPA now operates in more than 100 guerrilla fronts in the overwhelming majority of provinces of our country. It has thousands of Red fighters augmented by a far greater number of militia and self-defense units in thousands of villages. All these draw their strength from millions of people.

In pursuing the strategic line of protracted people's war and accumulating strength in stages, the NPA is waging guerrilla warfare on the basis of an ever widening and deepening mass base in the current stage of strategic defensive. It integrates armed struggle with land reform and mass-base building.

The NPA is in a position to grow ever stronger amidst the ever worsening crisis of the domestic ruling system and the world capitalist system. The proletarian revolutionaries, the Red commanders and fighters have a high level of revolutionary consciousness and are tested and tempered by battles and hard work. They can therefore take advantage of the increasingly favorable objective conditions for armed revolution.

1. THE PEOPLE'S VICTORY AGAINST THE ESTRADA REGIME

The Filipino people and the revolutionary forces are joyous over the overthrow of Estrada and his ruling clique. This is a brilliant victory. It demonstrates the power of the people to isolate and topple a corrupt and repressive regime that is servile to US imperialism.

The Party was certain of this victory when on its 32nd anniversary of reestablishment it made the call, "Mobilize the broad masses of the people to deliver the death blow to the Estrada regime!" Since October last year, the regime had become thoroughly isolated and had gone into a process of rapid disintegration.

This is a result of the resolute and militant struggle of the people and the broad united front against the regime. The broad masses of the people rose up against the servility of the regime to US imperialism and against its extreme corruption and repressiveness.

The legal democratic mass movement had long persevered in the struggle against the US-directed Estrada regime since the beginning. It would eventually mobilize 1.8 million people at Edsa, millions nationwide and the 75,000 that marched on to and encircled the presidential palace to compel Estrada to abandon his throne. Most of them were young people.

The call for at least one million people to lay siege on the palace worked effectively to break Estrada's bravado. Upon sight of tens of thousands of people, who ignored the call of the reactionaries to keep away from the palace, Estrada turned tail and hastily fled the palace. Had he tried to stay a day longer, he would have been directly encircled by more than a million people and probably arrested.

He fell from power completely on January 20, 2001, four days after the pro-Estrada Senate majority ignited overwhelming public indignation by voting against the opening of a second envelope containing his secret bank accounts. But he would have been removed from power earlier within December had resources been available to the forces of the national democratic

movement to mobilize a big core of organized masses from Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog to encircle the presidential palace.

The process of overthrowing Estrada involved not only political and organizational methods like issuing political statements, holding buildup meetings, marching to converging points and delivering speeches. Cultural groups made a major contribution by producing songs, band music, theatrical performances on the streets and on stage, cartoons and murals in order to raise the awareness and fighting spirit of the people.

Old and new methods of communications were used. Printing presses and photocopying machines worked overtime. Radio and TV broadcasts covering the issues and events related to the movement to oust Estrada held the attention of tens of millions of people daily. For several months, one radio station dedicated itself to the broadcast of anti-Estrada statements and music. Cell phone texting rapidly spread slogans and satirical jokes. Through e-mail, newspaper websites and webcasts, developments in the anti-Estrada movement reached national and international audiences.

The campaign to isolate Estrada was thoroughgoing. Progressive members of the clergy carried the anti-Estrada message in their sermons and liturgy. They neutralized El Shaddai as the main crowd supplier of Estrada. People blockaded and picketed the mansions of his mistresses, the offices of crony firms and banks and the houses of his diehard political cronies. Unable to bear the heat of mass protests, his closest friends of convenience turned against him.

Since the beginning of his regime, Estrada had earned the people's outrage for flaunting the patronage of the hated Marcoses and the biggest of Marcos cronies and enriching himself and his wives with public funds and bribe money from criminal syndicates. He had grievously violated national sovereignty and territorial integrity through the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

He attempted but failed to have the 1987 GRP constitution amended and he pushed legislation to further sell out economic sovereignty and national patrimony to the foreign monopolies. He allowed the oil firms and other foreign monopoly firms to ride roughshod over the people.

The despicable characteristics of the fallen regime are all manifestations of the rottenness of the entire ruling system. While Estrada feasted on the spoils of power, he was actually vulnerable to being overthrown because of the ever-worsening crisis of the system, the increasingly bitter contradictions among the reactionaries and the upsurge of the revolutionary mass movement.

Estrada served the interests of US imperialism and was given the latitude for corruption and cronyism. But he was also predetermined and circumscribed by the neoliberal dogma of "free market" globalization and by the rapidly dwindling resources. The economy was laid prostrate by superprofit-taking by the imperialist firms and banks, the aggravation of local exploitation and oppression, bureaucratic corruption and mounting budgetary and trade deficits and local and foreign indebtedness of the state.

After 20 years of wanton foreign borrowing by the Marcos regime under the Keynesian policy dictates of the IMF and World Bank for public works and raw-material production-for-export, the Philippines has been subjected to the more rapacious "free market" policy dictates of the IMF and WTO.

The Aquino regime laid the ground for liberalization, privatization and deregulation and abused local public borrowing. The Ramos regime went full blast on making an artificial boom with low value-added semimanufacturing and private construction by going into unprecedented rates of local and foreign borrowing until the bubble of the "emerging market" burst in the Philippines and the whole of Southeast Asia in 1997.

By the time Estrada came to power in 1998, the economy had been bankrupted by previous regimes and had sunk deeper into semifeudal underdevelopment. The illusion of "high" growth rates during the Marcos and Ramos regimes were conjured by rapid foreign borrowing and overconsumption by the exploiting classes. Estrada's political vulnerability, as a result of the worsening socioeconomic crisis, was aggravated by the shameless rapacity of his clique.

His pro-poor populist demagoguery was a big joke from the very start. He could not even pretend to be for national industrial development, land reform and improving the livelihood of the people. His imperialist masters prohibited him from speaking against the "free market" dogma. Thus, his program of "development" stood out as one of plundering the economy, promoting gambling and building mansions for his several families.

The crisis of the world capitalist system generated the socioeconomic crisis of the domestic ruling system. In turn, the latter crisis generated the political crisis and made the contradictions among the reactionaries more bitter than before. Amidst the socioeconomic and political crisis, the corruption of the Estrada ruling clique became conspicuous.

Indeed, the ruling clique tended to monopolize the spoils of power against other sections of the exploiting classes. The comprador big bourgeois patrons of the bureaucrat capitalists recovered their sequestered assets, raided the public treasury and pension funds, cornered state contracts, engaged in technical smuggling and evaded taxes.

In the military and police, a small clique of police officers in a presidential task force became favored in the most scandalous manner with huge intelligence funds and opportunities for criminal enrichment. Their task was supposedly to combat organized crime but they operated or coddled criminal syndicates engaged in gambling, drug pushing, kidnap-for-ransom, smuggling, prostitution and other vices.

Estrada's personal rapacity knew no bounds. He required his cronies to give him advance payments of huge kickbacks amounting to far more than his "fair share" of the loot in pork barrel fund distribution, state purchase contracts, corporate mergers using pension funds, stock market scams and illegal numbers game (jueteng) and other criminal operations.

It was only a matter of time before a crony or gangmate would feel threatened and aggrieved enough to stand up and blow the whistle on him. Thus did governor Luis Singson, one among his

innermost circle of cronies. From the very depths of his venal rule, Estrada was turned inside out. Public indignation led to the rapid disintegration of his ruling clique. It became possible for the House of Representatives to impeach him and the Senate to put him on trial.

Peaceful, militant and gigantic mass actions brought down the regime in so short a time because the line of the broad united front succeeded in uniting various political forces of the Left, Middle and anti-Estrada Right to concentrate their fire on Estrada. All of them agreed and moved to demand his ouster or resignation. The consistent mass protests of the national democratic movement provided the broad united front with a strong foundation.

The patriotic and progressive forces of the Left and Middle included the Erap Resign Movement, Bayan, Bayan Muna, Kilusang Mayo Uno, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Pamalakaya, Migrante, Gabriela, Erap Resign Youth Movement, Anakbayan, League of Filipino Students, National Union of Students of the Philippines, College Editors' Guild of the Philippines, CONTEND, ACT, Karapatan, Promotion of Church People's Response, Kairos, OUSTER, Health Alliance for Democracy, Concerned Artists of the Philippines, ProGay and so many organizations of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie. In scores of countries, Bayan International and Migrante International led a wide range of organizations of overseas Filipinos under the banner of the Erap Resign Movement.

The anti-Estrada reactionary forces included the high officialdom of the Catholic and other churches, the Makati Business Club and other business organizations, Kompil II (a small group capitalizing on the name of Cardinal Sin and former president Aquino), the Council of Philippine Affairs (associated with Jose Cojuangco, Jr.), the People's Consultative Assembly (associated with former president Ramos), the Federation of Retired Commissioned and Enlisted Soldiers (also Ramos-lining), Kangkong Brigade (anti-Estrada local officials in Metro Manila, Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon) and the United Opposition, a makeshift combination of such political parties as Reporma, Promdi and the Lakas-NUCD which then vice-president Macapagal-Arroyo put up to show that she had some base to stand on.

Clandestine work was conducted among the military and police officers in order to turn them against Estrada and a few diehard loyalists headed by Gen. Panfilo Lacson. Key personalities of the anti-Estrada Right worked on officers at the highest level. So did key activists of the Middle and Left forces on officers at all levels, especially at the middle and lower levels. The officers were urged to withdraw support from Estrada, respect the people's right to assemble and not to take power into their own hands.

As in the overthrow of Marcos, the US and the US-controlled multilateral agencies, like the IMF and World Bank, decided to drop Estrada like a hot potato in the face of the broad united front against him. The US called some generals to Washington in October 2000 for a crisis management meeting and sent out the word that the military and police forces would not attack peaceful mass actions. The US gave the advice to vice-president Macapagal-Arroyo to resign from the Estrada cabinet.

The IMF loudly decried Estrada's inability to collect more taxes and to stay within limits in deficit spending. It declared an international credit squeeze on the regime. The World Bank also

decried the excessively high rate of corruption, eating up nearly half of the government budget. It sounded as if corruption were not the reward for puppetry. Even the spokesmen and analysts of investment houses and banks spoke out against the regime through the international and domestic bourgeois mass media.

The Party correctly promoted the line of the broad united front in order to arouse and mobilize at the soonest possible time the broadest possible range of forces against the narrowest target. The full range of the united front went into play: the basic alliance of the workers and peasants, the progressive alliance of the toiling masses and the urban petty bourgeoisie, the positive alliance of the progressive forces and the middle bourgeoisie and alliance with the anti-Estrada reactionaries for the purpose of taking advantage of the splits among the reactionaries and isolating and destroying the current enemy.

The policy of broad united front allows the revolutionary movement to fight, isolate and destroy one enemy after another and in the process gain strength until it becomes capable of overthrowing the entire ruling system. As a result of the victorious struggle against the Estrada regime, the revolutionary movement has indeed become ever stronger than before and is ready to enter into a new round of struggle.

As the Party correctly predicted, the "Left" and Right opportunists of the past, who became blatantly counterrevolutionary (like Romulo Kintanar, Arturo Tabara, Nilo de la Cruz, Horacio Morales and Edicio de la Torre) and who became open agents of the Estrada regime, found their political graveyard. Even such grouplets (Siglaya, KDP, RPA-ABB and RHB) that collaborated with them but pretended to be critical of the Estrada regime are on the throes of extinction.

The ultra-Left call of Popoy Lagman's Sanlakas, demanding the resignation of all top officials of the reactionary government, was an attempt to save Estrada and was roundly rejected by the people. The call was meant to draw fire away from the narrowest target and would have run against the clear objective of overthrowing the ruling clique in four months' time.

To avoid the pitfall of Right opportunism, the forces of the national democratic movement maintained their independence and initiative. They cooperated with the unstable and unreliable reactionary allies but they avoided or refused to enter such organized frameworks as the People's Consultative Assembly, Council of Philippine Affairs and Kompil II.

The Party made it a point to stress publicly that the NPA should stay in the countryside to launch tactical offensives and not to join in the mass actions in urban areas. The Party's purpose for doing so was to dispel the fear of reactionary allies about joining mass actions, to deprive Estrada of any pretext for rallying the troops against unarmed demonstrators and to reinforce the calls of the broad united front on the reactionary military and police to withdraw support from the Estrada ruling clique and respect the people's democratic right to assemble and express themselves.

No NPA combat unit went directly into play in the urban mass actions. But the NPA played a major role in weakening and overthrowing the Estrada regime by continuing and accelerating tactical offensives against its forces in the countryside and encouraging the rural masses to

participate in mass actions all over the country. The NPA launched major offensives while nationwide the number of people joining mass actions increased dramatically.

While the legal mass movement surged to overthrow the Estrada ruling clique, the New People's Army intensified its guerrilla offensives nationwide, dealt lethal blows to the enemy forces and rendered Oplan Makabayan futile. In the second half of the year 2000 alone, sixty-six (66) tactical offensives were successfully launched in 32 provinces in various regions of the country. The main targets were Philippine Army regulars and Special Action Forces, CAFGU, military assets and informers. Nineteen (19) raids were carried out on PA, PNP, Coast Guard, CAFGU detachments and police headquarters.

Through ambushes and raids, a large number of casualties was inflicted on the enemy forces and military and police vehicles were destroyed. High-powered rifles and short arms, .50 caliber and .30 caliber machineguns, 81-mm mortars, M203 grenade launchers, portable and base radio equipment and other war materiel were captured.

One puppet regime has fallen and has been replaced by another. As in the successful struggle against the Marcos fascist regime in 1986, the ruling system remains intact. But it is stricken more than ever before by crisis. And the subjective forces of the revolution have emerged stronger than ever before.

The people and revolutionary forces are satisfied that they have punished a puppet regime and in the process have gained strength. We have finished off the Estrada regime before it could realize its vow to destroy the revolutionary forces before 2004. With increased strength and high confidence, we are prepared to confront and fight the new puppet regime as circumstances demand. We shall win ever greater victories in the continuing revolutionary struggle.

2. CONTINUING ROTTENNESS OF THE RULING SYSTEM

The overthrow of the Estrada regime has provided some sense of relief. But there is no general sense of euphoria over the ascendance of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency of the neocolonial republic. Her rise to power is merely a byproduct of the contest of strength between the outraged people and the Estrada regime.

The dearth of enthusiasm for the new regime is due to the fact that it has the same big comprador-landlord character as the previous regime and has a high potential for corruption and repression. The new puppet chieftain is a believer of "free market" globalization. And she is not at all appreciated for belatedly quitting her cabinet post in the Estrada regime.

Among the reactionaries, the Macapagal-Arroyo ruling clique is the biggest beneficiary of the downfall of Estrada. But at the same time, it inherits an economy that is in worse crisis than before and a government that is more bankrupt and more afflicted with corruption and factionalism than ever before.

The reactionary character of the regime is underscored by Macapagal-Arroyo's exaggeration of the role of the military and police officers in the overthrow of Estrada and by her repeated

obsequiously profuse expressions of gratitude to them, especially to the 11th hour defectors who withdrew support from Estrada only out of fear that their lower officers and men would otherwise disobey their commands.

Under instructions by the US, Macapagal-Arroyo is appeasing and promoting military officers who have been close to Estrada and who have manipulated him to adopt a costly all-out war policy. She is putting herself in the same weak position into which Estrada put himself relative to the reactionary armed forces.

Another glaring manifestation of the reactionary character of the new regime is that Macapagal-Arroyo seeks not only to unite her big comprador-landlord coalition, the United Opposition, but also to unite with the Nationalist People's Coalition of Eduardo Cojuangco and the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan of the Marcoses in preparation for the 2004 presidential elections. The son of Eduardo Cojuangco is running for congress in Pangasinan under the flag of the NPC-Lakas and the Marcoses are running for governor and congress in Ilocos Norte under the banner of KBL-Lakas.

The new regime is not offering any set of economic policies different from those of the Estrada regime. It is for merely readjusting the "medium-term development plan" of the fallen regime. Macapagal-Arroyo remains true to her record of pushing legislation in pursuit of the line of "free market" globalization, under the Aquino and Ramos regimes.

The Philippine economy is reeling from the bursting of the US "new economy" bubble and the recessionary trend in the US and worldwide. For a whole year already, the value of assets in the US has plummeted from fantastic levels of overvaluation. Four trillion US dollars in value has been wiped out in the stock market. This is four times worse than the 1987 stockmarket meltdown. Nearly half of the US population who have been entrapped in the stock market are financially crushed.

The crisis of overproduction in the US is severe. There is huge overcapacity and excessive inventory, especially in high-tech goods in the face of the greatly diminished purchasing power of US consumers. This aggravates the long-running global crisis of overproduction and financial crisis, especially in the debt-burdened countries that produce nothing for export, except raw materials and semi-manufactures.

The slowdown of the US economy and decade-long stagnation of the Japanese economy translate into dwindling orders for raw materials and consumer semimanufactures from the Philippines and elsewhere in the world. The European market offers no relief in absorbing Philippine exports because it is also adversely affected by the crisis in the US. The current global crisis of the world capitalist system is the worst after World War II.

The sharp reduction in export income is bound to widen the foreign trade deficit. At the same time, foreign credit is drying up while debt service obligations are mounting. The cost of importing producer and consumer goods is soaring relative to export income. The cost of imported fuel will rise repeatedly. As a result of the breakdown of agricultural production, even rice, corn, cooking oil and sugar are now in the import list.

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime is at a loss as to how to raise tax revenues now that local production is deteriorating, mass unemployment is spreading and prices are soaring due to the double whammy of scarcity of goods and higher import costs. Like the Estrada regime, it is under orders by the IMF to cut down on deficit spending and impose a heavier tax burden on the people.

It has already announced a policy of austerity. This policy means shifting the burden of the economic crisis to the broad masses of the Filipino people. Workers continue to be subjected to the policy of labor flexibility, deprived of job security, jobs and a decent minimum wage level. The peasants and farm workers will continue to be subjected to worse conditions of feudal and semifeudal exploitation.

Government jobs are being massacred and appropriations for social services (health care, education, public housing, technical and credit assistance for food production and the like) are being cut down. The highest priority in the state budget is for debt service. At the same time, bureaucratic corruption and spending for the military and police equipment and operations are unabated.

As a result of the economic crisis, there is less ground for amicable accommodation among the reactionary forces. The political crisis is certain to increase in turbulence and destabilize the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. This regime is challenged from the outside by a conspicuous opposition of pro-Estrada forces. At the same time, it is also shaken by an unstable combination of rival political groups within the regime.

The Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino of Angara and Estrada's party, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, are the mainstay of the electoral coalition against the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. The Nationalist People's Coalition of the biggest crony of Marcos and biggest patron of Estrada, Eduardo Cojuangco, has one foot in the opposition coalition and another foot in the ruling coalition.

The ruling coalition consists of the Lakas-NUCD of Ramos and De Venecia and Reporma of Gen. de Villa, together with such junior partners as Aksyong Demokratiko and Promdi. They maneuver against each other for the most lucrative positions in government and speculate that they can either use Macapagal-Arroyo to take a big share in the 2004 presidential elections or discard her after she becomes discredited prior to said elections.

The political base of Macapagal-Arroyo is fractious. She believes that she can reign like a queen over the conflicting factions within her regime, possibly win over some of the factions in the opposition and please the people through glossy but shallow "public relations". She tends to be oblivious of the worsening socioeconomic crisis and the militant mass movement of the patriotic and progressive forces.

The reactionaries regard the current bourgeois elections as an amicable way of allocating power among themselves and as an effective way to divide and rule the masses. But so long as the revolutionary mass movement is rising, the bourgeois elections are a way for the people and the revolutionary forces to recognize the intensifying splits among the reactionaries.

Within the military and police forces, there are increasingly bitter factional conflicts between the Estrada loyalists and the new loyalists of Macapagal-Arroyo. Overtly and covertly, they quarrel over promotions, lucrative assignments, purchase contracts and control over various criminal syndicates. The rottenness of the ruling system is starkly manifested not only by rampant violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the military and police but also by the direct connections of high military and police officers with criminal syndicates.

Macapagal-Arroyo's obsequious deference to the military betrays her acute fear of them, notwithstanding the fact that since the 1980s the US has had a policy bias for controlling client states through economic and financial levers rather than through military juntas or civilian fascist dictators. Separately, former president Gen. Ramos and Gen. de Villa have convinced her that she must coddle up to the military or else face a coup threat.

Thus, she has made Gen. de Villa her "little president" (executive secretary) and appointed retired generals to other high positions normally held by civilians. In an obvious attempt to curry favor with the military establishment, she has appointed Gen. Reyes and Gen. Villanueva as secretary of national defense and chief of staff of the armed forces, respectively.

These two generals were favorites of Estrada and were the principal pushers of his all-out war policy. Their promotions run counter to Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of ending the aforesaid Estrada policy and of desiring peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

It is highly probable that after estimating that she has sufficiently "consolidated" her position and after failing to trick the revolutionary movement into capitulation, she will rave for military suppression of the revolutionary movement, as did Aquino in 1987. Gen. Reyes can push her towards a militarist policy and benefit from the failure of that policy while she takes the blame. She seems to be unaware that the US is grooming him as a latter-day version of Gen. Ramos.

Macapagal-Arroyo expects to stay on top of the conflicting political factions and armed factions within her regime and to be able to marshal them for her candidacy in the 2004 presidential elections. But the worsening economic and social crisis and the factionalism within her regime are likely to unsettle her rule in a relatively short period of time.

The political crisis of the ruling system can accelerate under the pressure of the surging revolutionary mass movement of the people as they resist the escalating level of exploitation and oppression. In the same way that Estrada was removed from power, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is vulnerable to being discredited or overthrown by the people and a broad united front as it offers no solution to the socioeconomic crisis and unleashes military terror against the people and the revolutionary forces.

While still consolidating its position, the regime is well aware that naked force cannot be unleashed against the protesting masses and the armed revolutionary movement without running the risk of being overthrown or of failing to make the mark for reelection as a result of the high political and financial cost of military and police actions.

Thus, the regime has pretended to listen to the demands of the protesting masses. It has also declared the end of the all-out war policy of Estrada and offered to resume peace negotiations with the NDFP and the MILF. The problem of Macapagal-Arroyo is how she can be a "good president" in the midst of socioeconomic problems that she cannot solve and the militarists with which she surrounds herself.

So far, the regime has not offered any program to solve problems outside of the policy dictates of the IMF, World Bank and WTO. While she hypes her desire for peace negotiations, the military and police forces of the regime continue to wage campaigns of suppression against the people and the revolutionary forces.

3. CONTINUING ARMED REVOLUTION FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION AND DEMOCRACY

It is possible for the legal mass movement and the broad united front to overthrow a president like Marcos or Estrada, together with the entire ruling clique, for tyranny or corruption or both. But it is impossible to overthrow the entire ruling system of big compradors and landlords without armed revolution.

The domestic ruling system has its own brute force with which to suppress the people and the revolutionary forces. But aside from having its own coercive apparatuses for carrying out armed counterrevolution, it is propped up by the US as its imperialist master which supplies it with weapons of destruction and engages in armed intervention and aggression.

It is therefore necessary to build the New People's Army and carry out the people's war in order to destroy the ruling system and achieve the national and social liberation of the people. Under the concrete conditions of the Philippines, where the peasantry is still the majority class, the NPA can pursue the strategic line of protracted people's war. It can accumulate strength and develop in stages over a long period of time in order to encircle the cities until the conditions are ripe for seizing political power in the cities.

We can carry forward the people's cause for national liberation and democracy only by carrying out revolutionary armed struggle as the principal form of struggle. At the same time, it is necessary to carry out the legal struggle as the secondary form of struggle to complement the armed struggle. The high potency of this form of struggle has been demonstrated in the overthrow of Marcos and Estrada.

The most important among the legal forms of struggle is the mass movement. This daily takes up important issues and makes demands. At certain times, it can mobilize people to such an extent as to be able to overthrow a ruling clique. In the future, it can directly combine with the NPA in a strategic offensive to topple whoever is the president and the entire ruling system.

The reactionaries are now involved in an electoral contest. They are divided between the ruling coalition called People Power Coalition and the opposition coalition calling itself Puwersa ng Masa. They seem to agree that the overthrow of Estrada will be smoothened over by the

elections. But in fact, the contradictions among the reactionaries will sharpen because of the present conditions of worsening crisis and rising revolutionary mass movement.

The broad masses of the people demand the punishment of Estrada for his crimes of plunder and corruption. But some factions in the new regime wish to let him get off the hook through a bungling of the prosecution or by letting him flee. If he remains unpunished, the regime will pay a heavy political price and will face serious consequences in terms of popular outrage and fragmentation of the ruling coalition.

A progressive party like Bayan Muna has emerged to engage in the electoral form of struggle by seeking only three congressional seats in the party list elections and supporting progressive candidates for other positions. Considering the high prestige that it has gained in the mass movement to overthrow Estrada, Bayan Muna candidates are expected to win easily. But the reactionaries can in so many ways nullify the votes cast for it. In this regard, they should not be underestimated.

Both friends and enemies have made the observation that the mass base of the revolutionary movement would be exposed down to the precinct level through votes cast for Bayan Muna. Though a progressive electoral party, Bayan Muna is not the revolutionary party of the proletariat. It has its own way of garnering votes and engaging in alliances. Thus, its electoral mass base extends well beyond the revolutionary mass base.

Assuming that progressive candidates would be elected to various positions in the reactionary government in the near and long future, the reactionaries will not allow them to replace the unjust ruling system with a just and progressive one. At best, progressive officials would be able to expose the rottenness of the ruling system and espouse the demands of the people.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines has agreed with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines to resume the peace negotiations. These constitute another legal form of struggle even as they are directly related to the armed struggle. On an equal political and legal footing, the two negotiating panels face each other across the negotiating table and try to address the roots of the armed conflict and arrive at agreements.

The NDFP negotiating panel can seriously negotiate and try to draw benefits for the people only as it is firm on revolutionary principles and flexible in policy and the revolutionary armed struggle is growing in strength and advancing. At any rate, there should be no illusion whatsoever that peace negotiations are the sole or main way of arriving at a just and lasting peace.

The human rights organizations, churches and the people at large seek the release of political prisoners. But the militarists in the new regime are blocking or delaying the release of political prisoners and are in fact intensifying the military campaigns of suppression nationwide.

Fouling the atmosphere for peace negotiations, they continue to perpetrate human rights violations on a wide scale by undertaking a policy of murder, torture, looting, arson, forced mass

evacuations and seizing suspected revolutionaries and noncombatants as political prisoners. They release a few political prisoners and then take more.

After resumption in a neutral foreign venue, the peace negotiations will certainly go through twists and turns. That is because the GRP will always try to win across the table what it cannot in the battlefield. Off and on, the GRP will accuse the NDFP of using the peace negotiations to seek the status of belligerency. In fact the GRP uses the peace negotiations in a vile and vain attempt to push the NDFP into a position of capitulation and self-criminalization and attain the pacification of the revolutionary people and forces.

The most rabid among the reactionaries try vainly to demean us by claiming that we are insurgents rather than belligerents under the laws of war. They claim that we are merely a domestic police problem and that we must submit ourselves to surrender negotiations in a Philippine venue under the control and surveillance of the reactionary government, instead of peace negotiations in a neutral foreign venue.

We must tell these rabid reactionaries that they cannot dictate to us the framework and terms of peace negotiations. The revolutionary forces and the people have grown in strength by delivering lethal blows not just to police forces but to regular armed forces of the reactionary government.

We have acquired the status of belligerency under international law by waging revolutionary armed struggle, building organs of political power, organizing the people and defending our own territory. It is by doing all these and achieving greater victories in people's war that we shall gain wide international recognition of our status of belligerency and ultimately the recognition of the people's democratic government.

There are ways other than peace negotiations by which the people's democratic government can gain diplomatic recognition. The NDFP continuously carries out proto-diplomatic and diplomatic work and establishes and develops relations of mutual benefit and cooperation with other governments. It can make agreements with foreign governments for the protection and benefit of their citizens who visit or stay in the territory of the people's democratic government.

Our revolutionary government proves its status of belligerency whenever the people's army captures and detains prisoners of war for various lengths of time and accords them humane treatment under the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I. Thus, we comply with the NDFP's Declaration of Undertaking to Apply the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Protocol I of 1977. This document has been deposited with the Swiss Federal Council since July 15, 1996.

We fight in the battlefield while our negotiators talk across the table. Otherwise, the enemy will find no need for peace negotiations if the revolutionary armed struggle weakens or ceases. The achievements of our people's war and the desperate situation of the enemy have compelled the latter to discuss the roots of the armed conflict and negotiate possible basic reforms.

As the NDFP and GRP resume their negotiations, all previous agreements are revived. The most important of these agreements are: The Hague Joint Declaration, the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG), the Formation, Sequence and Operationalization of the

Reciprocal Working Committees and the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL).

The CARHRIHL is the first substantive agreement in accordance with the 4-point agenda of the peace negotiations. At the resumption of the peace negotiations, the negotiations on social and economic reforms shall be opened. We shall present the economic, social and cultural rights and demands of the people.

All Red commanders and fighters should understand the principled position of the NDFP in the peace negotiations and should prevent the spread of any false illusion, which undermines our revolutionary consciousness and fighting morale. They should continue their revolutionary work among the masses and carry out their fighting tasks.

We must maintain vigilance against the counterrevolutionary dual tactics of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. This consists of talking about peace and intensifying military campaigns of suppression. Let us not forget that in less than one month after coming to power, the new puppet president called on the military and police to eliminate or reduce the revolutionary forces.

The military and police officers who have pushed and carried out the national campaigns of suppression under the puppet regimes of Marcos, (Oplan Mamamayan), Aquino (Lambat Bitag), Ramos (Lambat Bitag) and Estrada (Oplan Makabayan) are still ferociously assaulting the people and the revolutionary forces.

We must counteract the enemy's nationwide and localized campaigns of suppression, its use of "civic action" pretenses, large-, medium- and small-unit operations and such new gadgets as night vision goggles, miniature communications equipment and global positioning system. We should not simply react to these but take the initiative by launching tactical offensives against weak points of the enemy.

We can increase our armed strength and raise the level of our military tactics and technique self-reliantly by seizing weapons and other instruments from the hands of the enemy forces. Some of our commando and special units have already acquired high-tech equipment to make operations more efficient than before. We must follow strictly the security guidelines on the use of computers, cellphones and other traceable equipment.

In the main, let us carry out basic tactical offensives of varying sizes in order to increase our armed strength. We should wage only those battles that we are sure of winning by mustering superior strength and using the element of surprise against the relatively weak points of the enemy forces.

Any series of small victories in our more than 100 guerrilla fronts amounts to a great victory nationwide. We can gain at least 1200 rifles per month or 14,400 rifles per year if on the average every guerrilla front command succeeds in seizing even only ten rifles from the enemy forces every month. Moreover, the rate of increasing our weaponry is cumulative as we base ourselves on the increased number of weapons at a given time.

The NPA can be flexible in the use of various sizes of units, like teams, squads, platoons, half companies or companies, in order to carry out tactical offensives, like ambushes, raids and arrest operations. The enemy forces always have weak points, which we can either discover or create by inducing them to commit mistakes.

Stationary or mobile small units of the reactionary armed forces, police, CAFGU, hostile private security agencies and criminal gangs are vulnerable. Even when we are confronted by hard points, like large military encampments or well-entrenched detachments, we can effectively act against these by waiting for a small part of the enemy force to come out of its camp and annihilating it at a distance from the camp. We can also harass the camp with weapons and tactics that do not strain our resources.

We can employ sniper fire, gasoline spray apparatuses, improvised bazookas, rocket propelled grenades, land mines and cheaply made explosives against vital enemy military installations. We can undertake night operations to give the enemy forces sleepless nights. We can capture from the enemy forces night vision goggles and other high-tech gadgets, including the trackers for detecting use of these, in order to turn the use of these gadgets against them.

We can reduce the capability of the enemy forces to make forward deployment against us or send out scout ranger teams or commandoes against us by seizing the initiative against their weak points and by inducing them to make mistakes. The enemy's offensive capabilities against us have certain limitations. These are due to the bankruptcy of the reactionary government, the overextension and limitedness of troop strength relative to our mass base, the ceaseless dilemma between concentration and dispersal, the growing factionalism among military and police officers and the constant need to secure the urban centers of power.

In the cities, the military and police forces of the reactionary government wrangle over political alignments and over connections with criminal syndicates. They are at each other's throat. They would be in a more complicated situation after we revive the armed city partisan units. However, these must undertake punitive actions at a well-calculated rate in order to let the military and police factions run ahead in their internal struggles and to avoid prejudicing the development of the legal democratic mass movement.

We must carry out highly selective special tactical offensives by armed city partisans and special commando units in order to punish the worst of plunderers and human rights violators and traitors who have blood debts. If we can arrest these enemies of the people, we should do so in order to investigate, prosecute and try them. But when these are armed and dangerous or these resist arrest, we must be ready to give battle and use the necessary amount of force.

We must seize every moment to strengthen the New People's Army and advance the people's war. We must exert greater efforts to further strengthen the Party, the people's army, the united front formations, the organs of political power and the mass organizations. We must win ever greater victories in expanding and consolidating the mass base and all revolutionary forces. The people are our inexhaustible source of strength.

We can increase the number and frequency of our tactical guerrilla offensives and raise the level of our revolutionary armed struggle only by continuously widening and deepening our mass base. We must have the mass base to facilitate our tactical offensives, to cover our retreat after every tactical offensive, to lure the enemy forces in deep to their rural graveyard and keep them blind and deaf for all intents and purposes.

We must continuously build our mass base in order to prevent the development of a purely military situation between our small armed units and the larger enemy forces. As in the past, before the Second Great Rectification Movement, we would be in a difficult and losing position if we allowed the purely military viewpoint to ride high. We must maintain a good balance of carrying out guerrilla tactical offensives and doing our revolutionary mass work.

The local organs of political power must be built steadily in ever expanding areas of our country. So must the mass organizations of workers, peasants, fishermen, women, youth, cultural activists and children that are the base for these organs of democratic political power. The working committees for mass organizing, education, land reform, production, defense, health, culture and arbitration must be formed to assist the organs of political power directly.

In consolidation work, it is absolutely necessary to build the mass organizations and form the working committees in order to let the masses solve their problems, empower themselves and lift themselves up socially. Thus, the NPA has a growing source of Red fighters, a powerful network of information and resources for the people's war. From the ranks of the most advanced activists, Party members must be recruited and local Party branches must be built promptly.

4. EXCELLENT CONDITIONS FOR WAGING PEOPLE'S WAR

The conditions are excellent for waging the new-democratic revolution through protracted people's war in the Philippines. The crisis of the world capitalist system and that of the domestic ruling system are daily worsening.

So-called free market globalization has proven to be utterly bankrupt. It has brought about the most rapacious ways of exploiting and oppressing the people in the underdeveloped countries as well as in the imperialist countries. It has devastated mainly the underdeveloped countries and has made the puppet states weak and vulnerable to violent contradictions among the reactionaries as well as to revolutionary armed resistance by the people.

The new world disorder is intensifying. The contradictions between the imperialist powers and the people in the client states, among the imperialist powers and between the big bourgeoisie and the proletariat are intensifying. Imperialist wars of aggression and violence among the reactionaries are breaking out. Under these conditions, proletarian revolutionaries can take the initiative to prepare and wage revolutionary armed struggle.

The disintegration of Soviet social-imperialism, the fall of revisionist regimes and the rise of the most criminal forms of capitalism in all countries where socialism has been betrayed are all part and parcel of the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system. The conditions for the

reemergence of revolutionary movements for national liberation and socialism are laid with utmost clarity against imperialism, revisionism and reaction.

Through the betrayal of socialism, the revisionist ruling cliques have enabled US imperialism to win the Cold War and emerge as the sole superpower. Thus, US imperialism has been able to escalate oppression and exploitation of the proletariat and people. However, this has aggravated and deepened the crisis of the world capitalist system and has resulted in wars of aggression. Now, the stage is set for the resurgence of the world proletarian revolution and broad anti-imperialist movement on an unprecedented scale.

The new US administration of George W. Bush wishes to focus its aggressive policy on Asia and the Pacific to put further under control China, Japan and the rest of Asia, a vast region where most of humanity and most of the social wealth are. The US has been able to impose its neocolonial and neoliberal economic and financial policies on the client states and further wants them to back down from their political assertions of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Emboldened by the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the weakness of Russia, the US and its NATO allies have started a chain of aggressive wars in the European continent and in the Middle East in connection with NATO expansion and with the sourcing and routing of oil supply. The troubles that they have begun to stir up in Europe are bound to become worse. The imperialist powers themselves are likely to rearrange and upset the current balance of their alliance. At the same time, the proletariat and people can revive their revolutionary struggle.

The revolutionary forces and people in Asia can take advantage of the overextension of US imperialism and its long-term weaknesses arising from its acts of bullying, intervention and aggression, the costliness of its high-tech weaponry, its Vietnam war syndrome or its obsession with the exit strategy for its aggressor troops and its admitted fear of protracted people's war.

In our region, we support all struggles for national sovereignty and territorial integrity against US and Japanese imperialism. We support all revolutionary movements for national liberation, democracy and socialism against imperialism and local reaction. We hope that in due time the armed revolutionary struggles of the peoples in Southeast Asia will resurge.

We support the struggle of China and the Chinese people for the return of Taiwan to its motherland, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and entire Korean people for the reunification of Korea and the Japanese people against US and Japanese monopoly capitalism, US-Japan security treaty and the US military bases.

The world proletarian revolution and the broad anti-imperialist movement are steadily advancing. We strive to contribute our best to the revolutionary advance of the proletariat and people of the world by carrying out the new-democratic revolution and by aiming consequently to undertake the socialist revolution. #

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