



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

RELEASED BY THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF THE PHILIPPINES

Amsterdamsestraatweg 50, 3513AG Utrecht, The Netherlands

T: : +31 30 2310431 | E: updates.philippines@ndfp.org | W: updates.ndfp.org

VOL II NO 1

15 JANUARY 2020

EDITORIAL

Peace Builders vs. peace spoilers

Nobody said that working for just and lasting peace was easy. The members and consultants of the NDFP Negotiating Panel talking peace with the Manila government over a period of 27 years should know.

NDFP consultants have been assassinated – Sotero Llamas in 2006 and Randy Malayao in 2019 – in the course of their peace building efforts. Several peace consultants have been arrested and are being detained by the Manila government based on spurious possession of firearms charges. The administration of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines has changed hands five times since 1992, with the accompanying willingness or aversion of its Presidents to seriously tackle the roots of the armed conflict.

But the already difficult road to peace becomes near impossible when peace spoilers are embedded in President Duterte's inner circle. Retired chiefs-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, who have all miserably failed in containing the expansion of the revolutionary movement and all complicit in committing the worst human rights violations in the past three decades, are holding strategic executive offices and are fanatically setting up roadblocks to peace. The military generals have come to believe their own propaganda that Filipinos are no longer poor, employment is rising, the economy is industrializing and thousands of revolutionaries are surrendering. And that the NDFP forces can be coerced to accept terms of surrender.

Meanwhile, the social crises have only worsened over these three decades and the revolutionary movement continues to gain strength. Despite the difficulties, sacrifices and in the face of treachery, the forces of the NDFP will not waver in the cause for peace and remain open for peace negotiations.

During the times that the GRP seriously undertook peace talks with the NDFP, we have proven it possible for the two Parties to set aside ideological differences. More than two dozen signed agreements – including the 1992 Hague Joint Declaration, 1995 Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees and the 1998 Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law – showed the two Parties uniting on concrete steps for the common cause of human rights, real economic progress and just and lasting peace for the nation.

The resumption of negotiations and signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social & Economic Reforms will benefit the Filipino people. We call on patriotic and peace loving Filipinos and friends of the Filipino people to help in overcoming peace spoilers for our common aspirations for just and lasting peace in the country. **UP**



Ceasefire ends successfully despite incidents – Prof. Sison

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) engaged in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) declared that the reciprocal unilateral ceasefire between the two parties from 23 December 2019 until 7 January 2020 was an “over-all nationwide success”.

Despite two incidents when New People's Army (NPA) units undertook defensive actions against attacks by the GRP's Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), including several AFP

complaints of ceasefire violations, Prof. Sison said that both the Manila government and the NDFP did not withdraw from their ceasefire declarations.

The agreement for reciprocal unilateral ceasefires during the Christmas holidays was intended to “build a favorable climate for the resumption of the GRP-NDFP peace talks”.

Meanwhile, Juanito Magbanua, Spokesperson of the NPA Regional Operational Command in Negros Island published a list of violations committed by the AFP during the ceasefire period. The list contained specific dates, villages and the names of the AFP units which conducted combat operations in the mountainous areas of the island. Despite the treacherous provocations of the AFP, Magbanua said, “the NPA remained in active defense mode... and firmly adhered to the ceasefire order.” **UP**



Talking peace. Negotiating panels of the GRP (left) and the NDFP across the negotiating table. Photo: teddycasino.wordpress.com

Generals Esperon, Galvez biggest obstacles to peace – NDFP

The committee on Socio-Economic Reforms of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) on 14 January berated retired generals Hermogenes Esperon, Jr. and Carlito G. Galvez, Jr. of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) for criticizing negotiations on the proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER), and described the top Duterte officials as “chronic saboteurs of the peace process... proving to be among the biggest obstacles to peace in the country.”

The two former chiefs-of-staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the NDFP said, “maliciously distort the considerable progress the GRP and the NDFP made on the CASER (drafts) between August 2016 and November 2017” when the peace talks were terminated by President Duterte.

The reciprocal working committees on socio-economic reforms of both the GRP and NDFP agreed in November 2017 on common drafts for the topics of Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ARRD) and National Industrialization and Economic Development (NIED). According to the NDFP, these are two of the most important parts of the CASER.

The NDFP disputed Gen. Galvez’s claim that CASER is “a product of a secret backchannel maneuver”. The former said that the “common drafts were widely taken up... in consultations nationwide.”

Officials from various GRP agencies took part in producing the common drafts, including from the National Economic and Development Authority, Land Bank of the Philippines, and the departments of Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources, Trade & Industry, Science & Technology and Finance. Academics from the University of the Philippines, De La Salle University and Ateneo de Manila University, as well as representatives of civil society, were also brought in by the GRP to assist in the common drafts.

“The common drafts show that it is possible for the two Parties to set aside ideological differences and unite on concrete steps for the common cause of real economic progress for the nation,” the NDFP said.

“The misguided, ill-informed and malicious commentaries of Esperon and Galvez are most of all intended to sabotage the possible resumption of the peace talks between the NDFP and GRP... They maliciously diminish and vilify the progress of the peace talks to give way to their narrow-minded hawkish militarism.”

Gen. Esperon is currently the National Security Adviser of the Duterte government, while Gen. Galvez is the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

President Duterte announced in early December that he wishes to resume peace negotiations with the NDFP. Backchannel talks in the Netherlands between the two Parties resulted in reciprocal unilateral ceasefire declarations for the Christmas holidays. **UP**



Protesters march in New York City against the murder of Iranian general Soleimani. Photo: iranpress.com

US murder of Soleimani draws condemnation, Filipinos join global protests

Masses of people in Iran, Iraq and other Middle East countries were enraged against the US government over the brutal multiple murder of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and several Iranian and Iraqi officials accompanying him in Baghdad on 3 January.

Millions marched in massive demonstrations in several countries, shouting “Death to America!” and burning US flags. The masses in Iraq demanded the expulsion of US troops and other foreign troops supporting the US. The Iraqi

parliament announced on 5 January that it voted for the expulsion of foreign troops from Iraq.

Prof. Jose Maria Sison, Founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, declared: “By ordering the assassination of Gen. Soleimani and the Iranian and Iraqi officials accompanying him, US President Trump has blatantly committed multiple murder as well as aggression against the sovereignty of [continued next page...]

[... continued]

Iraq and Iran in violation of international law and US law which prohibits such aggressive act without prior declaration of war by authorization of the US Congress.”

Luis Jalandoni, Chief International Representative of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in an interview stated: “The Filipino people condemn in the strongest terms this blatant US imperialist attack on the sovereignty of Iraq and Iran. We are in firm solidarity with the enraged masses in Iran and Iraq and other countries. We support their just struggles against US imperialism. We too, in the Philippines, are waging a revolutionary struggle against US imperialism in order to attain national and social liberation.”

Peace loving Filipinos participated in various protest actions around the world against the assassination of Gen. Qassem Soleimani. **UP**



MEDIA ADVISORY

CPP Information Bureau

ORGANIZE FOR TAAL ASH EXPLOSION

CPP calls for assistance to communities affected by Taal volcano explosion

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) on 13 January called on revolutionary mass organizations and civic-minded organizations in the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon to assist all those affected by Taal volcano’s ash explosion.

A more dangerous eruption is also forecast, the CPP said, prompting the need “for preparing emergency response and relief operations, including those that address the disaster’s health implications.”

The CPP also urged organizations in Metro Manila and Central Luzon to draw up plans in urban poor and peasant communities to mitigate the detrimental effects of the volcanic ash fall on crops, livestock and water supply, “most especially in the face of low farmgate prices and high costs of social services.”

Taal volcano, located 70 kilometers south of Metro Manila, started spewing ash and lava on 12 January. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology called for a total evacuation of communities within a 14 km. radius of the volcano. An estimated 50,000 have already fled the area. **UP**