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Editorial

Expose Aquino's blinding gimmickry and rhetoric

Self-serving rhetoric, old and rotten policies: This combination has emerged as the new puppet reactionary president Benigno Aquino III's management style.

In addressing the people, the newly installed president's style is to present a highly cosmeticized image and to aim for what is popular. He believes that in doing so, he can make palatable to the people his regime's policies which, in essence, are just as rotten, antinational, antipeople and brutal as those of the Arroyo regime.

These are the marks of Aquino's first-ever speech before Congress. Senseless cajolery. False rhetoric.

Aquino's SONA centered on the theme of corruption. But on this occasion, he targeted only the lower-ranking bureaucrats and ignored the biggest plunderers. To court applause from the people suffering in long queues for water, he exposed how MWSS officials have been luxuriating in the privileges that come with their positions.

He never mentioned the substantially bigger cases of corruption and thievery involving the chief plunderers led by Gloria Arroyo who lorded it over for close to a decade.

Criticizing the corruption of the Arroyo regime was one of the hallmarks of Aquino's election campaign. But it took him more than a month to sign the executive order establishing the so-called Truth Commission. This early, the

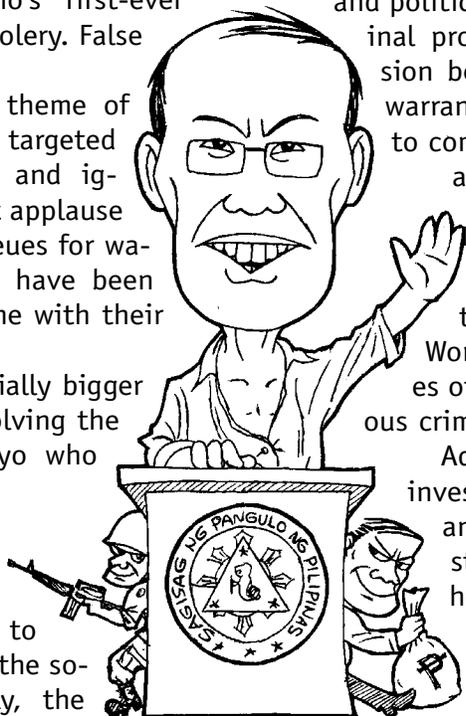
commission has already been fraught with a myriad questions especially with the many loopholes that could be used by the Arroyos and their minions to worm their way out of any court cases and mount countermaneuvers.

Aquino did not grant the commission prosecutorial powers, leaving this to the Office of the Ombudsman which will be led by a known Arroyo loyalist until the end of 2012. The Truth Commission's investigations are also set to end in 2012, giving Arroyo more than two years to launch all the necessary legal and political maneuvers to avoid possible criminal prosecution. Neither has the commission been given the power to issue arrest warrants nor does it possess enough clout to compel witnesses and even indictees to attend its hearings.

The commission's investigations will not cover electoral fraud in 2004 and 2007 despite the existence of overwhelming evidence. Worse, it will not investigate major cases of extrajudicial killings and other serious crimes against humanity.

Aquino's manifest lack of interest to investigate the previous regime's fascist and terrorist crimes renders empty his statements calling on the AFP to uphold human rights.

If Aquino insists that the revolutionary forces declare a ceasefire first as a precondition to peace



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talks, even his declarations of readiness to resolve the armed conflict through negotiations will turn out to be empty rhetoric. Such a condition violates the previously agreed upon process and is unacceptable to the revolutionary forces.

To make himself look like a hero, Aquino exposed some of the more striking anomalies in a number of agencies and corporations under the previous government and promised a cleanup. But he made the exposés only to justify the imperialist policies of denationalization, privatization, liberalization and deregulation and his plans to outdo the previous regime in implementing them. He pushed his "Private-Public Partnership" agenda, which in essence involves the further privatization of even more services and government assets that can be profitable to foreign and comprador interests conniving with big bureaucrat capitalists.

Meanwhile, Aquino was silent on the plight of oppressed workers, of the severe inadequacy of their minimum wage, on worsening unemployment, poverty and hunger. He claimed that the first item on his platform is the creation of jobs

and that this could only be achieved through the development of industry. But the only "solution" he could think of is to attract private investors and make it easier for them to do business.

Aquino said nothing about land reform, especially in Hacienda Luisita. As for the gigantic budget deficit, there is absolutely no intention on his part to do away with the automatic allocation of up to more than half of the budget for debt service. Instead, it is the people who will be made to bear the burden of such practice through higher electricity rates and train fares. There was also no indication that his government would be giving a higher priority to education, health and other social services.

With Aquino's obvious servility to the teachings of American counterinsurgency experts, we can expect his leadership style in the coming years to be filled with even more gimmickry and empty rhetoric. According to the *US Counterinsurgency Guide* framework, such tactics have the objective of portraying the ruling government as trustworthy and reliable in order to wrest the people's allegiance away

from forces advancing revolutionary change.

Aquino's gimmicks will soon lose their sheen in the face of the intensifying crisis besetting the people. His empty rhetoric will no longer be able to drown out the cries of a people suffering from the gnawing pangs of hunger. The people will no longer be blinded by the glare of his gimmickry as their own naked exploitation, poverty and oppression stare them straight in the face.

More than ever, the people must be vigilant about their basic interests and thoroughly fight for them by launching militant mass struggles and waging revolution. The peasant masses must fight for genuine land reform nationwide. The call for national industrialization must be put forward. The toiling masses must unite and fight for higher wages, jobs, housing and social services. There must be a concerted effort to fight for patriotic, democratic and propeople political, socio-economic and cultural policies as well as other basic issues. The struggle for national freedom, democracy, social justice and genuine development must spread like a prairie fire across the land.

In the face of widespread mobilizations by the masses, Aquino's gimmickry and skulduggery will sooner or later come to nought and his government's true nature will emerge as one that advocates the interests of foreign monopoly capitalists and the local big landlords, comprador bourgeoisie and bureaucrat capitalists.

The revolutionary and democratic people's movement nationwide is vigorously expanding and gaining strength in their continuing efforts to arouse, organize and mobilize the people. The people are aware through their long history of struggle that people's war is their only weapon to achieve genuine national and social liberation. **AB**

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"Private-Public Partnership"

Further privatization

Based on his SONA, Aquino's program will consist of the further privatization of public services and assets. His main targets for privatization are the National Food Authority (NFA), Metro Rail Transit (MRT), National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR) and the Philippine Navy lands.

He used the NFA's anomalous and erroneous management policies to justify plans to eventually abandon government responsibility. He denounced the excessive volumes of imported rice being kept in the agency's warehouses, but failed to mention the conspiracy of private commercial rice cartels and high-ranking NFA officials behind this practice. It is no accident that so much priority is given to importing huge volumes of rice only to have the excess stock auctioned off to the cartel. Meanwhile, with only a small subsidy fund left, the NFA is able to purchase only limited volumes of palay from the peasant masses at niggardly rates.

Aquino now uses the excess rice stocks in NFA warehouses to justify proposals to do away completely with programs to support local production and subsidize rice prices and make official the agency's conspiracy with the cartel via the implementation of "Private-Public Partnership" in the NFA, leading to the agency's eventual abolition.

It is this same agenda that is behind Aquino's plans to raise fares in the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT). In the case of the MRT, Aquino criticized its management's failure to raise fares which allegedly was behind the government's difficulty to fulfill guarantees given to private investors to make the

train system's operations profitable. Instead of revising a contract that is lopsidedly in favor of investors, Aquino plans to raise fares to make the MRT more attractive to future foreign and comprador investors.

Aquino's favored solution to NAPOCOR's endlessly cash-strapped state (it was in the red by up to ₱740 billion in 2009) is likewise to privatize the agency and raise electricity rates. But he makes no mention of the fact that NAPOCOR's huge debts are the result of contracts lopsidedly favoring private power producers. Among the terms of these contracts is a "take-or-pay" provision where NAPOCOR pays for the producer's entire capacity whether or not it is consumed, and a fuel-cost guarantee where NAPOCOR agrees to defray all of the producers' fuel expenses. This is aside from the corruption engaged in by NAPOCOR officials.

Aquino lambasted the perks and privileges enjoyed by officials of the Metropolitan Water-

ter-



works and Sewerage System (MWSS) but only because he wanted to justify the agency's privatization, which has long been demanded by both the Manila Water Company Inc. (MWCI) and Maynilad Water Services (MWSI), the two big foreign-comprador consortia sourcing water from the MWSS for distribution in Metro Manila. In turn, the consortia's strategic targets for privatization are the Angat and La Mesa dams. Two former executives of these water conglomerates now in Aquino's cabinet—Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson from MWSI and Energy Secretary Jose Almendras from MWCI—are both ardent advocates of MWSS' further privatization.

Also too good to be passed up in Aquino's "Private-Public Partnership" scheme are the lands of the Philippine Navy headquarters in Metro Manila. A big businessman reportedly heard about Aquino's efforts to raise the gargantuan funds necessary to strengthen the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and offered to enter into a hundred-year lease contract for the land and set up a commercial center, similar to that in the former Fort Bonifacio.

The talks are said to be underway, with the businessman already pledging \$100 million in "goodwill money." The AFP has since offered other vast tracts of land owned by the Philippine Air Force and Philippine Army for inclusion in the "Private-Public Partnership" scheme. Many other government-owned lands and other public assets are being lined up for privatization, sale or lease.

Protest actions mark Aquino's first SONA

Filipinos in and out of the country staged protest actions as Benigno Aquino III delivered his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 26.

In Metro Manila, some 10,000 people joined the protest action led by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and its allied organizations. The mass action began at around 8:00 a.m. in front of the Ever Gotesco Mall in Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City. The protesters carried an effigy of Aquino who was portrayed as a magician. The imagery is in reference to questions from the people on whether the new president's promises were true or mere illusion. Progressive organizations from Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon, which have been holding a protest camp in Metro Manila for

several weeks, also joined the protests.

BAYAN secretary general Renato Reyes said that the theme of their protest is "Karapatan, Katarungan, Kabuhayan at Kalayaan" (Human Rights, Justice, Livelihood and Freedom). They presented their eight-point demands to Aquino: file charges against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, issue a hold-departure order for her, and freeze her assets and bank accounts as well as those of her henchmen who plundered the public wealth; give justice to victims of human rights violations; implement genuine land reform;

GRP must reciprocate NDFP's readiness to engage in peace talks

"Are you ready to present concrete proposals instead of mere criticisms?...Are you also prepared for a (nationwide ceasefire)?... It is difficult to begin talks while the smell of gunpowder is in the air..."

Pres. Benigno Aquino III hurlled this challenge at the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), New People's Army (NPA) and National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) during his first State of the Nation Address on July 26.

In response, the revolutionary forces reiterated their readiness to resume the long-suspended peace negotiations with the reactionary government. The NDFP negotiating panel said it was waiting for Aquino to send a panel to either The Netherlands or Norway, where the talks had been held in the past.

The CPP and NDFP also reminded Aquino that the process and substantive agenda of the peace talks had been set since The Hague Joint Declaration was signed in 1992. The substantive agenda, in their proper order, consist of 1) respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; 2) implementation of socio-economic

reforms; 3) implementation of political and constitutional reforms; and 4) disposition of forces and ending the armed conflict.

This clearly indicates that discussions on ceasefire and the disposition of forces are to take place after agreements have been reached on social, economic and political reforms. Neither party should impose preconditions such as demands for a longterm truce or ceasefires of indefinite duration before the basic issues behind the armed conflict have been discussed and resolved.

But just as the Arroyo regime did, the Aquino regime wants to have it backwards. Aquino's spokespersons and subalterns have been harping on this theme since the SONA, insisting on a ceasefire first before any discussions on the aforementioned basic issues.

If Aquino is really interested in having a ceasefire at the soonest time possible, all he has to do is

study and sign the Concise Agreement to End Civil War and Achieve Just Peace proposed by the NDFP National Council in 2005. The concise agreement contains the principles and policies that will advance national independence and democracy and calls for common efforts to resolve the basic socio-economic and political problems that have long been weighing heavily on the Filipino people. It has been five years since this concrete proposal has been presented to the GRP.

But how has the GRP responded to the NDFP's declarations of readiness and its concrete proposals? Up to now, the Aquino regime has not even appointed a chief negotiator and named the members of its peace panel that will face the NDFP at the negotiating table.

Worse, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin has announced that the GRP will be prioritizing local peace talks, which is a disservice to the genuine peace process. The "local peace talks" scheme is a wornout tactic that has long been exposed for its bogusness and inutility and involves nothing more than the reactionary government talking to itself. **AB**

raise workers' wages; stop the political killing of activists and journalists; abrogate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA); allocate more funds for basic services like education, housing and health; resume peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front.

Progressive party-list representatives who attended Aquino's SONA manifested their demands through their apparel. Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro "Teddy" Casiño wore a barong Tagalog embroidered with the words "Stop the Killings." Anakpawis Rep. Rafael "Ka Paeng" Mariano wore a hat with the inscription "Tunay na reporma sa lupa" (Genuine land reform). Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond "Mong" Palatino wore a scarf that bore the words "Itigil ang pagtaas ng matrikula" (Stop tuition fee increases). ACT Teachers Rep. Antonio Tinio wore a pin that said "Itaas ang sahod ng mga manggagawa at guro" (Raise the wages of workers and teachers). Gabriela Women's Party Representatives Luzviminda Ilagan and Emerenciana "Emmi" de Jesus brought fans that had the words "Kapayapaan sa Mindanao, ibasura ang VFA" (Peace in Mindanao, junk VFA), "Itigil ang pagtaas ng mga bilihin" (Stop price increases) and "Karapatan sa pabahay" (The right to housing).

Protest actions were also held in other parts of the country and abroad.

In Davao City. Progressive organizations marched from Centennial Park to Freedom Park in Roxas Avenue. They demanded justice for the victims of the Maguindanao Massacre and for Gregan Cardeño who was killed by US military troops in the country. They also demanded a stop to Oplan Bantay

Laya.

In Bacolod City. Activists rallied at the Bacolod City Fountain of Justice to call for the junking of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) and ensure the people's job security.

In Cebu City. BAYAN-Central Visayas and the Alyansa sa mga Mamumuo sa Sugbo-Kilusang Mayo Uno (AMA-SUGBO-KMU) led a protest march from Fuente Osmeña to Colon Street. They demanded a wage increase and the repeal of pro-capitalist laws.

In Baguio City. A public viewing of the SONA was held at Malcolm Square. According to the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA), Aquino should also have issued marching orders against plunderers of the environment in national minority lands.

In Panay. Bayan Muna-Capiz held a protest action at the Roxas City Public Plaza. In Kalibo, Aklan, activists gathered and held their own State of the People Address (SOPA). Their main demand was justice for Fernando Baldomero. In Iloilo City, BAYAN-Panay led a march along the city's main thoroughfares which culminated in a rally in front of the provincial capitol. They called on the Aquino government to allocate a bigger budget for the education sector.

In Cagayan de Oro. Activists held a rally at Cagayan de Oro's Plaza Divisoria. BAYAN-Cagayan de Oro assailed Aquino's lack of a long-term solution to the economic crisis, saying he is no different from Arroyo who never adopted concrete measures to

solve the problem of poverty.

In the USA. Simultaneous protests were held in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York under the lead of BAYAN-USA. Activists said Aquino's speech was wanting in the face of an exodus from the Philippines due to the lack of concrete programs for land reform, employment, national industrialization and punishing Gloria Arroyo. They vowed to keep a tight watch on whether Aquino fulfills his promises or not.

In The Netherlands. A colorful protest action was held in Amsterdam by activists wearing masks and carrying umbrellas. They reminded Aquino of the people's demands and his promise to distribute Hacienda Luisita.

In Saudi Arabia. Migrants in the eastern province of Al-Khobar also said they were not satisfied with Aquino's speech. He presented no platform for OFWs especially as many of them are victims of human trafficking, in detention or on death row. Aquino only bared corruption cases but stopped short of saying anything about punishing Arroyo.

In Canada. Migrante-Ontario held a forum on July 24 at the Ontario Institute for Studies in



Education. The forum discussed human rights, employment and economic conditions and expressed support for the Morong 43 by raising funds for the detainees.

In Japan. Fifteen Filipino organizations in Japan led by Migrante-Japan called on Aquino to present concrete plans for the eight million OFWs within the first 100 days of his term. They also demanded the removal of certain officials of the Philippine consulate and embassy in Japan for their neglect and refusal to heed the grievances of OFWs.

In Hongkong. One hundred forty (140) leaders of various organizations gathered to present the agenda of Overseas Filipino Workers in Hongkong. The United Filipinos-Migrante-Hongkong led OFWs in airing their demands which included the reduction of e-passport fees, junking of additional fees in securing employment certificates and the provision of medical and legal services to OFWs. AB

SONA disappoints relative of slay victim

Like the mothers, fathers, children, spouses and other relatives of victims of extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations, Dr. William "Chandu" Claver was utterly disappointed with Pres. Benigno Aquino III's State of the Nation Address. In an open letter to the president, he expressed his frustration over the fact that Aquino said little about giving justice to the victims and punishing the masterminds and implementors of Oplan Bantay Laya which sanctions the killing and abduction of activists and others deemed enemies of the state.

On July 31, 2006, state agents ambushed Claver's family in Kalinaga province, killing his wife Alice. Persistent threats against his remaining family compelled him to seek political asylum in Canada.

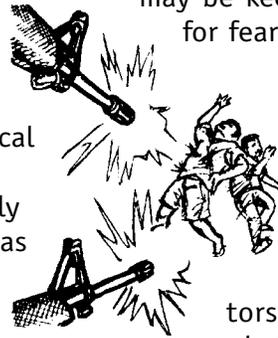
Claver listened intently to Aquino's speech but was frustrated with the president's silence on the issue of ending Oplan Bantay Laya which has resulted in over 1,000 bloody executions and more than 200 abductions.

Claver assailed Aquino's silence regarding the conditions of political detainees, especially the Mo-

rong 43 who are health workers like himself. Claver implied that Aquino may be keeping mum on the issue for fear of the military.

Claver called on Aquino to stop the killings, junk Oplan Bantay Laya and seriously investigate and actively prosecute the military perpetrators and their coddlers whether in the past administration or in the present one.

Claver warned that the bloodshed will continue as long as the armed agents of the state believe that their heinous crimes have the tacit approval of their leaders. AB



DPWH chief involved in anomalous contract

Despite avowals that he will fight corruption in government, Pres. Benigno Aquino III defended a member of his cabinet who has engaged in filthy maneuvers to win an anomalous contract.

The official who is now in hot water is former Maynilad Water Services Inc. president and now Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) secretary Rogelio Singson. When he was still chief of Maynilad, Singson connived with then Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) chair Efraim Genuino to secure the signing of a water supply contract for a major PAGCOR project.

Singson and Genuino tried to hasten the signing in June for the

3,877-square meter Bagong Nayong Pilipino Entertainment City in Parañaque before Genuino left PAGCOR for fear that the incoming leadership might reject the contract. Singson also insisted on heading both the DPWH and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) which handles such contracts, not only to secure the approval of the PAGCOR contract but also to use the post for his personal gain and that of Maynilad.

The MWSS rejected the Entertainment City contract because it did not undergo public bidding. Singson was also pushing Maynilad's anomalous demand for PAGCOR to grant it the right to operate without paying concession fees.

The MWSS insists that new franchise areas must first undergo public bidding to ensure that the government gets a favorable deal. Based on the Entertainment City's projected water consumption of 10 million liters daily at the minimum rate of ₱1 per liter, the government can earn at least ₱3.65 billion per year. This is the amount the state stood to lose had Singson and Genuino been allowed to get away with their midnight deal. AB

Political killings go on unabated

In less than a month since Benigno Aquino III assumed the presidency, 11 activists and media personnel have become victims of extrajudicial killings. The latest victims are four activists killed on July 19 and 24. Meanwhile, a villager was abducted and a former peasant leader was illegally arrested and tortured by the military, according to reports received by *Ang Bayan*.

July 24. Military men picked up Jovito Manzon, 50, a resident of Barangay Caldong, Sampaloc, Quezon. The military accuses Manzon of supporting the New People's Army (NPA). He is now detained at the 1st IB headquarters in Cavinti, Laguna.

The military conducted a saturation drive in the village the following day, where drunk soldiers harassed five women whom they also accused of supporting the NPA.

July 24. Two armed men opened fire on Joel Razaga, 45, a member of the National Federation

of Sugar Workers, in Sitio Binabuno, Barangay Malasibog, Escalante City, Negros Occidental. He was on his way to a meeting at Mt. Carmel College. Shells from 9 mm and .45 caliber pistols were recovered near the victim's body.

July 22. Five military agents arrested Dario Tomada around 11:00 p.m. at a restaurant in Biñan, Laguna where he was



working as a parking attendant. He was arrested for 15 counts of murder dating back to 1984 in Inopacan, Leyte.

Tomada used to chair the Samahan han Gudti nga Parag-uma ha Sinirangan Bisayas (SAGUPA), a regional peasant organization in Eastern Visayas. He left for Manila in September 2006 from his home in Tagaytay, Kananga, Leyte to escape threats from 8th ID soldiers then under Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan. He took different jobs to support his wife Amelita and their four children in Leyte.

Tomada was handcuffed, blindfolded and taken by the military agents to Camp Aguinaldo at around 12:00 midnight. He was interrogated for 30 minutes and repeatedly slapped on the face. Still blindfolded, he was again subjected to a gruelling nine-hour interrogation the whole of the following day and was not given any food. While torturing him, his interrogators offered him money for information on an individual allegedly based in Luzon.

According to human rights watchdog Karapatan, Tomada faces the same false charges slapped against Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Randall Echanis and others.

July 19. Three members of Katribu, a party-list organization of national minorities were killed in Rodriguez, Rizal, according to reports from Karapatan-Timog Katalagan. The victims have been identified as Galvan Navarte, Demilita Largo and Benita San Jose.

The victims were aboard a motorcycle when attacked by an unknown assailant. AB

AFP forcibly recruits 3 minors

Three 17-year old minors have been arrested and forced by the 39th IB of the 10th ID to participate in its dirty war against the revolutionary movement in Far South Mindanao Region (FSMR). The military unit took "Donna," "Jerry" ang "Boy" (not their real names) to present them to media and the public as "child soldiers" of the NPA. The soldiers trained "Boy" of Tagaytay, Magsaysay, Davao del Sur to penetrate an NPA unit and steal firearms. "Jerry" of Malawanit, Magsaysay was told to do the same but he refused. He was subjected to torture until he managed to escape his captors. "Donna," of Dungan Pekong, Matanao, Davao del Sur underwent the same experience. They are now portrayed as "child soldiers" in the media.

The Valentin Palamine Command of the NPA-FSMR denied that the three minors had ever been involved in the NPA as Red fighters or in any other capacity. The three are simple village youths victimized by the military and now being presented as victims of exploitation by the revolutionary movement. AB



Health group secures humane treatment for detainee mother, baby

The Free the 43 Health Workers Alliance has successfully secured a court order allowing detainee Carina Oliveros be with her newborn son. Newly appointed Justice Secretary Leila de Lima ordered prosecutors on August 6 not to oppose a petition to this effect filed by Oliveros, her son and their supporters.

Oliveros gave birth by caesarian section on July 22. A few days later, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) ordered Oliveros to leave her child and scheduled her return to detention. The Free the 43 Health Workers Alliance immediately demanded that Oliveros be given time to stay in a favorable environment to hasten her recovery.

According to Dr. Julie Caguiat, spokeswoman of the Free the 43 Health Workers Alliance, being allowed to stay with her infant is one

of the reproductive rights of women like Oliveros. The alliance reminded the Philippine government that it is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, a treaty defending women's rights.

The law recognizes Oliveros' right to care for her infant and it would be illegal to separate them, said Caguiat. It would be immoral and constitute another injustice if the BJMP insists on its policy to separate the mother from the child,



she said.

On August 3, progressive organizations barricaded the Philippine General Hospital where Oliveros gave birth to prevent BJMP personnel from transferring the mother and her child. **AB**

Killing of wounded fighters assailed

Police and military forces killed three Red fighters who had been rendered hors de combat in two separate incidents in Mindoro last month.

PNP elements killed Ka Fernando Pamorada, also known as Ka Tsakoy and Ka Rokke, on June 24 after his capture in an encounter in Barangay Orconoma, Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro. The PNP itself reported to the media that Ka Rokke was wounded when he was captured. But the following day, the PNP suddenly announced that he was killed in the encounter and that his body was in a morgue in Bongabong.

Also on June 24, elements of the 4th IB, the 411th PMG and

agents of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) in Oriental Mindoro captured NPA fighters Christopher "Ka Olip" Barrientos and Ulyses "Ka Mike" Gallario at a checkpoint in Poblacion, Roxas town. Witnesses recounted that the two fighters were aboard a motorcycle when a car blocked their way and its occupants started firing at them, wounding Ka Mike. Ka Olip managed to escape but the assailants followed him to Barangay Cantil, slammed his motorcycle with a car and cap-

tured him that same afternoon.

Many witnesses attest that the two fighters were wounded but alive when the Philippine Army and PNP agents took them to their camp and safehouse. When the victims' families started looking for them, the MIG denied having the two in its custody. On the afternoon of June 27, the military reported that the two Red fighters were killed in an encounter in Km. 11, Barangay Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. They bore many gunshot wounds on their heads and torsos and were unrecognizable when their families came to claim their bodies.

International rules of war prohibit the killing of hors de combat fighters. **AB**



10 soldiers killed in military actions by the NPA

At least ten military elements were killed and three others were wounded in a series of gunbattles between the New People's Army (NPA) and the military from July 20 to July 28. The NPA seized three high-powered rifles in these firefights.

July 28. It was noon when Red fighters opened fire at a vehicle that carried elements of the PNP Public Safety Management Battalion in Barangay Calpi Miyaga, Uson, Masbate. The vehicle came from the town of Armenia and was on its way to Uson. The exchange of

gunfire lasted for around 10 minutes. The vehicle came to a halt as the guerrillas aimed their fire at the front of the vehicle.

Bombo Radyo reported the following day that four policemen were killed in the ambush.

July 26. Bedlam erupted in the

camp of the 507th Police Provincial Mobile Group (PPMG) in Cataingan, Masbate after gunshots from the NPA rang out. Two policemen were killed and an undetermined number were wounded in the firefight that lasted for around 15 minutes. Due to the attack, the military and PPMG, who were conducting operations at that time, were forced to withdraw from the guerrilla zone and remove their satellite detachment in Barangay Paguihaman, Uson, Masbate.

July 23. Two soldiers were killed and another was wounded in two successive gunfights in Sitio Buloy, Barangay Decoliat, Maria Aurora, Aurora.

The first encounter took place around noontime when a unit of the NPA under the Domingo Erlano Command-Aurora encountered 48th IB troops conducting operations at that time.

The second gunfight started at around 3:00 p.m. until 4:00 that afternoon. The NPA unit was able to seize the initiative and inflict casualties on the enemy soldiers who were caught by surprise.

The military tried to cover up the incident and hide the casualties even if Sitio Buloy residents were able to see the enemy fatalities.

July 20. Guerrillas of the NPA Armando Dumandan Command ambushed 72nd IB troops conducting patrols in Barangay El Salvador, New Corella, Davao del Norte. They were able to seize an M16, an M14 and a Garand rifle. Two CAFGU elements were killed and two others were wounded, including the detachment commander in the barangay. The guerrillas did not sustain any casualties.

The wounded detachment commander surrendered and was immediately attended to by NPA medics.

NPA in Mountain Province belies 5th ID claims

KA Magno Udyaw, spokesperson of the Leonardo Pacsi Command of the New People's Army (NPA) in Mountain Province, has belied fabricated reports circulated by the 5th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army (5th ID) after the NPA staged an ambush in Samoki, Bontoc, in Cordillera region last July 5. Ka Magno denied accusations that the NPA stripped the seven soldiers killed in the ambush of their clothing, desecrated their bodies and stole their personal belongings. The soldiers were on their way to Bontoc to meet police and local government authorities regarding the government's counterinsurgency program and not for a medical mission, as the DRC claimed.

Repression, forced labor in Samar

SINCE March this year, residents of the towns of Motiong, Jiabong and San Jose de Buan in Samar province have been victimized by repressive acts and forced labor demanded by the 34th IB. Barangay officials and village watchmen condemned the compulsory meetings called by the military where they are ordered to convince their alleged NPA relatives to surrender. They are also enticed to poison Red fighters entering their places and are being compelled to put up their own barangay security system.

They have also received threats from the military even as the latter has accused them of giving their barangay revenue allotment to the NPA. Meanwhile, farmers in Motiong and San Jose are also complaining against the forced labor demanded by the military where villagers are ordered to carry wood for the construction of a fence for a military camp.



Website exposes US crimes, losing course in Iraq and Afghanistan

The website *Wikileaks* has recently disclosed to the public the contents of more than 90,000 classified US military documents concerning the NATO coalition's war of aggression in Afghanistan. Called the *Afghan War Diary*, the documents highlight, among others, the losing course of US imperialism and its criminal responsibility as well as that of its allies against the Afghan people from 2004 to 2010.

In describing the unjust war on an almost daily basis, the documents uncover the killings of thousands of Afghan civilians in incidents kept from the media and the public, the rising Taliban membership and its intensifying attacks, and US suspicions concerning its allies.

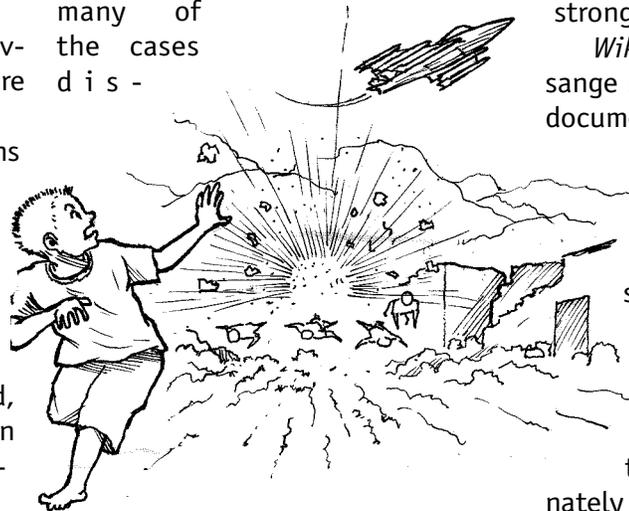
Wikileaks is a website run by activists that promote information sharing and making public classified documents detailing the crimes and other evil deeds of governments and private corporations. It sorted out information it had gathered and published it in three major newspapers—*The Guardian* of the United Kingdom, *The New York Times* of the US and *Der Spiegel* of Germany—that joined hands for this giant project.

Among the information uncovered and published by *Wikileaks* are the following:

1) More than 4,000 civilians were killed in attacks by US-led NATO forces in at least 144 separate incidents that were concealed from the public or covered up through fabricated reports. In one case, US forces bombed a community in Azizabad, Herat in northwestern Afghanistan in 2008, targeting a certain Taliban leader. Official reports said

that 30 rebels were killed in a fire-fight. But the truth is that around 90 civilians were actually killed. Sixty of them were children while 15 were women. The families of the victims were either paid off by NATO with consumer products such as canned goods and chocolates or offered money amounting to up to \$1,500 for every dead body.

2) The existence of Task Force 373 within the US-led Special Forces whose sole aim is to run after and liquidate Taliban leaders sans the benefit of a trial. Called the "black unit," this special outfit is composed mainly of US soldiers. On its hitlist are 2,000 alleged Taliban and al Qaeda leaders. In many of the cases d i s -



closed, TF373 indiscriminately unleashed attacks and killed even in the absence of a sure target. In one example, TF373 forces in Jajalabad in eastern Afghanistan indiscriminately fired their weapons in June 2007 after someone shone a torch at the soldiers. The TF373 unit even called for a helicopter gunship to bomb the whole area. The morning after, they learned that it was the local police that they had an encounter with. Four policemen were killed and four others were wounded.

3) The capability of the Taliban to shoot down helicopters using shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles. NATO forces have repeatedly denied this capability and always blamed reported helicopter crashes on pilot error or equipment failure.

4) The growing use of drones to pursue and kill alleged Taliban targets. These drones are flown and made to attack from a control room in a military base in Nevada, USA.

5) The arming, training and funding of Taliban forces by the Pakistani intelligence agency since 2004. The US military has repeatedly accused in its intelligence reports Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) of conniving with the enemy, which the ISI generals strongly deny.

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange said they possess many more documents like the *Afghan War Diary* and they are ready to make public all of these.

Prior to releasing the war diary, *Wikileaks* also showed last April video footage taken from an Apache helicopter. The footage shows US soldiers aboard the helicopter indiscriminately firing at a group of civilians,

including a Reuters reporter and his driver, who were walking on a street in Baghdad in 2007. The soldiers joked with each other and congratulated themselves while firing at a van that had arrived to extend help to one of the wounded. A few minutes after the firing, it became clear that there were two children seated in front of the vehicle. Twelve civilians were killed in this incident. The children in the van were wounded.

The occupation forces' contempt for the lives of ordinary Afghan and Iraqi citizens and the scope and gravity of their crimes against humanity are extremely despicable. *Wikileaks* hopes that the publicized documents will form part of the people's struggle against the unjust war in Afghanistan and Iraq. **AB**

Student protest actions shake Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been shaken by a series of protest actions staged by youth and students since July 26.

The protest started when students of Physiotherapy in Dhaka, the capital city, demanded that a public college be put up for them.

A parallel protest action was staged by students of Chittagong University (CU) against tuition fee increases. The Bangladesh Students Union (CUCSU) led the students in their walkout from their classrooms.

Students of private schools in the capital city also followed with a related protest.

Police authorities attacked CU on August 2 while the students were pushing through their pro-

test actions. Government troops barged into the campus, raiding dormitories using tear gas, rubber bullets and truncheons.

Some 500 activists were arrested while 250 more were injured. Around 90 students were taken to a nearby hospital for medical treatment after injuries sustained in the forcible dispersal of their barricade.

According to the latest reports, the student leaders have been charged in court while the CU campus has been closed down until September 16.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia bordered by India.

US government conceals real unemployment figures

The unemployment problem in the US continues to worsen. Since the US was hit by recession towards the end of 2007, the number of unemployed has ballooned by more than nine million. Presently, 15 million people are jobless if official statistics alone are taken into account.

The unemployment rate appears to have been reduced when the US government hired 635,000 census takers from April to May. But it was just temporary employment, and 125,000 more have become jobless this June.

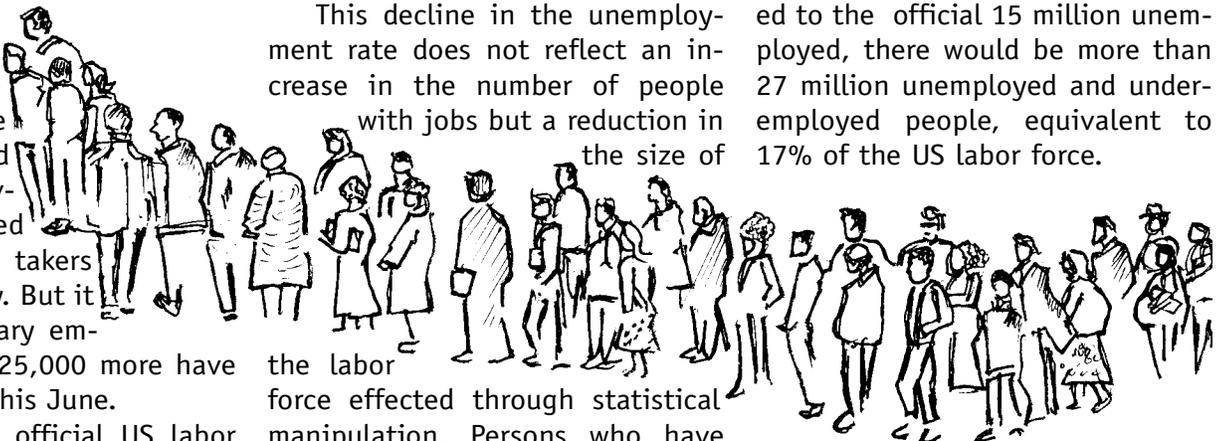
According to official US labor

statistics, the unemployment rate still hovers around 10%. It was allegedly reduced to 9.5% this June compared to 9.7% in May; 9.9% in April; and 9.7% in January to March. The last time the official unemployment rate reached the 10% mark was in 1982-83.

This decline in the unemployment rate does not reflect an increase in the number of people with jobs but a reduction in the size of

the labor force effected through statistical manipulation. Persons who have

stopped looking for jobs within a month (3.8 million) have been excluded from the labor force. On the other hand, included among the employed are those who work intermittently or part-time because of failure to find adequate employment (8.3 million). If they are added to the official 15 million unemployed, there would be more than 27 million unemployed and underemployed people, equivalent to 17% of the US labor force.



Agreement between Hacienda Luisita Inc. and farmers, a bogus one

A rally was staged in Mendiola on August 6 to denounce a bogus agreement allegedly reached by farm workers and the management of Hacienda Luisita Incorporated (HLI). The protesters burned a facsimile of HLI's certificate of incorporation to show their strong opposition.

According to Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano, president of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, the agreement is deceptive, unjust and immoral. It seeks to deprive agrarian reform beneficiaries of their right to own the lands of the Cojuangco-Aquino family, he said.

The "agreement" was concocted to preempt the impending Supreme Court hearing on August 18 regarding HLI's petition to junk the Department of Agrarian Re-

form's decision to distribute to the farmers all of the remaining 4,951 hectares of HLI's agricultural lands.

The bogus agreement was cooked up by no other than Fernando Cojuangco, chief operating officer of HLI and Central Azucarera de Tarlac, and of the Cojuangco-Aquino family's holding company Jose Cojuangco & Sons. He is Pres. Benigno C. Aquino's eldest cousin and is the head of the entire Coju-

angco-Aquino clan. He firmly opposes the distribution of the hacienda lands among the farm workers.

According to Lito Bais, president of the United Luisita Workers Union (ULWU), the main workers' union at Hacienda Luisita, the hacienda's farmers and farm workers are demanding the remaining 4,915 hectares of agricultural land and a just share in the assets and profits of enterprises set up in more than 1,500 hectares of the hacienda that have been converted to commercial and industrial use. The Alyansa ng Manggawang Bukid sa Hacienda Luisita also condemns the bogus agreement.

KMU, Anakpawis support PAL employees protests

The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) and Anakpawis have expressed support for the ongoing struggle of Philippine Airlines (PAL) workers for their rights and welfare.

The KMU, together with Philippine Airlines Employees Association (PALEA) members and the Laban ng Bagong PALEA union of ground employees picketed in front of the Allied Bank office in Makati City last August 5. Allied Bank is owned by Lucio Tan, who also owns PAL. They condemned the PAL management's unfair treatment of its employees. They also called for a stop to contractualization among

the employees and demanded security of tenure.

The current workers' struggle in PAL was precipitated by the mass resignation of 26 pilots protesting their transfer to Air Philippines, PAL's sister company which offers lower wages and inadequate benefits. A work stoppage by some 1,000 flight attendants is also in the offing to protest the mandatory retirement age of 40-45 and discrimination

against female flight attendants. Around 2,700 are slated to become contractual workers as PAL is set to close down three departments and will be resorting to outsourcing to fill up vacancies.

KMU has also challenged Benigno Aquino III to side with the pilots and employees and not with Lucio Tan. Aquino had earlier berated the pilots who resigned, underscoring his support for the PAL management's plans of filing charges against them. KMU has also called for an investigation of Tan's scheme of maximizing his profits and repressing workers of PAL and his other companies.