

Hail the Party's Second Congress! Advance the people's war to greater heights!

Message of the Central Committee to the New People's Army
on its 48th anniversary



The newly-elected Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) extends its warm revolutionary greetings to all commands and units of the New People's Army (NPA) on the occasion of its 48th founding anniversary. In behalf of the Filipino people and all revolutionary forces, the Party salutes every Red commander and Red fighter of the NPA as models of selfless sacrifice and complete dedication to serving the oppressed and exploited people.

Let us pay tribute to all the NPA heroes and martyrs as well as other revolutionary people who have given their lives in support of the NPA and the armed revolution. Let us also give recognition to all NPA veterans as well as Red fighters who have been wounded or injured in battle who continue to carry out tasks in the people's army or other fields of revolutionary work.

Let us celebrate the successful convening of the Second Congress of the Party historically held on October 24 to November 7, 2016 inside a guerrilla base area. Through the Second Congress, the Party has achieved greater unity and is ever determined to advance the national democratic revolution to greater heights.

The Second Congress was able to assemble the Party's leading cadres from the central leadership to the regional and provincial com-

mittees. It was able to do so on the basis of the strength and capacity of the New People's Army. The Second Congress amended the Party constitution and program with the aim of further illuminating the path for advancing the Philippine revolution. It has elected a new set of leaders comprising the Central Committee.

The Party calls on the NPA to advance on the road of protracted people's war. The international and domestic conditions are ever favorable for waging revolutionary armed resistance and carrying out democratic mass struggles.

Let us build on the accumulated victories and lessons drawn in the course of waging armed revolution. Guided by Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, the Party is confident that it can lead the NPA to wage extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and advance the people's war to ever greater heights in the coming years.

Ten years of global capitalist depression

The global capitalist depression has persisted for close to a decade now. The current depression is now more extensive and deep-going than the Great Depression of the 1930s. The destruction of productive forces is far worse and more intense and is rocking the entire capitalist system.

Unemployment continues to rise and is expected to reach 201 million in 2017. Youth unemployment is disproportionately high. Working conditions and terms of employment have become ever more oppressive with 1.4 billion of those with jobs suffering extremely low wages and lack of job security.

The capitalist contradiction between social production and private accumulation of profit continue to intensify. A mere one percent of the world's population controls \$110 trillion or half of global wealth. It is estimated that the wealth amassed by the eight biggest monopoly capitalists is as much as that owned by the bottom half of the world's population. Since 2009, 95% of economic growth in the US was captured by the top one per-

cent, as 90% of Americans became poorer.

The social and public infrastructure continue to rapidly decay. The living conditions of the toiling masses are ever worsening, both in the Third World as well as in the ghettos and working class cities and communities in capitalist centers. Cuts in social spending have resulted in the deterioration of public health, public education, public transportation and other social services.

The social and economic conditions of workers and people in capitalist countries continue to deteriorate. They suffer from low wages, pension cuts and spiralling costs of living. In 2016, total household debt reached US\$12.58 trillion, up by almost 60% from the previous year, and at almost the same level as 2008. Millions of working people in the US suffer from homelessness amid the glut of housing.

The worsening social conditions of the productive class forces have caused their inability to absorb the products of their labor leading to depressed markets. This has resulted in markets oversaturated with such consumer products as cell-phones, computer electronics, garments and shoes. International trade has slumped to lowest levels

in three decades and has led to bankruptcies of large shipping companies and port operators.

The global capitalist crisis persists because of the unresolved problem of overproduction under capitalism. There is overall slowdown in capitalist production. There is a growing inventory of intermediate and capital goods such as metals and chemicals, electrical machinery, petroleum products, as well as steel and cement. There is intensified competition and bankruptcies among capitalist firms culminating in inter-imperialist rivalries and wars.

The US and European economies continue to muddle through successive years of slow growth, even as China is rocked by one financial tremor after another. Global GDP growth for 2016 was 2.3%, the slowest since 2008. The global capitalist system has largely failed to stimulate productive growth since 2008 and is more and more being financialized. Whatever growth has largely been spurred by debt and so-called wealth-making products or non-productive speculative financial instruments. Global debt is at US\$230 trillion, more than 325% of global GDP and three times greater than in 2000.

In 2016, US GDP growth was 1.9%, the slowest in five years. The Obama regime failed to resolve economic problems over the past eight years through bail-outs and military spending. It has succeeded only in filling the coffers of big financial oligarchy with bail-out funds estimated by some at US\$29.5 trillion since 2008 at the expense of the working people who were made to suffer austerity measures.


The newly-installed Trump regime has vowed to "bring back jobs" by embarking on what he has declared as an "America-first" policy. It has scuttled the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and is set on renegotiating other so-called "free trade" agreements to "bring jobs back" to the US, concealing the

fundamental crisis of overproduction. Protectionism by the US government, however, has long been on the rise with government subsidies for domestic enterprises and trade barriers. The US government has long subverted multilateral trade agreements such as the WTO with support and subsidies for US firms, farms and finance. His vow to "make America great again" is bound to be detrimental to the US working class as he bids to bring down the costs of American labor. He has denounced China, as well as the European Union, for currency manipulation setting the ground for setting up trade barriers and investment restrictions and other measures. These are bound to provoke countermeasures by rival imperialists.


By leaving the European Union, the United Kingdom asserted to uphold its national economic interests, particularly, to establish new markets and trading partners, unconstrained by EU-defined rules. It is increasingly under economic pressure as its industrial base is undermined by cheap overproduced commodities from China. The UK will undertake its Brexit procedures this year, as other EU member countries consider a similar exit.


Russia has suffered from low prices of crude oil as a result of overproduction, partly by deliberate efforts of the US and Saudi Arabia to depress prices by boosting US production of shale oil and preventing OPEC to limit production in order to undermine the oil- and gas-exporting Russian economy as well as the economies of other anti-US oil-producing countries such as Venezuela and Iran.


The productive capacity of the Chinese economy is being undermined by the inventory of unsold commodities (steel, semiconductors and consumer electronics, appliances, automobiles, textile, real estate) as a result of the global economic slowdown. It is also being undermined by the increasing rel-





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ative size of the unproductive economy. It has engaged in its own version of quantitative easing from 2009 onwards.

In 2015, public and private debt in China soared to US\$28 trillion or 282% of its GDP, at least five times bigger than a decade ago. China borrowed US\$3 trillion more in the first three quarters of 2016 bringing its debt to 390% of its GDP.

China's financial system is being swamped with so-called wealth-management products or increasingly high-risk financial instruments. These comprise a disproportionately large part of the Chinese economy, estimated to be just below 45% of GDP. China's major stock markets have faltered several times since 2015 exposing the cracks in China's bloated financial system. There are growing fears that China is heading towards a general financial collapse similar to that of the US in 2008.

While the global capitalist crisis protracts and worsens, inter-imperialist contradictions under a multipolar world continue to rise. There is increasing rivalry between the biggest imperialist powers competing for strategic control of markets, sources of raw materials and spheres of influence. Military spending is on the rise reaching US\$1.7 trillion in 2015.

Amid the failure of several decades of neoliberal regimes to resolve the strategic decline of the capitalist system, there is now a strong drift to the Right among the political parties of the monopoly capitalists with strong authoritarian and ultra-nationalist rhetoric in the US, as well as in the UK and other EU countries. These parties are arousing xenophobia against immigrants and refugees, as well as racism, religious bigotry and fascism. The ruling classes have exhausted neoliberal free market posturing and are now seeking greater use of the coercive powers of the state to exploit its working classes and to force more advantageous

terms with its trade and investment partners.

In the vain hope of maintaining its strategic global dominance, the US military continues to extend its hegemonic reach across the world in order to perpetuate its client-states, carry out "regime-change" subversion against governments assertive of independence and maintain its military presence in major trade routes. The US government spends some US\$600 billion annually on its military, which is more than the combined spending of the next ten countries (which includes China and Russia).

The US military is overreaching. It seeks to strengthen its foothold in the Middle East and deploy its forces across the European border of Russia and China's southern seas. It is active in wars in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. It carries out military intervention in Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Pakistan, Philippines, Nigeria, Turkey, Yemen, Ukraine and many other countries. It has deployed special operations forces in over 130 countries under the pretext of anti-terrorism operations. Since 2013, the US has carried out its "Asia Pivot" to deploy more than half its foreign naval troops to Asia.

Under the pretext of "freedom of navigation operations", the US has established its military presence in the South China Sea over the past years. It has provoked China to make aggressive assertions of sovereignty, making excessive claims of sovereignty in Philippine exclusive economic zone and territorial waters and building military outposts and other structures in complete disregard of Philippine rights.

Indicative of its rising imperialist ambition, China has started to build military bases overseas, particularly in Africa and the Middle East, in order to protect its economic investments and expand its sphere of influence. China is also

set to complete building its first aircraft carrier fleet in the next years.

Russia continues to assert military strength in East Europe, the Middle East and Central Asian regions. It has strategic control of oil and gas resources in the Caspian and Black Seas. It has started to project its presence in the South China Sea through port visits in the Philippines.

In order to extend its global political influence and counter US hegemony, China has carried out an economic diplomatic offensive offering low-interest infrastructure loans through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) under its so-called "New World Economic Blueprint" and "One Belt, One Road" framework of building labor enclaves and transport facilities. The strategic aim of China is to tap into the larger ocean of unemployed labor in order to bring down further the costs of labor.

Russia and China continue to develop strategic military cooperation with other Eurasian countries, including India and Pakistan, through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The strategic control of oil resources and pipelines, especially in the Middle East, remains one of the major flashpoints of inter-imperialist rivalries. Contending imperialists have confronted each other in Syria with the US seeking to overthrow the al-Bashad regime by carrying out bombardments and by arming so-called rebels, while Russia (with Chinese support) stood behind the Syrian government through counter-bombardments against the US-supported rebels.

As inter-imperialist rivalries intensify, the proletariat and oppressed people around the world must heighten their struggles for national and social liberation. The worsening social conditions under the neoliberal regime are driving workers, peasants and toiling people to carry out mass struggles

and armed resistance.

Workers and toiling people are rising up in underdeveloped countries. They are rising up in great numbers in strikes and other forms of struggles against the onslaught of neoliberal policies on jobs, wages and public services. In China, workers in labor enclaves are waging mass struggles in their tens of thousands against the oppressive and exploitative conditions. Large workers' strikes have erupted in India and elsewhere.

In the US, the working class people, both white and colored, are rising up in big numbers against the newly-installed Trump regime which has declared a war against immigrants. Large strikes have broken out in the country over the past year over demands for wage increases and other issues.

In countries subjected to US imperialist military aggression and occupation, people are waging armed resistance, independently or supported by rival imperialist powers. Revolutionary armed resistance are being waged in India, the Philippines, Palestine, Kurdistan and other countries.

Proletarian revolutionary forces must take advantage of favorable conditions to establish Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties that are deeply rooted among the people and capable of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the people in their great numbers and leading their armed resistance to achieve national and social liberation and wage socialist revolution.

Crisis of semicolonial and semifeudal system persists under Duterte regime

The conditions under the Philippines semicolonial and semifeudal continue to deteriorate under the weight of the global capitalist crisis. The Philippines remains in a state of chronic crisis. It is generating antagonistic class contradictions between the exploiting and exploited classes as well as intense

factional rivalries within the ruling classes.

The non-industrial, agrarian and backward state of the Philippine economy has worsened through more than three decades of neoliberal policies. The capacity of the Philippine economy to produce and self-sustain continues to decrease. The reactionary government claims a 6.8% GDP growth last year, but this came largely as a result of short-lived expansion of construction and real estate. Agricultural production went down by 1.3% in 2016 from zero growth the previous year, while its share to the GDP went down to 8.8% from 9.5%. Overall, the share of the productive sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, mining and construction) went down further to 39.2%. The service sector, which primarily serves the circulation of foreign commodities, expanded to 49.9% of the economy.

The Philippines is now ever dependent on export of raw materials, low value-added import-dependent manufactures and migrant labor. Without independent solid industrial capacity, the country suffers from perennial trade deficits, in turn, leading to heavy dependence on loans and foreign capital, largely portfolio investments used in financial speculation.

There is practically nothing beyond the glitz of consumer imports, infrastructure building and call centers concentrated in the national capital and in narrow corridors of some provincial or town centers.

The Filipino people continue to suffer from worsening socio-economic conditions under the semicolonial and semifeudal social system. There is an increasing gap between the ruling economic elite and the vast majority of workers and peasants. Independent estimates show close to 70% of Filipinos, or around 66 million, living below the poverty line, earning less than P125 a day. On the other hand, the wealth of 40 richest Filipinos ex-

panded by 14% between 2015 and 2016, while the profits of biggest enterprises listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange grew by 18% in the same period, further increasing the gap between the ruling economic elite and the vast majority of peasants and workers.

Workers continue to suffer from widespread unemployment, flexible labor policies and low wages. Unemployment and underemployment stand at around 11.5 million or close to 27% of the total labor force. Around 1.3 million workers were dropped from the total workforce in 2016. As a result of the acute problem of unemployment, workers continue to desperately find work overseas. The rate of deployment of overseas contract workers grows year upon year.

Filipino workers continue to suffer worsening forms of oppression and exploitation under contractualization and similar schemes of flexible employment. In some labor enclaves, the rate of contractualization is as much as 90%. Working conditions continue to worsen under deregulation of labor standards as tragically illustrated by the large factory blazes.

Wages remain depressed. The minimum wage of P491 for NCR workers can cover a mere 43% of the amount of daily necessities for a family of six. Wages continue to be pulled down by such policies as wage regionalization, two-tier wage policy and so on.

The peasants masses continue to suffer from widespread landlessness and landgrabbing and worsening forms of feudal and semifeudal exploitation and acute unemployment. Land reform under the reactionary government has proven to be bogus and has been set aside. Land continues to be monopolized in large haciendas as well as in so-called contract-growing schemes and vast foreign-owned plantations devoted to crops for export.

Public infrastructure and ser-

vices continue to deteriorate under the neoliberal policy of privatization and deregulation. The broad masses suffer from social cuts or insufficient budget allocations pushing public hospitals and state schools, as well as other public service agencies, to engage in commercial operations and corporatization schemes to the detriment of the public. For almost ten years now, the so-called conditional cash-transfer program designed and funded by the World Bank, has utterly failed to resolve the roots of widespread poverty.

The deepening crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system and the worsening contradictions arising from it has given rise to the Duterte regime, which in many respects was set to be unlike its predecessors. For one, Rodrigo Duterte is the first GRP president who has made claims of being a "Leftist" and "socialist" and who has openly displayed friendly relations with the revolutionary armed movement. While mayor, he has made himself known as opposed to the building of US military facilities in Davao City.

He prevailed in the 2016 elections riding on the people's widespread dissatisfaction over the ruling system and aspiration for decisive change. Upon winning the presidency, Duterte offered cabinet positions to the Left and selected names from an NDFP list of recommendees from the ranks of progressive and patriotic mass leaders to head the agrarian reform and social welfare departments, and the presidential anti-poverty commission. They have been given the distinct opportunity to extend all-out support to the struggles of peasants, workers and the toiling masses across the country, in particular to push for land distribution at Hacienda Luisita and other haciendas, an end to contractualization, a stop to militarization of barangays and others.

By and large, however,

Duterte's cabinet is dominated by advocates of neoliberal policies of past regimes as well as pro-US militarists. There are contradictions within the ruling clique, which are also linked to factional rivalries among the ruling classes. Such rivalries are reflections of the deep crisis of the rotten ruling system as well as contradictions arising from the multipolar world.

The Yellow Army of Liberal Party stalwarts, including the Aquinos of Hacienda Luisita, are at the forefront of efforts to destabilize the ruling regime. They are being incited and egged on by the US imperialists as a check against Duterte's anti-US posturings. There are officers in the AFP who are ready to move against Duterte once commanded by their US handlers.

After almost eight months in power, Duterte's promises of change have yet to be translated into firm policy, much less actual change and momentum. He has yet to prove himself different from his predecessors.

Duterte has repeatedly promised to end labor contractualization. This promise, however, was not reflected in DOLE Order 174 issued last March 21 which upholds the Herrera Law and merely aims to standardize and further regulate the practice of contractualization, much like the policy of previous regimes. The Duterte regime has also yet to take decisive steps to address the peasants' outstanding demand for land reform. It has yet to fulfill its promise of providing free irrigation.

GRP President Duterte has repeatedly issued statements declaring an independent foreign policy and critical of US military intervention. He would criticize the conduct of US war exercises, the VFA and the EDCA but has yet to carry out concrete measures to assert national sovereignty. Pressed by the military establishment, Duterte would accede to allowing the US to construct military facilities in

Palawan and other AFP camps and conduct the Balikatan exercises as well as 256 other military exercises in the country this year.

Grave abuses of human rights have been committed by state police and military forces under the Duterte regime's "war against drugs" and its "all-out war." Duterte, himself, has incited the rotten police force to carry out a crazed war against drugs. At least 8,000 "drug personalities," mostly small peddlers and drug users in urban poor communities, have been killed by police in "Oplan Tokhang" operations as well as by vigilante death squads.

Since declaring an all-out war against the revolutionary forces last February, the military and AFP-organized paramilitary groups have carried out a spree of killings and armed suppression operations against peasants and minority peoples. Duterte has commanded the AFP to "flatten the hills" by using helicopter gunships and newly-acquired jet-fighters to conduct aerial bombardments. In complete disregard of civilian lives and people's livelihood, the AFP has carried out bombing runs in Compostela Valley, Sarangani, Abra, Maguindanao, Agusan del Norte and others places.

The AFP has announced its new counter-insurgency plan Oplan Kapayapaan, which is largely based on the previous Oplan Bayanihan in terms of combining psywar, intelligence and combat operations. More than 400 political prisoners remain incarcerated, many of whom have been unjustly detained without trial for several years now.

The Filipino people are becoming increasingly restive over the unfulfilled promises of Duterte. They demand national sovereignty, national industrialization, genuine land reform, an end to bureaucratic corruption and widespread poverty and oppression. Workers are bound to rise up in big numbers to demand an end to contractualization and

clamor for wage increases and an end to wage regionalization and other schemes to pull down wages. Peasant mass struggles are erupting across the country asserting their right to own land and plant food crops ("bungkalan" movement), demanding just farmgate prices of their produce, opposing usury and the oppressive microfinancing banks and resisting militarization of their communities. The urban poor masses have intensified their struggle against privatized housing with the recent occupation of more than 5,000 idle housing units in Bulacan. The youth and students are demanding an end to the K-to-12 program and against rising costs of education.

The steady advance of the Filipino people's struggles amid worsening crisis serves as the stark backdrop of the NDFP-GRP peace negotiations. These have steadily moved forward since its resumption in August last year.

In negotiating with the GRP, the NDFP acts in behalf of the People's Democratic Government to represent the interests of the broad masses of workers and peasants, petty and national bourgeoisie. The GRP, on the other hand, represents the interests of the ruling classes of big bourgeois compradors and big landlord class despite the Duterte regime's lip service to serving the people's interest. It is also fully aware that it is incapable of destroying the armed revolution and is in a sense stalemated with it.

In engaging in peace negotiations, the GRP and the NDFP have mutually agreed to address the root causes of the armed conflict in order to realize a just and lasting peace. The Duterte government and the NDFP currently have the historic opportunity of forging substantive agreements on socio-economic and political and constitutional reforms. The GRP and NDFP have agreed to accelerate negotiations. The NDFP seeks to forge these agreements within the year.

In the first and second rounds in Oslo, the Parties agreed to accelerate peace negotiations with the objective of reaching agreements on the three remaining substantive agenda and an agreement to facilitate this by issuing reciprocal interim ceasefires.

The third round of peace talks held in Rome, Italy on the third week of January, saw marked progress in the initial discussion to unify the exchanged drafts on the CASER, with the agreement to constitute bilateral teams for the purpose. The panels also agreed to reconstruct the list of JASIG holders. The NDFP has expressed willingness to co-found with the Duterte regime a federal government, with the clear aim of pushing for particular constitutional reforms that uphold people's democracy.

On the other hand, the Duterte regime has failed to fulfill many of the promises it made during the early period of peace negotiations, in particular, the amnesty and release of all political prisoners. He has also gave the AFP orders to forward-deploy forces in around 500 barrios nationwide to conduct psy-war, intelligence, suppression activities against the people and combat operations against the NPA.

NPA units carried out evasive maneuvers to prevent armed skirmishes with the AFP. For several months, the Party and NPA called on the Duterte regime to pull back its forces from the barrios, to no avail.

These factors compelled the Party leadership and NPA command to terminate their ceasefire declaration last February 10. The Duterte regime responded by terminating its own ceasefire declaration, ending peace negotiations altogether and declaring an all-out war against the revolutionary forces.

Facing widespread criticism, the Duterte regime was compelled to open backchannel talks with the NDFP and agree to the continuation of scheduled peace talks and rein-

statement of previous terms, including assurances to NDFP consultant and negotiators, a promise to release around 24 political prisoners, including three previously convicted, and extend the bail for the released consultants.

In line with the March 11 Joint Statement, the Party leadership and NPA national command has issued a declaration to restore the interim ceasefire, encouraged by efforts to settle through negotiations the outstanding issues which led to the termination of the previous declaration and fully conscious of the need for the people's army to actively defend the people.

While willing to engage the Duterte regime in peace negotiations and forge agreements to serve the interests of the Filipino people, the revolutionary forces are also keenly aware of the dangers of pacification especially as a result of a prolonged ceasefire without substantial gains for the Filipino people.

Aware of the prevailing contradictions arising from the multipolar world and parallel schisms within the ruling classes and ruling clique, the revolutionary forces are willing to let the Duterte regime unfold and bare itself through peace negotiations whether or not it is a stark running dog of the US imperialists.

Inspired by the Party's Second Congress, all revolutionary forces are prepared to carry forward the people's democratic revolution and bring the people's war to a new and higher stage. At the same time, they are prepared for the possibility of significant progress in the forging of agreements on social, economic and political and constitutional reforms in the course of the peace negotiations as well as for the adverse reaction of the US imperialists and the local reactionaries to such reforms.

However, as long as the status quo persists, the Party must persevere along the general line of people's democratic revolution thru

protracted people's war by waging revolutionary armed struggle, building the revolutionary mass organizations and the organs of political power, strengthening and expanding the Party and leading the people in waging militant mass struggles.

The people's war is steadily advancing

The worsening oppressive and exploitative conditions which the Filipino people are subjected to compel them to wage revolutionary armed struggle. This addresses the central revolutionary task of overthrowing the armed reactionary state of the ruling classes and establish the people's democratic government under proletarian leadership.

After 48 years of waging revolutionary armed struggle through protracted people's war, the New People's Army has achieved great victories and accumulated profound lessons on waging people's war. Under Party leadership, the NPA has succeeded in advancing the people's war by waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare on an ever widening and deepening mass base.

The NPA has launched tactical offensives against the weak points of the enemy, adeptly employing tactics of concentration and dispersal and relying on the support of the masses. It has conducted attritive actions at the expense of the enemy to serve the main thrust of conducting annihilative actions, in order to seize weapons and weaken the reactionary armed forces.

The NPA has drawn strength from widespread and deep-going support of the peasant masses and minority peoples by carrying out widespread anti-feudal campaigns along the minimum and maximum program of land reform of the people's government and upholding the right to self-determination and defending the people's ancestral land against economic and environ-

mental plunder. It has also inspired the broad masses of workers, educated youth and intellectuals, the urban poor semiproletariat, women, professionals, church people and other democratic sectors to participate in revolutionary work and join the armed struggle.

The NPA has been the principal force in the Party's effort to conduct revolutionary mass work among the peasant masses and minority people, build the revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, women, youth, children, cultural activists and people's militias and establish the organs of political power. While principally serving as a fighting force, it has also served as a force for production and cultural revolution.

In waging people's war, the Party and NPA is concerned with the question of advancing from one phase to the higher phase of the strategic defensive, and from the current strategic defensive stage to the next stage of strategic stalemate.

At the beginning, the Party had a mass base of 80,000 people and organized the NPA with only 9 automatic rifles and 26 inferior firearms in Central Luzon in 1969 to an army with squads and platoons with more than 200 high-powered rifles in 1971.

When the enemy deployed 5,000 troops and police under Task Force Lawin, the Party leadership shifted to Isabela to establish its headquarters and training center for cadres and Red commanders for nationwide deployment. By 1972, the seed cadres of the Party and the NPA had spread to ten regions of the country, including Ilocos-Cordillera, Southern Luzon the Visayas and Mindanao.

The NPA grew to three companies with high-powered rifles augmented by local guerrilla units. It spread to most provinces of Cagayan Valley. Early on, the enemy reacted with Task Force Saranay. But the mistake of the re-

gional Party leadership was that it overstayed with two companies from 1972 to 1976 in the Isabela forest region despite the evacuation of the local population.

From the outset of Martial Law in 1972 to the mid-1980s, the NPA expanded across the nation, building guerrilla fronts in different regions. Guerrilla warfare achieved nationwide spread by the early 1980s. Combined with intensifying economic and political crisis of the US-Marcos dictatorship, widespread guerrilla warfare resulted in the rapid expansion and growth of the NPA, of guerrilla fronts and the revolutionary armed struggle in general.

In the early 1980s, the Party leadership made the strategic mistake of attempting to leap from the middle phase of the strategic defensive to an illusory strategic counter-offensive stage where it was imagined that it could leap over the advanced phase of the strategic defensive and strategic stalemate.

The NPA continued to grow and develop, but was drawn to premature regularization where it built its vertical forces with a disproportionately small horizontal force. Towards the end of the 1980s, it suffered great losses as a result of self-constriction due to neglect of mass work and the mass base and launching tactical offensives against hard targets, urban basing of higher commands and so on. This was combined with ill-conceived and artificial attempts at insurrection in cities and town centers by playing with the spontaneous consciousness of the masses and deploying armed units in the urban areas.

The Party launched the Second Great Rectification Movement in 1992 to undertake comprehensive rectification and address the problems brought about by premature regularization and urban insurrectionism. The Party reaffirmed such basic principles in carrying out protracted people's war and guer-

rilla warfare. The NPA redeployed its forces to cover lost ground in mass work, rebuild the mass organizations, expand to new guerrilla territories, wage agrarian revolution and build the Party and local organs of political power.

In the effort to cover ground, the NPA tended to overstretch by deploying smaller squads of Red fighters. This made NPA units vulnerable to enemy attacks and induced passivity and conservatism.

In the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee in 2002, the Party called on the NPA to overcome the problem of conservatism. It commanded the NPA to build platoons as the basic formation to raise its capacity to engage the enemy and launch tactical offensives; and to set up front, provincial and regional centers of gravity composed of 20-30 percent of total number of guerrilla forces.

The 11th Plenum aimed to build a significant number of company-sized fronts alongside a bigger number of undersized-company fronts that can easily develop into company-sized fronts in every region.

The 11th Plenum set to meet the targets in a medium-term timetable. It called for waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare and building contiguous company-sized guerrilla fronts and building levels of command at the front, provincial and regional levels with the Party central leadership serving as the Military Commission. It aimed to achieve nationwide growth of the NPA and advance of the people's war.

The NPA registered growth in 2002 to 2006 surpassing the historical high achieved in 1987. There was, however, different degrees of implementation of the 11th Plenum's resolution, including those pertaining to the NPA force structure. Tactical offensives were not commensurate to the growth. There was overdispersal and one-sided stress on mass work. It was able to

conduct a nationwide campaign of tactical offensives in 2005 and 2006 but with differing results in different regions.

The growth and strength of the NPA was slowly eroded by problems in platoon building, front building, Party leadership at different levels, overdispersal, civilianization and military conservatism. Units of the NPA were drawn to militia-ism and roving rebel tactics (armed propaganda teams and squads against local tyrants and bad elements) and different degrees of civilianization. As a result, there was a slow decline around 2006-2009. This was aggravated by the all-out division-sized enemy campaigns across the country (Oplan Bantay Laya I and II), focused on certain regions at times.

The NPA registered overall slow and imbalanced growth from 2009 onwards. On the one hand, there was the persistent problem of overdispersal and military conservatism, causing the NPA to become passive and unable to exercise initiative. On the other hand, the NPA and Party leadership in other regions were able to seize the initiative, direct military campaigns at the regional and subregional levels and fully employ the concentrated strength and spread of NPA platoons and companies to wage widespread and intensive guerrilla warfare, forcing the enemy to spread its forces and deny it of any single target. The growth of the NPA in these regions more than compensated the stagnation or slow decline of the NPA in other regions.

In some Mindanao regions, the NPA was able to exercise initiative on the basis of their success in building platoons, maintaining vertical forces (companies and undersized companies) and building subregional areas of contiguous guerrilla fronts. Despite having deployed large number of troops against the NPA, the AFP has been unable to stem the growth of the NPA in the Eastern Mindanao re-

gions.

In mid-2016, the Political Bureau (Politburo) of the Central Committee took stock of the situation and determined the need to overcome the outstanding problem of military conservatism. Drawing lessons from the positive experience of advancing revolutionary armed struggle in some regions in recent years, the Politburo came up with resolutions to enable and raise the capacity of the NPA to more actively launch tactical offensives on a nationwide scale and conduct military campaigns to counter and frustrate the enemy's plans.

The Politburo resolved for the NPA to take full initiative in waging people's war at the national and regional levels, boldly expand the number of Red fighters, build contiguous areas of several fronts, further increase the number of guerrilla fronts, carry out more frequent tactical offensives, wage agrarian revolution and mobilize the peasant masses in an ever widening scale and expand and consolidate the mass base by building the organs of political power at the municipal and higher levels.

At around the same time, the NDFP and Party leadership agreed to forge a ceasefire with the Duterte regime, keenly aware that contradictions arising from the global capitalist crisis and domestic ruling system can potentially create the conditions for a possible alliance. For close to six months, from August 28, 2016 to February 10, 2017, the Party ordered the NPA to cease and desist from carrying out offensives campaigns and operations against the uniformed armed personnel of the AFP and PNP, in compliance with the agreement forged by the NDFP and GRP in the first round of peace talks.

At the same time, the Party is ever conscious that a ceasefire of a considerable period without significant benefit for the people and their revolutionary cause is poten-

tially disadvantageous to the NPA, especially at a time that it seeks to take full initiative in waging guerrilla warfare and overcome the debilitating effect of conservatism.

In the interest of keeping the ceasefire, the NPA carried out evasive maneuvers in order to prevent armed skirmishes with the AFP which forward-deployed its armed units to conduct intelligence, psywar, armed suppression and intimidation to destroy the people's organizations, as well as combat strike operations against the NPA.

After near and actual armed skirmishes, especially in January, the Party and NPA decided to terminate the unilateral ceasefire declaration on February 10. The Duterte regime responded with typical rashness, declared the termination altogether of peace negotiations with the NDFP, and the re-arrest of NDF consultants. The AFP declared an all-out war, stirring up protests and widespread clamor for the Duterte regime to continue peace talks with the NDFP.

The agreement to reinstate a ceasefire prior to the April 2-6 4th round of peace negotiations will be fully supported by the NPA. At the same time, it must remain ever conscious of the need to exercise its initiative in defending the people against the psywar, intelligence, armed suppression and combat operations being carried out by the armed units of the AFP in the barrios.

The NPA and all revolutionary forces must take utmost political initiative during the ceasefire in order to rapidly organize the peasant masses in new and old areas, carry out anti-feudal struggles and agrarian revolution, while strengthening itself through trainings, mass recruitment, as well as cultural and educational work among them.

Even as the Party seeks to expand and strengthen the NPA, the guerrilla fronts and the armed struggle in a comprehensive and

all-sided manner, it is open to the possibility of peace negotiations leading to a substantive agreement and an alliance of all positive forces against US imperialism and its local running dogs. At the same time, it is ready for the opposite.

Tasks for strengthening the NPA and advancing the people's war

The current situation of the NPA was reported and evaluated by the 1st plenum of the Central Committee under the Second Congress. The CC took note of the substantial uptick in the number of Red fighters since mid-2016 guided and inspired by the resolutions of the Politburo.

The NPA has since carried out the necessary reorganization and training of officers and fighters. It has opened new guerrilla fronts and has formed new platoons and companies. It has strengthened its various levels of commands.

The First Plenum of the Central Committee established its Military Commission and formed and convened the National Operations Command (NOC) of the NPA. The NOC shall serve as the national center of gravity of the NPA and shall direct the people's army in waging and advancing the people's war across the entire country.

The First Plenum has set forth the tasks for accelerating the fulfillment of the tasks to advance from the middle phase to the advanced phase of the strategic defensive in order to move closer to the threshold of the strategic stalemate.

The Central Committee commands the NPA to fulfill the following tasks:

1. Carry out extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare on an ever widening and deepening mass base and towards developing full-scale guerrilla warfare. Develop the capacity and structure of the people's army to carry out synchronized and coordinated military campaigns and operations at the subregional, regional and national level.

Ensure the building of vertical forces in the regional and subregional levels to serve as centers of gravity of guerrilla fronts in military work as well as carrying out agrarian revolution and political work. The NPA front command must have a minimum strength of a company with a platoon as center of gravity. Local guerrilla platoons serving as headquarters of Party section committees covering a municipality or cluster of barrios must be built at an accelerated pace.

Build the operational commands of the NPA from the national down to the regional, subregional (provincial) and front levels. Seize the initiative and carry out military campaigns from time to time at the regional and national levels.

2. Accelerate the recruitment of armed personnel in all regions across the entire archipelago. Recruit large numbers from the educated youth and working class to become cadres and political officers in the New People's Army. Implement the three level military course in order to upgrade the training of Red commanders and fighters. The regional operational commands (ROCs) must immediately resolve the problems of recruitment and strengthening the NPA.

Increase the NPA's rifle strength by developing its tactics in warfare to enable it to seize weapons from enemy operating troops, as well as from armories of Army units, paramilitaries, private armies, security forces and so on.

3. Resolve the gross imbalance in growth and strength of NPA forces by carrying out a campaign to rectify errors to spur a dramatic increase in the NPA strength in Luzon and Visayas.

Regions with relatively more experienced and successful cadres and commanders and with more arms can train those from the weaker regions or be ready to be redeployed there permanently or for a more definite tour of duty of at least one year.

Combat military conservatism, militia-ism and civilianization in the people's army. The NPA in Mindanao must continue the steady increase in its strength. Improve strategic and tactical military leadership especially at the national and regional levels, firmly guided by the principle of centralized strategic command and decentralized operations.

4. Increase several times over the number of people's militia units in all barrios where there are Party branches, and build local guerilla units at the municipal or section levels where there are Party section committees. Carry out intensive political and military training among them and release their revolutionary energy and enthusiasm to wage people's war at the local level and launch tactical offensives against the enemy forces.

5. Consolidate all guerrilla fronts and build new ones. Develop guerrilla war theaters by raising the capacity of NPA guerrilla fronts to coordinate and utilize the interplay of its forces.

Develop wider contiguous areas of subregions with interconnected 3-5 fronts or interconnected subregional areas. Isolated fronts with no adjacent or adjoining front or separated with great distance from each other should be a transitory or temporary situation.

Raise the level of organization of revolutionary mass organizations and organs of political power at the inter-barrio, municipal, district and provincial levels in order to carry-out the functions of the people's democratic government and conduct war mobilization.

6. Carry out the revolutionary

land reform program more intensively and on an ever widening scale. Undertake antifeudal campaigns at inter-barrio or higher levels. Carry out the confiscation of lands grabbed by the ruling classes of landlords, compradors and their foreign masters and carry out free land distribution to the peasant masses where these are possible and defensible.

Improve the means and technique of production to increase agricultural yield and develop earnest cash sources. Support programs which serve the social needs of the peasant and national minority communities including their need for elementary and secondary schools, people's clinics, sources of potable water, electricity, housing, and so on.

7. Help build the Party, ideologically, politically and organizationally, within the people's army and among the masses. Carry out intensive political education among the Red commanders and fighters to raise their revolutionary consciousness, steel their will to fight and strengthen their absolute devotion to serving the people and the revolutionary cause.

8. Persevere in carrying out the policies of the people's democratic government to dismantle criminal syndicates, especially drug traffickers and kidnap-for-ransom groups, private armies of warlords and local tyrants and repressive security forces of mining and plantation companies. Enforce policies with regard the protection of the environment, as well as those covering the operations of business and economic ventures to ensure the well-being of the people.

9. Frustrate Oplan Kapayapaan and the pacification and surrender campaign of the Duterte regime. Actively oppose the enemy's campaigns of military suppression. Punish the fascist and criminal perpetrators of extrajudicial killings, illegal arrests and detentions, aerial bombardments, shelling, forcible evacuations and hamletting, occupation of schools, barangay halls, day care centers and other civilian structures.

10. Support the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. Rally the people to push for accelerated peace talks and for the forging of the CASER and CAPCR within the year. Oppose the line of merely ending the armed conflict by means of a prolonged ceasefire and the surrender of revolutionary forces without agreements on the necessary substantive socio-economic and political reforms.

While a unilateral or bilateral ceasefire is in effect, the NPA must continue to carry out its duties as defined by the people's democratic government to defend the peace and protect the people. It must militantly undertake as well active defense against units of the reactionary armed forces that carry out offensive combat operations against the NPA and armed oppression against the people.

Prepare for the possibility of GRP-NDFP peace negotiations leading to agreements on substantive social, economic and political reforms and possible alliance or the opposite. Be prepared to serve as implementors of land reform and other programs. Whatever the outcome, NPA Red fighters must never lose their grip on their weapons. **AB**