



EDITORIAL:

Masking the scourge: how 'Filipino-American Friendship Day' covers up U.S. neocolonial rule

Read on page 2

Groups in the Philippines and abroad protest six years of Anti-Terrorism Act (p. 2)

Duterte impeachment trial opens amid mounting calls for accountability (p. 3)

IAT ruling being made to serve US strategy of containing China (p. 4)

EDITORIAL:

Masking the scourge: how ‘Filipino-American Friendship Day’ covers up U.S. neocolonial rule

The 2026 Marcos Jr.’s official theme for Filipino-American Friendship Day was “80 years of shared history and sacrifice.” Leading up to the event, a specialized commemorative logo took over high-profile displays like the SM Mall of Asia Globe, and official embassy statements heavily praised the legacy of World War II veterans. Because the holiday falls on the Fourth of July, U.S. Independence Day, its celebration in the United States by Filipino-Americans is uniquely layered. Yet, beneath the pageantry of this 80th anniversary of the 1946 Treaty of Manila lies a deeper political agenda: these festivities are carefully designed to promote the U.S.-Marcos administration’s narrative, masking ongoing U.S. control over the archipelago.

The July 4, 1946 Philippine independence was a historical hoax. It was a calculated transition from direct colonial rule to neocolonialism—a system where a country is independent on paper, but its economy, military, and foreign policy remain dictated by its former master.

The United States secured its grip on the newly “independent” republic through a combination of unequal treaties and legislative maneuvers. The most glaring was the Bell Trade Act of 1946. Standing amidst the literal rubble of World War II, a devastated Philippines was given a cruel ultimatum: the U.S. tied \$620 million in desperately needed rehabilitation funds directly to the acceptance of the act. This forced the nation to grant “Parity Rights”—a humiliation requiring the amendment of the Philippine Constitution to give American corporations equal rights to exploit local natural resources and public utilities. Furthermore, duty-free U.S. imports strangled local industrialization, locking the country into a dependent cycle of exporting cheap raw materials while importing expensive American manufactured goods.

Beyond economic shackling, Washington ensured its military hegemony. The 1947 Military Bases Agreement granted the U.S. a 99-year lease on 23 installations, including massive enclaves like Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base, where Philippine laws did not apply. Paired with the Military Assistance Agreement, the United States kept the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) fundamentally reliant on U.S. logistics and training—effectively outsourcing local defense to serve Washington’s geopolitical interests. This pseudo-independence intentionally bypassed the revolutionary masses, handing power to a collaborative haciendero and comprador ruling class. This elite oligarchic circle willingly safeguarded American interests in exchange for political backing and protection against domestic agrarian unrest, such as the Hukbo ng Bayan (People’s Army) rebellion.

Eight decades of U.S. neocolonial rule have cycled through thirteen puppet presidents—stretching from Manuel Roxas, Ferdinand Marcos Sr. to the current administration of Marcos Jr. Throughout this era, U.S. imperialism has systematically stunted the semi-colonial, semi-feudal Philippine economy. By keeping the nation underdeveloped and pre-industrial, Washington deliberately safeguards a system that favors the plunder of local resources, secures superprofits, and maintains a captive market for its own surplus products.

Historically, the U.S. used its Philippine bases as launching pads for its wars of aggression in Korea and Vietnam. That overt era of permanent presence seemingly ended on

September 16, 1991, when the Philippine Senate rejected a base treaty extension, leading to the formal withdrawal of American troops by 1992.

However, that historic victory was quickly sabotaged. The puppet U.S.-Benigno Aquino III regime circumvented the constitutional ban by classifying the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) as a mere Executive Agreement rather than a treaty, effectively bypassing the Senate. Today, under the current U.S.-Marcos Jr. regime, this deception has expanded into a full-scale threat. The U.S. now maintains nine EDCA “Agreed Locations” embedded inside AFP camps. These sites are strategically positioned facing Taiwan and the West Philippine Sea—the primary flash points of potential armed conflict between China and the United States. Advanced U.S. missile systems capable of reaching mainland China are already deployed across the archipelago.

While the 1991 termination expelled permanently stationed troops, EDCA and VFA (Visiting Forces Agreement) successfully bypassed this through a “rotational” presence smokescreen. Under this guise, U.S. forces constantly cycle in and out of the country for joint exercises. Yet, while individual soldiers rotate, the permanent infrastructure they construct—warehouses, barracks, fuel depots, and runways—along with the heavy weapons they stockpile remain permanently on site. It is a functional, uninterrupted military presence hidden beneath a transient label.

The puppet Marcos Jr. regime is completely complicit in this theater of war, placing the Philippines directly on the front line of Washington’s “first island chain” containment strategy against China. In doing so, it recklessly puts millions of Filipino lives in harm’s way should a hot war erupt. Now more than ever, the Filipino people must be aroused, organized, and mobilized in the revolutionary struggle for true national and social liberation. 

Groups in the Philippines and abroad protest six years of Anti-Terrorism Act

National-democratic organizations in the Philippines and abroad marked the sixth-year anniversary of the fascist Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) by a series of protest rallies and mobilizations. The use of the ATA and its twin legislation, the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act (TFPSA), has worsened in suppressing the legitimate resistance of the people, as reported by the Ang Bayan Ngayon July 5, 2026.

Karapatan, a human rights coalition, recently counted at least 256 activists, mass leaders, and ordinary citizens have fallen victim to the twin “counter-terrorism” laws. Among them, 222 were slapped with trumped-up charges. Out of these cases, 138 have already been dismissed by courts due to lack of sufficient evidence and constitutional basis.

Currently, 25 of those charged remain detained, among them journalist Frenchie Mae Cumpio, development workers Marielle Domequil and Emilio Gabales, and

church worker Aldeem Yañez.

The fascist Anti-Terrorism Council (ATC) have arbitrarily designated as “terrorists” 37 individuals since the enactment of the ATA. These include Cordillera People’s Alliance (CPA) indigenous leaders Windel Bolinget, Sarah Alikes, Jennifer Awingan, and Steve Tauli. Two of those designated—Norman Ortiz and Lee Sudario—are victims of enforced disappearance perpetrated by the military. Some are peace consultants of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

In 2025, the TFPSA was also used to file fabricated charges against six activists in Cagayan Valley (Cagayan Valley 6) and staff members of non-governmental organizations in Negros, such as the Paghidaet sa Kauswagan Development Group (PDG) Inc.

Cristina Palabay, secretary general of Karapatan. said, “For many years, the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act have served as legal weapons for unjust arrests, prolonged detention, the freezing of bank accounts, and other forms of political repression, threatening the basic rights and freedoms of the people.”

“The Marcos Jr administration continues to weaponize these laws to silence critics and suppress legitimate political dissent,” she said. “Instead of addressing the root causes of the social crisis, the government chose to expand the machinery of repression through laws that penalize those who organize, speak out, and defend people’s rights”. Meanwhile, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) noted that the bogus doctrine of the United Nations and US imperialism on the “war on terror” provides justification for successive reactionary regimes in the Philippines to suppress democracy.

On July 3, in a call to scrap the “twin terror laws”, Bayan, Karapatan and other progressive groups launched a rally in front of the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Manila. “While we call for the junking of the terror laws and condemn



image: philippinerevolution.nu

the atrocities committed by the US-Duterte and US-Marcos regimes, we also hold global institutions like the United Nations accountable because its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy has become the playbook of authoritarian leaders to justify their brutal and anti-democratic policies.” Similar protest activities were held in the cities of Baguio and Cebu. In the Lower House of Congress, Makabayan bloc lawmakers ACT Teachers party-list Rep. Antonio Tinio and Kabataan party-list Rep. Renee Co filed a bill to repeal the “Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020”.

Meanwhile, in New York, US, a militant protest by Fil-Am activists led by Bayan-USA, Malaya Movement USA, and ICHRP-US confronted the Marcos regime’s delegation, which included representatives from the National Task Force-Elcac and the ATC. State officials attended the Fourth United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week (June 26–July 2) to boast about their bloody record. They only minimally mentioned human rights during their talk in a closed door session about the global landscape on terrorism. ▲

Duterte impeachment trial opens amid mounting calls for accountability



image: philippinerevolution.nu

The impeachment trial of Vice President Sara Duterte opened this week amid heightened political tensions and renewed calls from progressive organizations for accountability, as prosecutors began presenting evidence while hundreds of demonstrators gathered outside the Senate demanding that the proceedings lead to justice not only for Duterte but also

for other public officials accused of corruption.

Members of the Bantay Impeachment alliance, joined by the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), and other people’s organizations, staged a protest outside the Senate, emphasizing that the impeachment trial should not be viewed simply as a political contest between the rival Marcos and Duterte camps. Instead, they described it as an important opportunity to expose corruption and affirm that no public official is above the law.

Inside the impeachment court, Senate President Francis “Chiz” Escudero formally presided over the proceedings as prosecutors outlined the charges against Duterte. They argued that evidence would establish the unauthorized use of confidential funds and other acts constituting betrayal of public trust and violations of the Constitution. Duterte’s defense panel, meanwhile, maintained that the impeachment complaint was politically motivated and lacked sufficient legal basis.

The trial reached a significant milestone during its second day when the House prosecution panel presented its first witness, National Bureau of Investigation Cybercrime Division Senior Agent John Mark Calilung. His testimony focused on the fourth article of impeachment, which alleges that Duterte publicly threatened President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., First Lady Liza

Araneta-Marcos, and former House Speaker Martin Romualdez during a live-streamed online briefing in November 2024. Calilung testified on the NBI's cyber crime investigation and the preservation of digital evidence, including copies of the live-stream secured through coordination with Meta. Prosecutors argued that the video and related digital records are central to establishing the allegations before the impeachment court.

The proceedings were marked by repeated objections from Duterte's legal team, which sought to prevent Calilung from testifying on the grounds that he was not named in the original Articles of Impeachment. Prosecutors countered that the witness had been properly identified during pre-trial proceedings. Escudero denied the defense's motion, ruling that the prosecution was not confined solely to the summary evidence contained in the impeachment articles and allowing the witness to proceed.

Vice President Duterte did not attend the opening session de-

spite being summoned, appearing only briefly at the Senate beforehand for a meeting with her legal team. Her absence drew criticism from progressive organizations, which argued that public officials facing serious allegations should personally answer before the impeachment court and the Filipino people.

Outside the Senate, demonstrators maintained that the impeachment case should serve as a warning to all corrupt officials. While demanding Duterte's conviction, BAYAN and KMU also stressed that accountability must extend beyond a single individual. They argued that corruption remains embedded within the country's political system and called for investigations into allegations involving other members of the ruling elite, including the Marcos administration. For the protesters, the trial represents not only a constitutional process but also a measure of the country's commitment to public accountability and democratic governance. 

IAT ruling being made to serve US strategy of containing China

The International Arbitral Tribunal (IAT) ruling on July 12, 2016 which defined the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) is a victory for the Philippines' claims of maritime rights in its EEZ (properly named as the West Philippine Sea), within the South China Sea, debunking China's claims of ownership under its so-called 9-dash line.

Thus declared the CPP in a statement on July 12 to mark the 10-year anniversary of the IAT ruling.

"The Filipino people stand on strong grounds to assert their rights under the arbitral ruling. The country must continue to engage China in vigorous diplomacy to explore and pursue all possible mutually acceptable terms of cooperation consistent with the arbitral ruling," CPP chief information officer Marco Valbuena stressed.

The Marcos regime, however, the CPP said, is wasting the arbitral ruling's potential for peaceful dialogue and practical agreements, by being subservient to US imperial interests. Instead of pursuing diplomacy, the Marcos regime has only deepened tensions in the region by allowing the country to be used as springboard for US war preparations and provocations.

"Against the Filipino people's interest and security, the arbitral ruling is now being exploited by US imperialism, in collusion with its lackeys in the Philippine military and defense establishment, to justify building up military forces against China," the CPP said.

"Instead of serving the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes, the arbitral ruling is now being made to serve the US strategy of 'containing' China's growth. On US urging, Japan and other US allies have expressed 'support' for the arbitral ruling, to justify sending its own military forces, heightening tensions and making peaceful resolution of disputes more difficult," the CPP added.

The arbitral ruling, the CPP emphasized, is being misrepresented as having granted territorial rights to the Philippines in the Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) to justify "joint patrols" of US and Philippine coast guard vessels

in the area, as well as its continuous build up of naval forces in the South China Sea, and the deployment of troops and missiles in the Philippines.

The CPP warned that these dangerous moves form part of the "malign strategy" of US imperialism as it called on the Filipino people to reject US claims of being a friend and ally, when the US serves only its imperialist interests of imposing its hegemony and provoking war to assert its supremacy.

In a related development, the recent claim made by supposed Chinese academics that Batanes, the northernmost province of the Philippines, is Chinese territory because it is part of Taiwan, has prompted officials of the Marcos regime, namely, the secretary of national defense, scurrying not only to push back this latest bogus Chinese territorial claim, but also to justify increased defense budget, militarization, and US military troops and weapons in Batanes, specifically the Mahatao forward operating base in Batan Island in Batanes province. According to Naval News, Mahatao's location in the Luzon Strait is "one of Manila's largest defense investments in the Province of Batanes to date". The same website reported that since the deployment of a Marine brigade to the region in 2022, the Philippines has increased troop deployments, military exercises and American access to the strategic island chain. Under the Marcos regime, the Philippines has ceded its sovereignty and territorial rights in many thousands of hectares of military bases and sites across the country, which are declared to be under the reactionary Philippine armed forces but in reality and practice are controlled and maintained by US military forces. 