



# Paninindigan

ang pahavaagang na Bayan

July - Sept. 2008

# CONTRADICTIONS

*The US-Arroyo regime lurches from one crisis to another, clinging to power by acting as the most rabidly reactionary faction of the Philippine ruling elite and one of the most devious, malevolent and shameless of the lot.*

Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo maintains her illegitimate rule by her utter puppetry to US imperialism and other imperialist powers; feeding the corruption and militarism of her generals; catering to the vested interests of the big, comprador firms especially those supporting it; sucking the lifeblood of the people by means of onerous taxes and other anti-people economic measures; squandering government resources on debt service, counter-insurgency campaigns, presidential largesse for favored politicians and for lining the pockets of her plundering family members and business cronies. Expectedly, Mrs. Arroyo was quick to ride on the Catholic Church stand against the Reproductive Health Bill, acquiescing to the backward and even reactionary views of the bishops while courting their favor with generous contributions.

Mrs. Arroyo has resorted to escalating military offensives alongside scuttling the peace process with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to cover up its responsibility for the current mess in Mindanao in the wake of its junking of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD). In the process, Malacañang is whipping up the worst pseudo-nationalist, chauvinistic and warmongering rhetoric and sentiments against the MILF and the Moro people and has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, Muslims and Christians alike.

Amid all these, Arroyo's agenda to stay in power beyond 2010 has

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ART BY FLON FAURILLO



BAYAN-BOHOL SECRETARY-GENERAL  
VICTOR OLAYVAR

BAYAN- Bohol Chapter together with the peasant group HUMABOL and other allied groups held protest actions last September 8 to demand justice for Victor Olayvar, a peasant leader and Bayan-Bohol Secretary General.

Ka Victor was killed on Sept. 7, 2006 by suspected members of military death squads

## Protests mark death anniversary of Bayan martyr Victor Olayvar

in Cantubod, Danao, Bohol. He was gunned down just a kilometer away from a company detachment of 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in Sta. Fe, Danao. Two years have passed and justice has not been rendered to Ka Victor and his bereaved family.

“After the Philippine National Police pointed to almost everyone except the military as suspects, a case was filed against a notorious robbery gang in Danao as the alleged perpetrators. The case was immediately dismissed by the fiscal for lack of evidence. The PNP move was clearly meant to show that they are doing their jobs but in reality they were misleading the investigation away from the real culprits,” John Ruiz III, current Bayan-Bohol secretary general, stated.

The protest actions were held in the second district of Bohol where Ka Victor was most active while in the people’s movement. The second district has been subjected to large-scale militarization with the declaration of the then 302<sup>nd</sup> Brigade commander that the northeastern part of Bohol is top priority in their anti-insurgency campaign.

After Ka Victor, Bayan Muna Secretary General Mario “Mayong” Auxilio was also gunned down in Bien Unido last year. Ka Victor’s sister-in-law was abducted on March 13, this year in Trinidad by suspected military assets and was interrogated on the whereabouts of other militant leaders before she was released.

## BAYAN, NUPL hold Forum on Access to Justice with CJ Puno

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) and the National Union of People’s Lawyers (NUPL) gathered more than 200 leaders and representatives of various sectors at the “Kabuhayan, Karapatan, Katarungan,” A Forum on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR): Violations and Remedies”, Aug. 28 at the UP College of Law, Malcolm Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.

Eight weeks after the SC-initiated “Forum on Increasing Access to Justice: Bridging Gaps, Removing Roadblocks,” BAYAN and NUPL held the parallel forum so that progressive organizations of the poor and marginalized sectors, their lawyers and rights advocates, could articulate their own analyses and recommendations regarding the struggle for economic, social and cultural rights in the courts, BAYAN Chair Dr. Carol P. Araullo said in her opening remarks.

Stressing that the protection of ESCR cannot be defined by judicial remedies alone, Atty. Romeo T. Capulong proposed the adoption of the “writ of Andres Bonifacio.” In his speech entitled “Access of the Poor to Justice in an Elite-Dominated Constitutional Government and Society,” Capulong asserted that the way to address barriers to justice is to “examine scientifically their roots and be part of the wider national struggle to dismantle these roots that afflict not only the justice system but, more importantly, the whole Philippine society.”



(from left to right) KMP sec. gen. Danilo Ramos, Atty. Neri Colmenares of NUPL, BAYAN chair Dr. Carol Araullo, SC chief justice Reynato Puno, Judge Romeo Capulong and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano

Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno attended the forum as guest speaker and formally received the sectoral reports. “I will personally look into your recommendations...The Supreme Court will look into to the recommendations regarding the SLAPP\* (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) and SLAPP-back actions, and the expansion of the scope of the Writ of Amparo to include the protection of ESCR,” Puno declared. -

ELEANOR DE GUZMAN

\*SLAPP is any legal action filed against an individual or individuals, groups, labor unions, entity or associations, community residents, or the like by reason, or arising out, of their exercise of freedom of speech, expression, or of the press, or of the right to peaceably assemble or petition the government for redress of grievances in matters of public concern, and is intended merely to harass, vex, exert undue pressure, or stifle the resources of such individual or individuals, groups, labor unions, entity or associations, community residents, or the like.

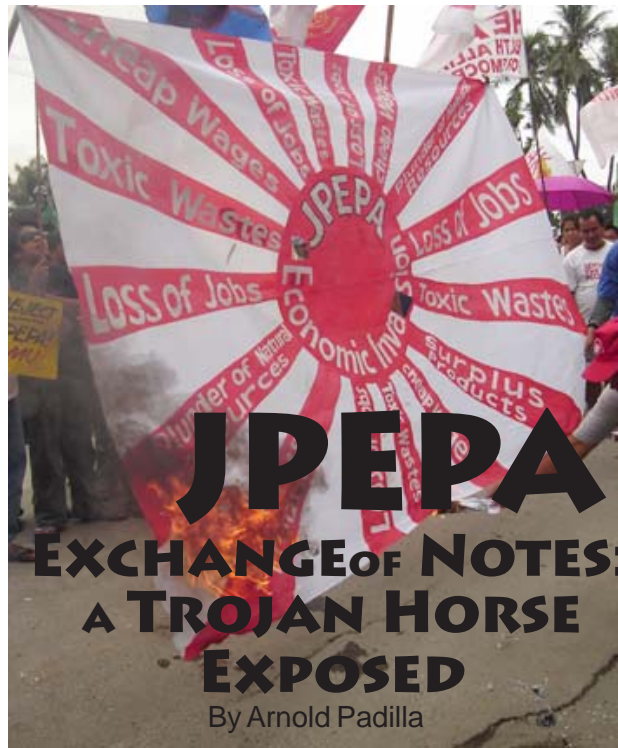
After many delays, Manila and Tokyo have finally produced the “exchange of notes”. The much awaited document, Senator Miriam Santiago said, will supposedly correct the constitutional flaws of the controversial Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) and seal its ratification by the Senate.

Only five pages, the actual document is composed of: (1) the diplomatic letter of Foreign Affairs secretary Alberto Romulo to Japanese foreign minister Masahiko Koumura, dated August 22, identifying four major points of “shared understanding” between the Philippines and Japan and (2) Masahiko’s reply to Romulo, dated August 28, citing verbatim the points he raised and a statement confirming the shared understanding.

The first two points of the shared understanding refer to general statements pertaining to the parties’ commitment to respect each others’ national laws, including their constitutions; and to implement the JPEPA in accordance with each other’s respective charters.

Point number three, meanwhile, enumerates the provisions of the 1987 Constitution that shall not be amended by the JPEPA. These include provisions in Article II (Section 15), Article XII (Sections 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10-12 and 14), Article XIV (Sections 4 and 12), and Article XVI (Section 11). The provisions cover, among others, the protection of Filipino enterprises from unfair foreign competition; restrictions on foreign ownership of public lands and in the exploration and exploitation of natural resources; limitation to Filipinos of certain investment areas; preferential rights, privileges and concessions granted to Filipinos covering the national economy and patrimony; regulation of foreign investments; regulation of technology transfer and promotion; and the promotion of preferential use of Filipino labor, domestic materials, and locally produced goods.

The need for an exchange of notes arose from the indisputable fact that the JPEPA seriously violates several provisions of the 1987 Constitution. Santiago, main sponsor of the treaty and a self-styled constitutional expert, recognized that ratifying the JPEPA in its present form invites the risk of an



eventual rejection by the Supreme Court (SC).

The constitutional provisions listed in the exchange of notes contradict the bilateral treaty’s terms on National Treatment (Japanese investors will enjoy the same rights and privileges reserved to Filipinos), Most Favored Nation (Japan will get the same most favorable treatment that the Philippines accorded to other countries), and prohibition of performance requirements (Japanese investors could not be forced to transfer technology or to procure locally their production needs, among others).

Santiago described the exchange of notes as an agreement wherein “Japan” promises explicitly and specifically that it will respect the nationalist provisions of the constitution”. She also called the document an “integral” part of the JPEPA, which under the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties can be considered as a treaty “when the parties agree”.

With this document, the chair of the Senate foreign relations committee and her co-sponsor Senator Mar Roxas, head of the trade and commerce committee, are confident that the JPEPA will surely pass scrutiny by their colleagues. By October, they hope to muster the needed two-thirds vote and complete the ratification process – more than two years after the JPEPA was

signed by Gloria Arroyo and then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi.

But despite all the hullabaloo about the exchange of notes, including Roxas’s refusal to defend the JPEPA unless it was produced and Santiago’s “no exchange of notes, no treaty” stance, the document is nothing but a general statement of commitment from Japan to respect the 1987 Constitution. It could have been a stronger and more binding document if it explicitly amended the questionable provisions of the JPEPA, as originally proposed by retired SC justice Florentino Feliciano who first raised the constitutional issues during one of last year’s Senate hearings.

In fact, the exchange of notes could be a Trojan Horse just waiting for the opportune time to attack. A closer look at point number four of the shared understanding reveals the hidden intentions of the document:

*“4. The present exchange serves only to confirm the interpretation of and does not modify the rights and obligations of the Parties under the provisions of the JPEPA.”*  
(emphasis added)

In other words, the unconstitutional provisions of the agreement remain and will still bind the Philippines once the JPEPA gets ratified. The exchange of notes did not resolve the constitutional issues but in effect just deferred the question to be tested by actual legal conflicts over the treaty’s implementation that may arise in the future. This places the Constitution under unnecessary duress because under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the Philippines could not raise unconstitutionality for failure to comply with its JPEPA obligations.

Point number three of the exchange of notes, in reality, does not guarantee that the JPEPA will not undermine the 1987 Constitution. It simply clarified that the bilateral agreement will not amend the pertinent constitutional provisions. But it does not prevent Japan, for example, to insist before an international court on its right accorded by the JPEPA to fully own local public utilities because the Philippines did not exempt it from Article 89 (National



# The Vicious Forces Against Filipinos

by Amie Dural

Filipino people have nothing to gain from bilateral or multilateral agreements that will prop up a professionally brutal military.

## Continuing injustice

Close to three years after the November 1, 2005 rape of 'Nicole,' Lance Corporal Daniel Smith, the only one of the four accused US servicemen who was convicted, remains in US custody instead of being imprisoned in a Philippine jail as a convicted criminal, albeit on appeal. This is a glaring example of how our sovereignty and justice system can be trampled upon by the US and guarantee criminal immunity for abusive US soldiers.

Nicole's case generated moves in Congress and Senate to review the VFA. Bayan and allied organizations call for the immediate abrogation of this unconstitutional agreement which brings back the ills and abuses committed by US troops in the country's military bases in Subic and Clark, Central Luzon from 1930 to September 1991.

As early as 2001, US engineers have started building permanent infrastructures, roads and other facilities, under the guise of civic action, "Operation Gentle Wind", in Basilan. The building of an international airport in General Santos City by US construction companies serves the US goal to establish virtual permanent bases in this strategic area within the Asia-Pacific region. Recent reports on the building and expansion of several US military facilities in Zamboanga, including the headquarters of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines (JSOTFP) inside Camp Don Basilio Navarro, an air asset facility inside the Zamboanga City International Airport, and a training facility inside Camp Arturo Enrile in Malagutay village, further expose the long-term designs of the US in Mindanao.

Even the VFA does not allow the setting up of infrastructure by US military personnel on Philippine soil, thus the need to disguise these as civic actions or part of training exercises. But not all atrocities can be covered up by the US as so-called humanitarian missions and joint training exercises.

## From Central Luzon to Mindanao

From Subic to Sulu and other areas of the Balikatan exercises in Mindanao, atrocities have been committed with the direct participation of US troops.

Rowina Wahid, the widow of Corporal Ibnon Wahid, vividly remembers seeing four American soldiers in jovial mood when she was brought to a navy boat by government soldiers who ruthlessly tortured and shot her husband to death. The boat carried some goats, generators and other personal belongings of her husband.

Rowina was one of the witnesses and survivors of the February 4, 2008 Maimbung massacre who pointed out that US troops were present during the assault by combined Army and Navy elite forces on Barangay village, Ipil, Maimbung, Sulu. Eight civilians, including a three-month pregnant woman, two children, two teenagers and Rowina's husband, an Army soldier home on vacation, were killed in the incident. In this joint mission of Filipino and American troops, the following offenses were committed against more than 20 families:

- Arbitrary Deprivation of Life (Murder)
- Torture
- Arbitrary/Illegal Detention
- Arbitrary Deprivation of Property (Robbery)

**B**rowsing through the website of the US Embassy Public Affairs Section in Manila, viewers would see photos of US military forces engaged in relief operations in typhoon-affected provinces in the Philippines.

One photo shows residents from the remote Municipality of Balasan, Philippines waving and cheering as U.S. sailors and Philippine military personnel delivered relief supplies last June in Iloilo City. These widely publicized humanitarian missions serve as convenient cover for US troops' involvement in combat operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and permanent presence in the country.

Since 2002, from 17 to as much as 24 *Balikatan* (shoulder-to-shoulder) "training exercises" involving Filipino and US troops under the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) have been held yearly. If the Arroyo government succeeds in pushing for the Senate ratification of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with Australia and possibly, other Asian states, soon there will be multinational *Balikatan* exercises in the country.

The Australian government expects ratification of the SOFA with the Philippines amid allegations of resurgent "terrorism" in Mindanao. The agreement has been "completed, signed and ratified" by the Australian Parliament in September 2007. Australian officials declare that only a small number of Australian troops will take part in future exercises.

In the face of renewed armed hostilities in Muslim Mindanao following the aborted signing of the Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain (MOA-AD) between the Manila government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), US military strategists now have more justification to expand US troops presence purportedly to help fight Filipino troops against 'terrorists.'

## Professionalizing the Military?

The Australian parliament forged defense agreement with the Philippines ostensibly to help "professionalize" the armed forces of both countries. According to Australian visitors who recently attended a Bayan briefing on SOFA, this is the stated purpose of their government for sending Australian troops to the country.

With this presumption, it is more than relevant to ask whether decades of US funding, training and upgrading of the AFP's equipment and materiel has succeeded in professionalizing the Philippine military. In our view, the US-trained, supplied and directed Philippine armed forces are "professional" only in protecting the interests of the US and the local ruling elite. Our historical and current experiences of massacres, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and other human rights abuses committed by the military prove that the

Photo courtesy of [www.arkibongbayan.org](http://www.arkibongbayan.org)

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# Post-SONA: The People's Economic Struggles Continue

by Arnold Padilla

What made the last State of the Nation Address (SONA) of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo different was that it lacked the usual hype about the economy and the bluster of about achievements that peppered her previous SONA speeches. On the contrary, the speech sounded quite "defensive." While Arroyo tried hard to explain her administration's response to the people's deteriorating conditions, she failed once more to provide a credible account of the true state of the nation.

## Unfavorable Polls and Reality on the Ground

The wave of unfavorable opinion surveys on the economic situation and the Arroyo administration that landed in the media weeks leading to the SONA somehow preempted any attempt on Malacañang's part to paint a rosy picture of the national situation. Perhaps the most damaging to the government, publicity-wise, was the July 2008 nationwide survey of Pulse Asia which showed that only 13 percent of their respondents thought that Arroyo's SONA is "truthful".

But the results of these opinion surveys only confirmed the reality that the people are faced with grinding poverty, joblessness and inflation. The first semester of 2008 was particularly debilitating to ordinary income earners as prices of rice and other basic food items, fuel, and other commodities rose astronomically. The National Statistics Office (NSO) reported that the June inflation reached 11.4 percent, the highest in 14 years.

## Desperately Justifying Anti-Poor Policies

The impact of the raging economic crisis could no longer be obscured by claims of macroeconomic growth, strong peso, rising foreign investments, etc. The hard reality that people faced was that the pump price of diesel at the start of the year was only P38 per liter but when Arroyo was about to deliver her SONA, it was already P60 while the retail price of regular rice jumped from P24 a kilo to P36 during the same period.

It was in this context that Arroyo delivered her 2008 SONA. Expectedly, Arroyo avoided accountability. Instead of admitting the defects of national policies, she pinned all the blame on the global economic crisis. In fact, she even maintained her recurring theme that the country was in the right direction towards sustainable growth but was only derailed by soaring food and fuel prices in the world market. More importantly, Arroyo claimed

that the government is doing enough to mitigate the effects of the global crisis especially through VAT. (See accompanying article "Vat: Defending the indefensible")

## Continuing Rice Crisis, Massive Landlessness

In her SONA, Arroyo also credited her subsidy program to explain why the Philippines enjoys one of the "cheapest" rice in the region. Rice production has been supposedly increasing by more than 4 percent since 2000 while infrastructure such as irrigation and farm-to-market roads are built and seeds and more loans provided to farmers. As a long-term measure, Arroyo pushed for the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) "with reforms" including her longtime agenda, the use of farm as collateral. These programs and projects will purportedly boost the country's rice self-sufficiency.

Prolonging the life of the disreputable CARP spells more trouble for landless tillers and will further aggravate the rice and food insecurity of the country. By legitimizing and facilitating land monopoly and re-concentration, CARP strengthens the local rice cartel of landlords, traders and usurers who prey on farmers through feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and on consumers through hoarding and speculation. Consumers will have to contend with high retail prices of rice for the rest of the year as the National Food Authority (NFA) started to pull out the P18.25 per kilo rice from public markets. This cheapest rice will reportedly be available only to 150,000 poor families who earn P5,000 a month or less. And while Arroyo talked about rice self-sufficiency, her agriculture liberalization and privatization policies will continue to make the country a rice importer and at risk in an increasingly erratic global rice market.

Advocates of genuine agrarian reform face the challenge of an emerging consensus among pseudo-progressive party-list groups and pro-landlord members of the House to pass the "reformed" CARP instead of passing the alternative Genuine Agrarian Reform Bill (GARB) filed by the militant Anakpawis party-list. The battle between advocates of GARB and the CARP extension will intensify in the coming months as its proponents try to beat the December deadline. The program's land acquisition and distribution (LAD) component will be financed only until

December after which a new law is needed to continue such funding.

## Destruction of Jobs and More Economic Liberalization

Meanwhile, Arroyo's boast of labor-intensive government infrastructure development projects that "created" 20,000 jobs plus the "cash for work" program in calamity hit areas betrayed the absence of a solid medium- to long-term program for industrialization that could create gainful and secured jobs. Instead, the administration

continues to push for aggressive liberalization of the economy through bilateral treaties such as the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) which its proponents in the Senate hope to ratify by October. Aside from the JPEPA, the Philippines has also received a draft Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA) from the European Union (EU) for a possible bilateral trade deal last February.

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# US INTERVENTION IN THE MINDANAO PEACE PROCESS

by Renato M. Reyes, Jr.

Responsibility for the escalating armed conflict in Mindanao should be laid squarely on the US-backed Arroyo regime. Through its self-serving and deceitful maneuvers, the Arroyo regime has severely damaged the peace process, provoked armed confrontation, and allowed escalating foreign intervention in the country's internal affairs including armed conflicts.

With US instigation and support, the Arroyo regime negotiated in bad faith and raised the expectations of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro people, when the GRP negotiators agreed to the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Ancestral Domain. The MOA, while recognizing on paper the Moro people's right to self-determination, in particular their right to their ancestral domain, was calculated to flounder and fail in the face of legal challenges and the unfounded outcry that it would dismember the Philippine Republic.

The Arroyo regime knew that the MOA would require constitutional changes and that the Supreme Court's intervention was very likely. Malacañang took no effort to unify its allies from among the Christian and Moro reactionary political leaders to accept the MOA. It was a calculated risk the regime took given its sinister agenda of neutralizing, if not destroying, the MILF as a revolutionary armed force and thereafter, co-opting its leadership.

Opportunistically, the Arroyo clique wished to take advantage of the situation that the MOA would precisely entail constitutional revision, in order to open the doors wide open for its bid for term extension via Charter change or Chacha. However, by raising MILF expectations then backtracking on its commitments, the regime also set the stage for escalating armed conflict. Clashes between the MILF and the AFP ensued after the Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order on the MOA signing, thereby threatening the fragile ceasefire between the GRP and MILF.

On one hand, the MILF must investigate and make accountable its

commanders involved in reported attacks on civilians in North Cotabato, Basilan and Lanao. On the other hand, the responsibility of the US-Arroyo regime in the deteriorating situation in Mindanao should be underscored.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines's (AFP) pursuit operations against MILF commanders Umbra Kato and Bravo already resulted in further escalation of the armed conflict. The MILF as a revolutionary force will not surrender its military commanders to the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP). The government's insistence resulted to more armed confrontation and caused greater damage to civilian lives and property whether Christian, Moro or lumad. There are now 300,000 individuals affected or displaced by the raging armed conflict. There have even been reports that soldiers looted civilian homes during forced evacuations. There have been civilian casualties as a result of AFP airstrikes, including a pregnant teen and five children in Datu Piang, Maguindanao.

The mechanisms embodied in the ceasefire agreement between the MILF and the GRP are the only proper and effective ways to approach the heightened armed confrontation under the present circumstances. The MILF must ensure that those responsible for attacks on civilians will be held accountable and that these attacks will stop.

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including the  
\$100 million off-  
shore oil exploration

Sulu recently announced by Exxon  
Mobil, the world's biggest oil and gas  
producer.

It seeks to curry favor with the MILF  
insofar as US investments and basing  
opportunities are concerned. The US  
government has also made it clear that it  
does not support independence for the  
Bangsamoro.

According to the USIP report, the US  
government divided its work between the  
USIP, the USAID and the US embassy and  
State Department. The US embassy was  
tasked to "encourage" the Philippine  
government to pursue peace talks. The  
USAID was tasked with "economic  
development" of Mindanao while the  
USIP was tasked with engaging and  
influencing key players in the peace  
process. The report also states that the US  
embassy coordinated with the US Pacific  
Command in counter-terror training and  
in ensuring high visibility of US troops in  
Mindanao.

The US clearly intervened in an internal  
affair, as it tried to influence key players  
in the peace process. The Arroyo  
government is guilty of allowing such  
brazen intervention. Arroyo and US  
interests intersected on the issue of charter  
change and the prospect of US  
investments in Mindanao. Early on, the  
USIP report already anticipated the issue  
of charter change because some  
provisions in the Memorandum of

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members of the  
Philippine congress) to review the status  
of the peace process and the role of the  
Institute. Ambassador Frank Wisner and  
USIP representatives also met with  
Arroyo in California after the 2004  
elections to encourage a renewed GRP-  
wide effort to conclude an equitable  
settlement with the Moros".

The PFP received \$30 million in funding  
from the US Congress in 2003 as part of  
the Iraq War Supplemental  
Appropriations of 2003. It sought to  
influence the outcome of the talks,  
including the controversial issue of  
ancestral domain. Using examples of  
ancestral domain conflict resolutions of  
the Native American Indians, the Anuit  
tribes in Canada, the Maori in New  
Zealand and other experiences that did  
not require secession from an oppressive  
regime, the USIP advocated an ancestral  
domain arrangement that would remain  
friendly with US interests.

US involvement in the peace process  
bodes ill for the cause of the Bangsamoro  
people. The US has long sought to gain  
a solid foothold in Mindanao in order to  
further exploit the resources of Mindanao,  
particularly oil and minerals. It has sought  
to strengthen US military hegemony in  
the region through military exercises and  
the forward presence of its troops in Sulu  
and other provinces.

#### **US as Peacemaker?**

What does the US want in the peace  
process? The US does not want the  
genuine recognition of the rights of the  
Bangsamoro. In reality, the US seeks an  
end to the armed conflict in Mindanao to  
secure a stable area for its investments,

**T**he Arroyo regime welcomed and  
fully-supported United States  
intervention in the internal matter  
of peace negotiations between the  
Government of the Republic of the  
Philippines (GRP) and the Moro Islamic  
Liberation Front (MILF). Arroyo and her  
subalterns must be investigated and held  
accountable for their actions.

Based on the report of the United States  
Institute for Peace (USIP), the US-initiated  
and funded Philippine Facilitation Project  
was supported by both US President  
George W. Bush and Philippine President  
Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. The USIP was  
created and funded by the US Congress  
for peace advocacy that helps advance US  
economic, political and military interests  
worldwide. As a policy instrument for the  
U.S. government, USIP served as a  
"channel of communication outside  
official policy mechanisms."

In 2003, after a letter from then MILF  
Chair Hashim Salamat asking the US  
government to call on the Manila  
government to resume the peace process,  
the US government began its involvement  
in the Mindanao peace process. To quote  
the report, "During an August 2003 visit  
to the Philippines, a PFP delegation met  
with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo  
and her senior advisers, military officers,  
senior Philippine senators, religious  
leaders and representatives of civil  
society. When Arroyo visited the United  
Nations in September 2003, several senior  
advisers and USIP staff members met  
with her and her delegation (including the  
foreign secretary, executive secretary, and

**ARROYO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ESCALATING  
ARMED CONFLICT IN MINDANAO**

# VAT: DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE

## IN THE NAME OF FOREIGN DEBT

by Arnold Padilla

In her latest State of the Nation Address (SONA), Gloria Macapagal Arroyo spent a considerable portion of her speech defending the value added tax (VAT), calling it the means for Filipinos to ride out the world food and energy crisis. The speech illustrates how defensive Malacañang is over the unpopular and regressive tax, which various sectors and some lawmakers want scrapped as food and fuel prices escalate. It aggressively hypes the so-called *Katas ng VAT* program to justify the VAT and show that it provides concrete and direct benefits for the poor.

Arroyo is forced to uphold the VAT in particular on oil and power despite growing clamor against it as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have both warned the government against cancelling or even reducing the VAT. Malacañang could not afford to let go of what the Finance department described as the "biggest tax measure since the birth of the Republic".

Indeed, Arroyo's VAT reform agenda, realized through Republic Act (RA) 9337 that increased from 10 to 12 percent the VAT rate and further expanded to include oil and power among others, have notably increased government's tax revenues. Total RVAT (reformed VAT under RA 9337) collections from 2006 to the first half of 2008 have already reached P219.08 billion. Of this amount, oil accounted for P122.4 billion or almost 56 percent while power, P24.04 billion or just below 11 percent. For the second half of 2008, government expects to collect P51.6 billion in VAT on oil and P8.4 billion from power.

Malacañang is determined to protect these revenues to maintain its good standing among the foreign creditors, who get their signal from the IMF's assessment of a country's fiscal position. In 2007, no less than the former managing director of the IMF hailed the Philippine government for its fiscal progress and described the VAT as Arroyo's "central achievement". Days before the SONA, the IMF strongly warned the Philippines of the adverse fiscal effects of tax cuts in response to the run-up of oil prices.

In her last SONA, Arroyo went as far as to say that scrapping the VAT will only benefit the non-poor (i.e. *may kaya*) who supposedly consume "84 percent of oil and 90 percent of power". Thus, the poor according to the government do not shoulder a heavy burden of the VAT but even gain from it through programs such as the P7.5-billion *Katas ng*

VAT. The Finance department, however, later said that the poor (i.e. low-income) refers to those earning less than P80, 000 a year – a ridiculously low standard to measure poverty.

Nonetheless, the *Katas* program has been widely discredited as its various components merely offer one-time dole-outs such as the P500-subsidy for small power users. Its frivolity was fully exposed when the Budget department announced that it is no longer funding the program next year. It cited the falling prices of petroleum for its decision and said that the program will only resume if global oil prices top \$200 per barrel next year. Such is the character of the *Katas* program, which the Arroyo administration hyped so much to counter calls to scrap the VAT on oil and power. At its core, it is an empty publicity and stopgap measure of an embattled government scrambling to justify its anti-poor policies.

No matter how Malacañang packages the VAT as a pro-people fiscal measure, it still could not conceal how the regressive tax puts undue additional burden on the consumers. In the case of oil, the VAT has become even more unjustifiable as pump prices soared to record levels, with diesel peaking at P60 per liter in July. Though oil prices have eased in the last couple of weeks, VAT still comprises between P6 to 7 per liter, a significant amount for ordinary income earners especially in these times of double-digit inflation.

Arroyo also claims that with increased revenues, there are now more funds for the poor – a blatant lie easily exposed by official records. The Bureau of Treasury data, for instance, show that from 2001 to 2005, the annual allocation for education was 15.6 percent of the national budget; health, 1.7 percent; housing, 0.2 percent; and debt servicing (interest), 27.8 percent.

Comparing these levels with the RVAT period (2006-2007), the share of education even fell by 1.4 percentage points and health by 0.1, while housing slightly increased by 0.2. Interest payments as a portion of the national budget, in contrast, rose by 1.2 percentage points.

But Arroyo and her economic managers could not care less, obsessed as they are to achieve fiscal stability and keep the foreign loans flowing. As of first quarter 2008, the country's foreign debt stood at \$54.6 billion, up from \$54 billion in the same period a year ago. Government expects to incur an additional foreign debt of \$2.3 billion for the whole year, and another \$2.5 billion in 2009. Consequently, Malacañang will allocate increasing amounts to pay for these loans – P636.1 billion this year and P681.2 billion next year.

What's in store for Arroyo and her cabal from these debts? Well, think of the botched NBN-ZTE, the Northrail and Southrail, and other projects funded by foreign debt wherein multimillion dollar *tongpats* abound. This is how the vicious onerous taxes – foreign debt – corruption cycle bleeds the Filipino people dry.

This vicious cycle must end and it is only possible through direct political actions by the people. The series of protests against the VAT in the past months and the critical public opinion generated has obviously helped to compel the House ways and means committee to propose the targeted scrapping of the VAT on power. Of course, this is not enough. The people's campaign to remove the VAT on oil and power, as well as the demand to stop the payment of onerous foreign debts, must continue and intensify. #



## Arroyo is...continued from p.7

Agreement on Ancestral Domain might be declared as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. The Arroyo government pounced on the opening for cha-cha as an opportunity to advance its own self-serving agenda of term extension.

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney's **claims** that the US does not intervene in the internal affairs of the Philippines is a pure lie. Her claim that she has not read the text of the MOA-AD is unbelievable. From the USIP report, the US government, through various agencies, was involved in the peace process on many levels. In fact, the report also stated that towards the end of the PFP's term, the US embassy began directly dealing with the leaders of the MILF.

One of the most telling and disturbing statements found in the USIP report deals with forms of intervention available to the US. The report describes U.S. policy instruments in Mindanao to include "diplomacy,

conditionality of U.S. economic and military assistance programs, **and more punitive measures on the counterterrorism front.**"

The above statement could mean that the US government is also open and is engaging in direct operations.

### Direct US military intervention

The USIP report also stated that "American targets also included so-called MILF lost commands, which were linked to terrorism. American Special Forces under the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P) established expanded counterterrorism operations, providing the AFP with intelligence, training, and weaponry. The objective was to assist the AFP in its efforts to reform, modernize, and enhance its ability to fight terrorist groups."

The report also implied that the US embassy in the Philippines knew of the extent of the activities of the US soldiers in Mindanao. "The US embassy was also closely engaged with US PACIFIC COMMAND in

counterterrorism training and defense reform with the AFP and was thus linked to a highly visible American military presence in Mindanao," the report said.

A case in point was an ambush in Patikul Sulu last August 30 wherein US soldiers were believed to be part of the AFP convoy.

Based on news reports, at least 30 US soldiers, part of the Guam Army National Guard's 1st Battalion under the 294th Infantry Regiment, were deployed in Sulu to serve as security - for at least for six months - for a unit of the Special Operations Command-Pacific.

That the US troops were right smack in the middle of a raging armed conflict not only makes them vulnerable to actual armed confrontation, it also raises the question of their activities in the area. American Special Forces have long been suspected of being embedded in AFP combat units, providing intelligence support among others. ###

## US intervention cont. from p.7



Nonetheless, government and media reports must not be one-sidedly and uncritically accepted. The MILF claims that the hostilities in North Cotabato were provoked by AFP troops moving into or in the vicinity of MILF areas even before the MOA initialing. They distinguish and differentiate the situation and events in North Cotabato from those in Lanao del Sur and Norte.

Aside from continued military operations, the Arroyo regime persists in undermining the peace process by Arroyo's latest pronouncement that "engagements with all armed groups shall be about disarmament, demobilization, and rehabilitation" and that her regime will pursue peace talks with "communities" instead of armed groups. From the horse's mouth, the real agenda of the GRP is

thus revealed as well as the real cause of the failure of the earlier GRP-Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) talks and the current prolonged impasse in the GRP-National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) talks.

The Arroyo regime shows no real interest in resolving the underlying issues of the armed conflict with the MILF which includes the historic denial of the Bangsamoro people's economic, social and cultural rights, foremost of which is the right to a homeland and self-rule. It has also undermined national sovereignty by allowing US involvement in the peace process and in the forging of agreements, as well as US involvement in the military operations against the MILF. The

Arroyo regime is further exposing itself as a puppet dancing to the tune of US geo-political and economic interests.

The GRP and MILF must immediately return to the negotiating table and resolve the issue of the Bangsamoro ancestral domain on the basis of prior agreements and consensus points.

The GRP must abandon its policy of escalating its offensive military operations and of allowing US military and political interventionism. It is the GRP's continuing attempts, with the connivance of the US, to co-opt or ensnare the MILF into a negotiated surrender and use the negotiations to remain in power, that has derailed the peace talks and caused the renewed outbreak of hostilities. #

**CONTRADICTIONS, CONT. FROM P. 1**

not waned. The MOA-AD, which signing the Supreme Court suspended, was used by Malacañang to revive Charter change (Chacha), riding on a Senate resolution to change the form of government to a “federalist” one, as a supposedly long-term solution to the armed conflict with the MILF.

The escalation of hostilities between the government and the MILF has revived questions on the continuing presence of US troops in Mindanao under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). This underlines just how the US and the Arroyo regime have been complicit in perpetrating the conflict in Mindanao.

Indeed, Chacha goes beyond the narrow political agenda of Mrs. Arroyo and her cabal. The closer alignment of the Constitution with US economic and geopolitical interests in the country and the Asia-Pacific has always been on the US imperialist agenda. Charter revision will allow the US to openly establish permanent military bases, bring in nuclear weapons, own land, wantonly exploit the country’s natural resources, and penetrate heretofore protected areas of the economy.

Much earlier, the regime already torpedoed peace talks with the National Democratic Front (NDF) and boasted of neutralizing or defeating the Communist Party of the Philippines - New People’s Army (CPP-NPA) by end of its term, pouring billions of pesos in its all-out counter-insurgency effort. Extensive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are continuing, spawned by military attacks on civilian communities as well as the targeting of legal activists and other progressives for assassination, abduction, torture, illegal arrest and trumped-up charges.

The regime’s callousness regarding the intolerable plight of the people, its infinite capacity to lie and manipulate appears to give it some political initiative and room for maneuver but all these are short-term and illusory.

Mrs. Arroyo must contend with the lowest of credibility and popularity ratings since the post-Marcos Dictatorship era and serious political challenges from the democratic mass movement and the Oust Arroyo united front. As a result, the worst of corrupt schemes and anti-people policies and programs are being thwarted or held in abeyance such as the NBN-ZTE deal, Cha-cha and the implementation of the Anti-Terrorism Law.

The US-Arroyo regime is also up against unflagging armed challenges nationwide led by the CPP-NPA-NDF and, in Muslim Mindanao, spearheaded by the MILF. The smoldering restiveness within the Armed Forces of the Philippines still has the potential to break out into open rebellion at some critical juncture.

The rapidly deteriorating economic situation, reflected in the widening poverty, misery and further decline in the people’s overall quality of life, constitutes the greatest destabilizing factor for the regime. The steep rise in prices of basic goods and services comes on the heels of record levels of joblessness, depressed wages and very little alternative means of livelihood for tens of millions of Filipinos except to attempt work overseas.

Enveloping the crisis situation inside the country is the deepest and most widespread crisis that has hit the world capitalist system, particularly its core, the US economy, since the Great Depression in the ‘30s. This implies that the domestic crisis will be longer, more acutely felt and harder to overcome so long as the global economic and financial turmoil persists.

The implication vis a vis the Arroyo regime is that US imperialism is under severe constraints to bail out its puppet given its own economic imbroglio involving trillions of dollars for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the huge bail-outs of financial corporations hit by the housing fiasco and credit crunch, and billions needed to stimulate the recessionary economy. The campaign for the US presidential elections this year is also preoccupying the US ruling elite.

The US-Arroyo regime’s claims and promises – that it is bringing the country closer to First World Status; that it will bequeath a Strong Republic through electoral reforms, a balanced budget, and unrelenting war against “terrorists”; that it will decisively defeat, if not render inconsequential, the CPP-NPA and reduce the MILF to the same fate; and that it will voluntarily relinquish power in 2010 – are all exposed as nothing but lies, lies and more lies.

What the regime is in fact achieving, quite ironically, is to repeat the feat of the unlamented Dictator Marcos in being the best recruiter, not just for the Oust GMA Movement, but for the revolutionary forces of the NPA and MILF. #

**Vicious forces...continued from p.4**

- Violation of the Right of Pregnant Women
- Violation of the Right to be Presumed Innocent Until Proved Guilty and
- Attack Upon One’s Honor and Reputation

**Constitutional Issues**

The VFA clearly violates provisions in the Philippine Constitution barring military base operations, criminal accountability of American soldiers to Philippine Courts, the entry of nuclear weapons and nuclear-capable ships and planes, and accountability for damages to the environment caused by toxic wastes.

On September 19, the Supreme Court is set to hear oral arguments on Bayan’s petition against the VFA.

It is high time the Supreme Court heed the people’s cry to abrogate the VFA, SOFA and all other unjust treaties that perpetuate the wanton violation of Philippine sovereignty. Let us reclaim our nation’s dignity and sovereignty by intensifying our campaigns against these vicious forces against the Filipino people’s interest and welfare. Justice must be rendered to all victims of human rights abuses, rape, displacement and other atrocities committed in the course of alleged US-RP training exercises and “other activities” under VFA.

**\*Atrocities committed by “visiting” US forces**

**July 25, 2002:** The house of the Isnijal family in Brgy. Kanas, Tuburan was raided by a team of US and Philippines soldiers around midnight. US Sgt. Reggie Lane shot a sleeping Buyong-Buyong Isnijal in the leg. Isnijal’s wife, Juraida was also hurt in the ensuing scuffle with the raiding team. Philippine authorities arrested and detained Isnijal for allegedly being a member of the Abu Sayyaf.

**2003:** Arsid Baharun was hit by a stray bullet while US troops were training their Filipino counterparts in target shooting inside the base in Malagutay, Zamboanga City.

**July 31, 2004:** An elderly Moro woman in Manarapan, North Cotabato died of a heart attack upon seeing a helicopter carrying US soldiers, thinking it was a military aircraft.

**September 2006:** A mother suffered from shrapnel wounds inflicted by a bomb

*CONTINUED NEXT PAGE*

detonated during joint exercises in Brgy. Tagbak, Indanan, Sulu.

**September 2007:** Five US servicemen in Gen. Santos City caused alarm when they displayed their firearms in a restaurant.

**November 2007:** "Nicole" was raped by US marines in Subic, Central Luzon.

**December 2007:** US soldiers meddled in the operation of a hospital in Panama,

Sulu. They ordered hospital personnel to close the facility every night and to refuse patients coming in afterwards. A certain Master Sergeant Ronburg from the US military forces based in Camp Teodulo Bautista in Jolo, allegedly ordered on November 30, 2007, the closure of the district hospital in Panamao Sulu during night time and prevented medical personnel from treating patients after sundown. Dr. Silak Lakkian, chief of the Panamao District

Hospital said that a team of US soldiers barged in and told the chief nurse to close it not later than 6pm and threatened to shoot anybody seen in the hospital premises after that time.

*\* data from the Out Now Coalition, a broad campaign network demanding pull-out of US troops in the Philippines*

## Ka Tanny's Legacy Shall live

BAYAN rendered a simple yet heartfelt tribute to Sen.

Lorenzo "Ka Tanny" Tañada last August 10 at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani. It has devoted a special place in its website [www.bayan.ph](http://www.bayan.ph) to celebrate his lifetime of service to the cause of freedom, justice and democracy for the Filipino people. A related website [www.arkibongbayan.org](http://www.arkibongbayan.org) uploaded tributes to him and photos of the commemoration.



Ka Tanny's legacy is critically important and relevant to our people's struggle to freely chart our own destiny without interference from the US and other foreign powers; to establish a truly democratic government; and to develop a progressive economy that will lay the basis for social justice and lasting peace.

He is best remembered for being the leading and uniting figure in the 14-year struggle to end the fascist dictatorship of Marcos; for exposing what he called "the monumental folly" of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant and leading the historic Welga ng Bayan (People's Strike) against it; and for making the clarion call to reject the RP-US Bases Agreement and free the country of foreign military troops and bases once and for all.

*(excerpts from Dr. Carol Araullo's tribute to Ka Tanny, BW)*

### post-SONA continued from p.5

It has also concluded talks, through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), for free trade pacts with Australia, New Zealand and India last August.

With another major setback suffered by the World Trade Organization (WTO) to expand liberalization last July in Geneva, rich countries will further turn to bilateralism to push for more trade and investment concessions from the poor countries. The Trade and Industry department has already asked the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) to conduct a study on the impact and prospects of an RP-US economic pact in July as Arroyo instructed the department to start negotiations with its American counterpart. Massive economic displacement and destruction of local industries, as experienced under the WTO since 1995, are feared under these bilateral deals. In addition, the country has already given up so much in the JPEPA, including its sovereignty over economic policy making. Certainly, the US and other countries will ask for more concessions than what the Philippines gave to Japan. This makes the people's campaign to prevent a Senate ratification of the JPEPA strategically crucial.

These are some of the major economic issues confronting the people in the remaining months of 2008 and the year to come. The relentlessness of the US-Arroyo regime in inflicting harm on the Filipino people must be met by the people fighting back with heightened vigor. #

### JPEPA...continued from page 3

Treatment). Another potential area of legal tussle is the prohibition of performance requirements and *future* non-performing measures. What the Philippines reserved in the JPEPA are *existing* measures, thus undermining the constitutional mandate of Congress to restrict foreign investments in certain economic activities in the future when the national interest requires.

The Trojan Horse in the exchange of notes is also exposed by the calculated use of the phrase "shared understanding". As such, Japan can argue in the future that as a simple "shared understanding" and not a categorical "agreement", the exchange of notes is merely a diplomatic note that does not modify anything in the main treaty and does not bind Japan to specific legal obligations. As a matter of fact, it is equivalent to the diplomatic correspondence between the foreign affairs heads of Japan and the Philippines in May 2007 confirming the former's vow not to dump toxic wastes in the country. But despite this exchange of diplomatic notes, the liberalization of toxic waste trade between the parties under the JPEPA remains, which creates the condition for increased exports of Japanese hazardous materials to the Philippines.

Despite Santiago's relentless propaganda that the JPEPA will be ratified by the Senate, a host of issues about the treaty remains unresolved. The exchange of notes itself is viewed differently by some senators. According to Senator Francis Pangilinan, the exchange of notes is in effect a renegotiation of the original JPEPA and said that a bloc of four to five senators is forging a consensus that renegotiation is the best option. Senator Aquilino Pimentel, on the other hand, pointed out that aside from constitutional issues, there are also equally important trade issues that must be scrutinized by the Senate.

The battle against the JPEPA is certainly far from over. Advocates of just and mutually beneficial economic agreements and defenders of national patrimony and sovereignty must be more aggressive in convincing at least eight senators to firmly reject the obviously defective economic treaty. With a host of bilateral economic deals, including one with the US, in line, the outcome of this campaign takes a higher level of strategic importance.



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# ILPS: GLOBAL ANTI-IMPERIALIST MOVEMENT ON THE MARCH

by Rita Baua

On its Third International Assembly on June 18-20, 2008, the International League of Peoples' Struggles gathered 265 participants and 165 peoples' organizations from 30 countries. It was held at the YMCA camp site in Shatin Territories, Hongkong.

The ILPS carried the theme "Strengthen the peoples' struggle, unite to build a new world against imperialist aggression, state terrorism, plunder and social destruction."

In his keynote message, Varavara Rao underscored the ILPS' theme as "most timely and urgent in the context of the growing imperialist military attacks and unbridled plunder of the resources, labor and markets of oppressed countries." He noted that the "ILPS has grown into a massive league of anti-imperialist, revolutionary democratic forces the world over."

Prof. Jose Ma. Sison, ILPS chairperson, addressing participants via internet video, presented the significant achievements and shortcomings of the ILPS since the Second International Assembly in 2004, and pointed out the favorable conditions, challenges and tasks for further strengthening the ILPS. Noting that the ILPS has emerged as "the most outstanding anti-imperialist and democratic formation by providing political guidance to the people through its 18 concerns," Prof. Sison issued the challenge for the ILPS to take up the major concerns more promptly, disseminate its positions in all forms of mass media, increase its membership nationally and globally to make ILPS more effective, and consolidate the commissions so that the ILPS truly become more vibrant.

Workshops were held on the 18 concerns which Sison described "as the lifeblood of the ILPS."

A new International Coordinating Committee was elected, with BAYAN chairperson Dr. Carol P. Araullo as deputy chairperson for internal affairs and Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) chairperson Elmer Labog as second deputy general secretary. ###



strategic resources such as oil. Condemn the doctrine of preemptive war as barbarism and flagrant violation of international law, the sovereignty of nations and the United Nations charter. Continue the campaign against the US occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan and the US-backed genocidal war of Israel against the peoples of Palestine and Lebanon. Launch bigger and more coordinated regional and global actions on these issues.

3. Oppose direct military intervention and threats of military invasion by imperialist countries led by the US against Iran, Syria, Cuba and DPRK. Oppose US embargoes and other forms of bullying and sanctions against these countries and their peoples.

4. Oppose US and other imperialist-instigated armed conflicts especially in Somalia, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Oppose the use of military and political interventionism to topple anti-US regimes such as in Venezuela and other parts of Latin America. Oppose forward deployment of US and other imperialist countries' armed forces in sovereign territory such as countries in the Balkans, in South, Southeast and Central Asia, Japan, South Korea and Oceania.

5. Oppose the drive of the imperialist powers and Israel to boost their strategic nuclear arsenal, develop tactical nuclear weapons for limited wars, militarize outer space, build an anti-ballistic missile defense system and make immense profits for the military-industrial complex.

6. Condemn and campaign against the demonization as "terrorist" and blatant fascist attacks against anti-imperialist and national liberation movements and their leaders and organizations. Call imperialist powers and their client regimes to account for using state terrorism to suppress the people. Condemn US non-ratification of the International Criminal Court. Take advantage of all avenues to bring the fascist imperialist ringleaders like George W. Bush and their puppets to justice.

7. Continue to fight the imperialist corporations and banks, the IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO) as tools of neocolonialism and the US-instigated neoliberal policy of imperialist globalization and unbridled plunder. Struggle to dismantle the WTO, regional free trade agreements and intensify the campaigns against bilateral economic agreements as new means to push the neoliberal agenda against weaker countries and peoples.

8. Fight for the right of the people to affordable and safe food, to self-sustaining and self-reliant food production against the super-profiteering and market manipulation of the agro-chemical, seed and food processing cartels and financial speculators in grain and other foods. Expose and oppose the imperialist policy of "neoliberal globalization" behind the worsening global food crisis.

9. Persist in exposing and opposing the various types of pseudo-reformers and imperialist-funded non-government organizations and other formations that seek to undermine and frustrate the people's just struggles.

10. Continue to seek out and foster greater unity, cooperation and coordination with all forces desirous of a broad anti-imperialist united front nationally, in global regions and worldwide.

**Bayan led in organizing the Workshop on Concern No. 1: The cause of national liberation, democracy and social liberation against imperialism and all reaction. Affirming that the resistance from the toiling masses of workers and peasants is the strongest, most inexhaustible and most important challenge to imperialism, participants of the Workshop on Concern No. 1 issued the following calls to action:**

1. Consolidate and broaden the international anti-imperialist united front by supporting the struggles for national liberation, democracy and social liberation. Extend support and solidarity to the struggles of oppressed nations and nationalities and uphold and defend their right to self-determination. Undertake internationally-coordinated campaigns against imperialist war and plunder. Undertake sustained and widespread anti-imperialist education campaigns as well.

2. Expose and oppose the US and other imperialists' wars of aggression to expand their spheres of influence and control over