



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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Amsterdamsestraatweg 50, 3513AG Utrecht, The Netherlands

T: : +31 30 2310431 | E: editors@updatesphilippines.info | W: updatesphilippines.info

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EDITORIAL

US warmongering against China threatens World Peace

The latest US provocations against China over Taiwan brings the world closer to the verge of a global war. The US carries out these challenges against China even as it continues to engage in a proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. In the context of a declared 'no limits' partnership between Russia and China, backing each other over standoffs on Ukraine and Taiwan with a promise to collaborate more against the West, a US war against China will ignite a new World War.

While the Filipino people condemn US imperialism for its warmongering, they must likewise denounce Chinese imperialism for abandoning Chairman Mao Zedong's long-standing policy of peaceful settlement, in its imperious drive to use military might in resolving the issue of China's reunification.

The recent visit to Taiwan by US Speaker Nancy Pelosi was a blatant provocation against China. The visit came after recent declarations by US President Biden that it will "come to Taiwan's defense." A few days earlier, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper led an Atlantic Council delegation to Taiwan and called for an end to the 'One-China Policy' while a US guided-missile destroyer, the USS Benfold, sailed through the Taiwan Strait. The US military also deployed the USS Reagan carrier strike group east of Taiwan.

China responded to the provocations by firing 11 ballistic missiles into waters surrounding Taiwan as part of "a series of military exercises". The US wishes China to commit a miscalculation to justify its actions to "defend Taiwan," stimulate increased deployment and sales of US firepower in the region.

In the face of escalating competition from imperialist China, the US has imposed trade sanctions against China-made products, including against Huawei, on the pretext that the company was engaged in spying. Additionally, the US has activated the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue with Japan, India and Australia, with the aim of encircling China. It is also advocating the expansion of NATO beyond the Atlantic by including Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, declaring China as a "strategic threat" to the military alliance.

The Filipino people must denounce the US for using Philippine military facilities and territorial waters as springboard for aggressive acts against China. Filipinos must support the people of Taiwan in their struggle against the use of Taiwan as a US pawn and against China's growing militarism. At the same time, they must support the Chinese people's aspirations to resolve China's reunification peacefully and amicably.

The Filipino people must demand the withdrawal of all US troops and military advisers from Philippine soil, which makes the country a target of reprisals of US enemies. They must also call on China to respect Philippine national sovereignty and maritime territory and demand the dismantling of all military facilities built within and around the West Philippine Sea.

The Filipino people must join forces with the peace-loving peoples of the US and China and build a united front against imperialist war. Together with the peoples of Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific and beyond, the Filipino people must also build a united front to oppose imperialist aggression, especially US war provocations in the region. **UP**

Joint US-RP patrols in West Philippine Sea condemned

The Communist Party of the Philippines condemned on 8 August the proposal for the military forces of the Republic of the Philippines and the US to conduct joint maritime patrols in the West Philippine Sea. Marco Valbuena, CPP Chief Information Officer, said, "Such a plan is inimical to the country as it further bounds the Philippines to the US military at a time that economic and military tensions between the US and China are rising."

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Image: cpp.ph

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Valbuena said the proposed joint maritime patrols will deprive the country's capacity to act independently and in line with its national interest. "It will shamelessly put on display how the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is an appendage of the US military and make the country a target of US imperialism's enemies or rivals," he said.

He warned, "Such joint patrols can be used to provoke China to make miscalculated armed actions... thus serving the US goal of escalating armed hostilities. In a way, this can be similar to how the US used Ukraine to provoke Russia to mount a military assault, and thus create

conditions of war which the US military industrial complex is now making huge profits from."

The Marcos government's Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo, in a virtual press conference with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on 6 August, confirmed the proposal, asserting that this falls under the US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty, Visiting Forces Agreement, and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Valbuena explained that the Marcos regime is subservient to both the US and China, but has thus far shown greater docility to the US in the face of its increasingly aggressive posturing in the Asia-Pacific region, from Taiwan, to the Philippines all the way to the Solomon Islands.

He revealed, "Marcos showed utter spinelessness when he downplayed the brazen provocation by the US against China through the official visit to Taiwan by US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi... The Marcos regime exhibited gross subservience to the US when it cancelled military purchase contracts with Russia for fear that the Philippines will be subjected to US sanctions."

The CPP called on the Filipino people to push for the abrogation of the US-RP Mutual Defense Treaty, the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, and for the withdrawal of all US troops and advisers from the country.

"At the same time, the Filipino people must demand China to dismantle its military facilities, and put a stop to industrial fishing and the plunder of marine resources within the country's maritime territory, exclusive economic zone and extended continental shelf, and to respect the July 2016 decision of the International Arbitral Tribunal," concluded Valbuena. UP



AFP killings, torture of civilians escalate further

Killings, torture, illegal arrests, destruction of livelihood and threats to community residents perpetrated by state security forces continue to escalate in Negros Island, in central Philippines. Juanito Magbanua, Spokesperson of the Negros Island Regional Operational Command of the New People's Army condemned the state terrorism, especially the practice of tagging civilians killed as high-ranking members of the NPA.

In a statement issued on 3 August, Magbanua accused Armed Forces of the Philippines 303rd Infantry Brigade commander Brig. Gen. Inocencio Pasaporte of falsely claiming four armed encounters with the NPA in northern and central Negros Island in the month of July.

One of the "fake encounters" took place in Trinidad village, Guihulngan City in Negros Oriental on 26 July. Christina Jacolbe, who was five months pregnant, her 16-year old daughter and a relative, Rodan Montero, were killed by elements of the AFP 62nd Infantry Battalion when they indiscriminately fired at the victims' hut. Chistina sustained six gun shot wounds. Brig. Gen. Pasaporte claimed they were NPA members killed in an armed encounter.

In a similar incident, just 100 km south of Manila, the AFP 59th Infantry Battalion killed nine-year old Kyllene Casao on 18 July when they opened fire in Guinhawa village, Taysan town in Batangas province. Kyllene and her father were on their way home when fired upon by the state security forces. Her father survived the killing but is currently missing.

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The AFP prevented human rights groups from conducting an investigation into the incident. The groups, however, eventually succeeded in pushing for an independent investigation which would include advocates of children's rights and the UNICEF.

On 26 July, in Malapad na Parang village, Lobo town, also in Batangas province, Maximo Digno, a mentally-challenged person, was killed by the same AFP battalion. The soldiers claimed that Digno was an NPA killed in an armed encounter.

Meanwhile, state security forces continue the arrest campaign against activists. On 28 July, combined forces of the AFP and Philippine National Police arrested 63-year old Marites Pielago while confined in the Dr. Nilo O. Roa hospital in Naga City, Camarines Sur province. Security officials accuse her of murder and frustrated murder, in connection with an armed encounter with the NPA in 2018.

Pielago is the Bicol Region coordinator of opposition Makabayan coalition party and former congressional nominee of Bayan Muna in 2019. **UP**



*Philippine human rights lawyer
Angelo Karlo Guillen. Photo: bulatlat.com*

Filipino lawyer wins 2022 Baldwin Medal of Liberty

International human rights organization Human Rights First announced on 8 August the awarding of its 2022 Roger N. Baldwin Medal of Liberty to Philippine human rights lawyer Angelo Karlo Guillen. The Roger N. Baldwin Medal, named after one of the founders of the American Civil Liberties Union and the International League for Human Rights, is awarded to “extraordinary activists” as recognition and support for “advancing the protection of human rights at great personal risk.”

Michael Breen, President and CEO of Human Rights First, announced this year's winner. He praised Guillen for being “a courageous and effective advocate whose work has made a difference in the lives of his fellow Filipinos and put a spotlight on abuses and calling for accountability.”

Guillen, currently the General Secretary of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers – Panay Island, has been a constant target of surveillance, vilification and harassment by officials of the Manila government. He and his NUPL colleagues are tagged as ‘communists’ and ‘terrorists’, and exposed to deadly attacks by state security forces. In March 2021, Guillen survived a brutal stabbing by yet unknown assailants. Three other NUPL lawyers have been murdered in recent years.

“I am honored to accept the Baldwin Medal, which I do on behalf of all Filipino human rights lawyers and defenders,” said Guillen. “This award will encourage us even more, to continue our work defending human rights and civil liberties in the Philippines, even in these difficult times.

“I am especially glad this award could be announced on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, which is also National Indigenous Peoples Day in the Philippines. Indigenous peoples, like the Tumandok community, as well as farmers, labor leaders, and activists, have borne the brunt of unjust arrests, extrajudicial killings, and other human rights violations committed by state security forces that, to this day, still take place throughout the country. Their rights must be protected, and we hope that this recognition will help bring attention to their plight.”

The award, established in 1989, is presented in alternating years by Human Rights First, which awards human rights advocates outside the US, and the ACLU, which awards advocates in the US. The 2022 Baldwin Medal will be presented to Guillen in person at an event in the US later this year. **UP**



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