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THE PRESIDENT, THE SENATE AND THE PAID MOB

(The following article first appeared in "Kabayan", the newsletter of Kabalikat Inc. It is reprinted with permission and translated by the author. Since then, on Oct 7 the Senate, by a vote of 15 to 8, reached agreement with Aquino for a 3-year withdrawal. Ed.)

Pro-Bases Senators must have sweated beads bigger than the size of corn kernels when 12 of their colleagues opposed the retention of the US Military Bases Treaty.

And Mrs. Aquino, an uncontrollably staunch supporter of retention, might have raised her prominent eyebrows as the Senate president and presidential aspirant, Jovito Salonga, let himself be counted with the opposition even if the decision could entail what is described as "political extinction."

The following morning, all the national dailies had the expected feast day and coined "Magnificent Dozen" as the name for the 12 politically undaunted Senators who stood their ground against all vicious odds.

Though it is common knowledge that each of the twelve belongs to a different political spectrum and each has his own rationale for voting "no", the fact that they've kicked out the major representation of US aggression in the country is enough reason to feel triumphant - even if those who are clinging to America's pants resurrected the already prostituted Paid Mob Power.

In her all-time-high desperation, the alarmed Mrs. Aquino decided to hold a "referendum" so as to be "assured" that the 12 dissenting Senators would have second thoughts.



AQUINO



ENRILE



ESTRADA



GUINGONA



LAUREL



MACEDA



MERCADO



PIMENTEL



SAGUISAG



SALONGA



TANADA



ZIGA

PDI Photos

Unfortunately for her, the proposition of a referendum is unwelcome. Mainly because it would cost millions of the much needed

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peso for disaster rehabilitation and yes, it's unconstitutional. She knows that the Senate, a people-elected body, is responsible for any ratifications regarding treaties.

Although it is true that the country will lose US\$203 million in bases rental and another \$556 million in revenues of "businesses" in their surrounding areas, but whatever the amount, as critics observe, "only a nation that had lost its pride and dignity would have accepted it."

Besides, even a representative of the US Congress reviewing the military budget reiterated that, "with the incredibly changed world situation, let's say sayonara to the Philippines." And, no other than Senate president Salonga (though presidential aspirant) said, "to be truly free and independent, a nation must sacrifice and suffer."

We can vividly remember in 1986, Mrs. Aquino, then campaigning, was strongly against the bases retention because they supported the dictatorial regime of the late Mr. Marcos. But like a chameleon, Aquino played safe in declaring, "I'm keeping my options open until 1991." Now that the time has come, we know what she opts for.

With what is unfavorably happening to the Pros, Mrs. Aquino's lieutenants began to reveal the loopholes she overlooked.

They've accused Aquino as "lacking of foresight", (which she is usually accused of), as she endorsed 21 of the 23 Senators without checking their stand on the bases issue. Another wrong choice, according to them, is Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus, head of the Philippine negotiating panel who always calls to "slay the father image" - an obvious verbal attack on the Americans.

Given the situation and inadequate remarks from the "pants clingers", the least argument they can concoct is the dilapidation of Philippine-American friendship (read: no base, no aid).

With an unbalanced and deceitful relationship, the Philippines would rather have no friend at all.



From left to right: Ruth Mercado (10-17 yrs), Anita Alberca (17-20 yrs), Esterlita Villalongja (12-18 yrs). Women's Correctional Center, Metro Manila

Dear Friends, Greetings!

The Gabriela Commission on Women's Human Rights would like to ask your support for women political prisoners and political detainees. We call this campaign "ADOPT A WOMAN POLITICAL PRISONER." Our purpose is to solicit cash and material donations to meet their needs in the detention centers and those of their families, especially the children who are also affected by their parents' conditions.

There are 34 women political prisoners languishing in prisons and detention centers in the country. Some of them have been detained for over three years, while most were arrested in 1989. Four have already been sentenced to 6-18 years of imprisonment. Ten also have husbands in detention, one woman is pregnant and two are with their children. There are also children in jail with their mother or parents since no one can care for them at home.

These imprisoned women suffer not only isolation from society but more so the pain of being separated from their families. They are also affected by the insufficient and non-nutritious food rations, inadequate medical services and wretched physical facilities. Worse, they suffer sexual intimidation and harassment while in detention and the daily threat of sexual assault from their jailers. In fact, some are survivors of rape or sexual molestation.

ADOPT A WOMAN POLITICAL PRISONER

Please direct your support to the Gabriela Commission on Women's Human Rights, Security Bank and Trust Company Account No: 2700-0055-44 Greenhills, Metro Manila.

Hilda Narciso, Co-Director, GCWHR,
PO Box 4386, Manila 2800, Philippines.

QUEENSLAND P.A.S.G. HAS A FOLDER OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND DETAILS OF SOME OF THE CASES. PLEASE MAKE CONTACT IF YOU CAN HELP. THESE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE WOMEN'S STORIES:

RUTH MERCADO: Ruth (31) is a community development worker from Cebu City. Her husband works in a factory. They have a two-year old daughter now in the care of Ruth's parents.

Ruth was arrested with her househelper and a guest at her residence in Mandaue City on October 13, 1988. At the time of her arrest, she was recuperating from the birth of her daughter.

She was convicted of subversion and sentenced to 10 to 17 years.

ESTERLITA VILLALONGJA: Esterlita is 22 years old from Butuan City. Her parents are peasants. Her husband is a miner.

She was arrested on April 29, 1988 when her house was raided. She was charged with illegal possession of firearms and sentenced to 12 - 18 years.



Rosa Cambel - Detained at Iloilo City

MARIA AND ERASMO VITUALLA: On 26 Oct 1990 Maria and Erasmo and guests were arrested on their wedding day in Lapu-lapu City. They weave and sell baskets. The couple are charged with robbery with homicide and frustrated murder. Born in January, their baby is in jail with them. Maria's bail has been set at 20,000 pesos.



CHERRY MENDOZA: Cherry is 22 years old. She became a factory worker in the Bataan Export Processing Zone and then joined a youth organization. On December 3 last year, she was arrested without warrant. Cherry is charged with subversion. She was released March 19, 1991 on bail of ten thousand pesos.

Cherry was raped and tortured by her captors. She wishes to pursue a case against the rapists and GCWHR and FLAG lawyers are assisting her.

ANITA ALBERCA: Anita was born in 1966 in Bohol. She is from a peasant family. Her husband is a farmer. They have a one-year old child.

Anita is a member of a peasant organization. She was arrested on May 17, 1989 together with her husband and sister who were later released. Anita was charged with murder and sentenced to 17 - 20 years imprisonment.

ROSA CABEL: 32 year old Rosa is a mat weaver from Leon, Iloilo.

She was arrested on September 27, 1990 in Tigbauan, Iloilo. The house where she was staying was raided by the 326th PC company and SOT team. They opened fire at the house and Rosa was struck in the arm by a bullet.

She was charged with rebellion and illegal possession of firearms and ammunition. Until now she has not been arraigned.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE FESTIVAL IN THE PHILIPPINES DECLARATION

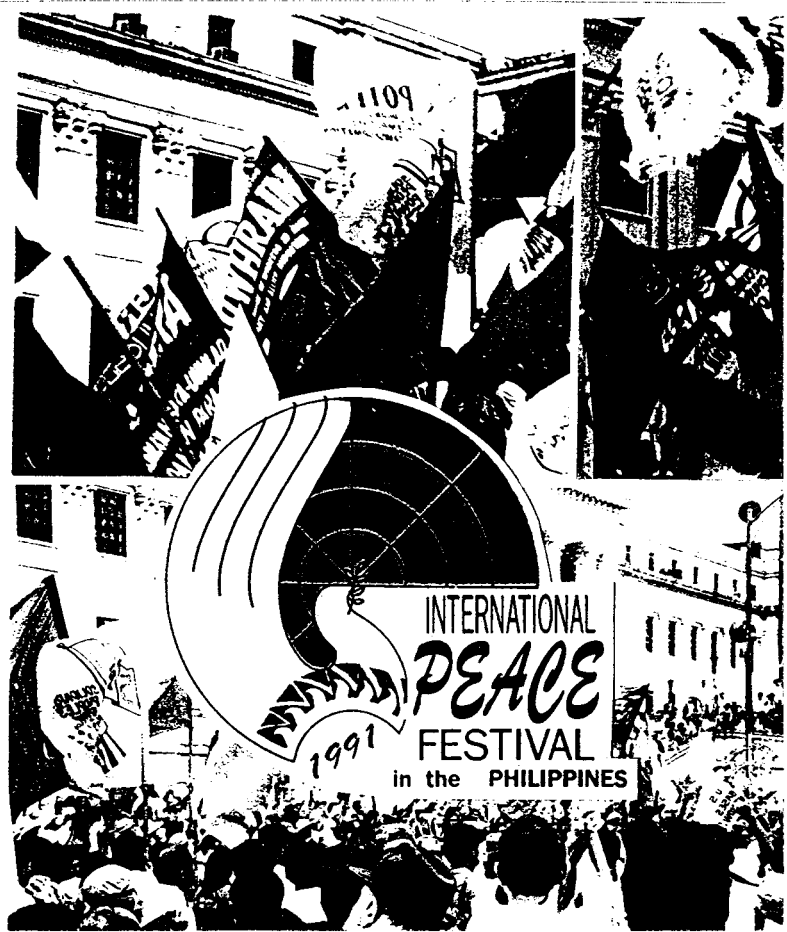
LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA, 14 SEPTEMBER 1991

We the participants and delegates of the International Peace Festival in the Philippines 1991, believing in a peoples' right to sovereignty and self-determination and having witnessed the Filipino people's unprecedented rejection of the United States' military bases, are fully cognizant of the world problems of peace and threats to the international community of peoples and nations.

We trust the Filipino people have enough courage, wisdom and resources to overcome the difficulties they may face as the U.S. attempts to hold on to its military bases in the Philippines.

Recent developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe countries highlight the changing configurations in the alignment of nations. This so-called "new world order" does not offer the genuine peace and security that we all aspire for, but a more systematic plunder of the world's resources, particularly in the Third World.

This "world order" will usher in a more intensified rivalry among the major capitalist powers, which will mean intensification of wars such as "theater war",



SEPT 16, 1991 -- Some 75,000 anti-bases demonstrators r. after the third reading was announced as a resounding "NO!".

drug wars and "low intensity conflict" in the Third World. We denounce this world order and the powers that perpetuate this unjust order.

The U.S. is escalating its hostile interventionist policy against nations and their progressive leaders in countries such as Cuba, Libya, and north Korea by blatantly disseminating threats of military aggression.

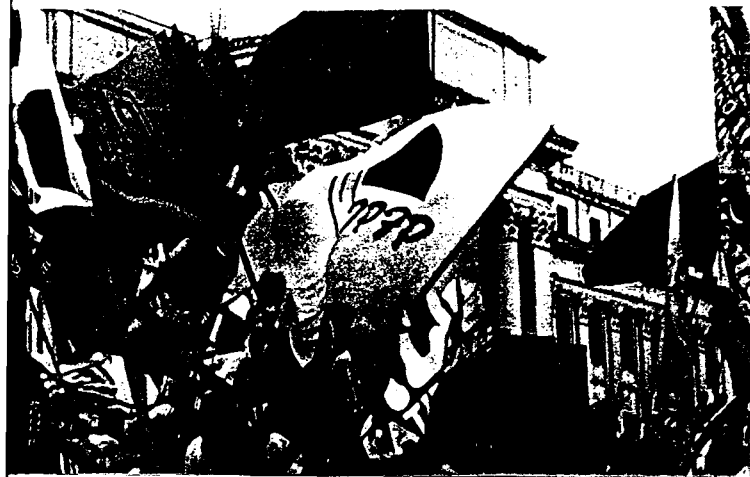
In spite of severe obstacles of foreign intervention and oppression, the people's movements for self-determination and peace everywhere are gaining strength by shedding the shackles of the oppressed and untruthful past and by embracing the true culture and history of the people.

Therefore, we celebrate the victories of progressive forces in countries that are pursuing democratic and socialist paths; as well as popular movements for self-determination and national liberation.

We reaffirm our commitment to the individual's indivisible right of action against repressive and unjust political

STRENGTHEN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY and ACTION for WORLD PEACE





...llied outside the Senate. At 5.30 pm the result of the vote

and economic systems; and demand the release of all political prisoners.

We demand arms-exporting governments to immediately desist from selling and dispersing weapons of destruction everywhere, especially the Third World.

We call on all peoples of the world to demand that the U.S. and its allies lift the embargo imposed on Iraq's children and elderly who need food and vital medicines.

We draw attention to the plight of the indigenous peoples' struggle for genuine sovereignty and self-determination.

We call on our friends and progressive movements in countries such as the U.S., Japan and Western Europe which are at the forefront of global economic exploitation and intervention, to continue their important work and further strengthen efforts at home; and to form a greater solidarity with the peoples of the Third World.

We are proud to have achieved the objectives of the IPFP 1991 by contribut-

ing to the strengthening of the movements, organizations and individuals working for peace and self-determination; by promoting a better understanding of the Philippine struggle for sovereignty and genuine democracy; by sharing experiences and strategies of peoples' struggles; and forging solidarity and strengthening networking.

We declare:

TO STRENGTHEN THE GLOBAL UNITED PEACE FRONT AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION INFLICTED UPON THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD!

TO UNITE AND FIGHT IMPERIALISM AND ALL FORMS OF HEGEMONY!

TO BRING DOWN ALL BARRIERS AND THREATS TO WORLD PEACE - WITH OUR OWN GOVERNMENTS, DESPITE OUR OWN GOVERNMENTS OR, IF NEED BE, BY THE SHEER POWER OF THE PEOPLE'S RESOLUTE WILL.

"With the votes of 12 Senators, the nation cast away the yolk of an unequal relationship that kept it weak and dependent on its old colonial masters."
excerpt from the editorial of Philippine Daily Inquirer 17 Sept 1991



WHAT DOES IT COST TO GO TO WAR?

Extracted from 1989 BAYAN HUMAN RIGHTS RESOURCE KIT II
Loretta Ann P. Rosales, Director, Political Affairs Commission, March 1989

Upon the collapse of peace talks in February 1987, Pres. Aquino declared total war as a state policy against insurgency. Since then:

- o More than 305 bombs have been dropped by US-supplied gunships (from US base rentals) aided by ground operations on peasant and tribal communities nationwide (Manila Chronicle, 10 Oct. 1988);

- o P20.8 billion of the 1989 national budget goes to the war effort (Defense Budget, Dept. of Budget & Management);

Since the declaration of total war, countless lives have been lost and displaced. For 1988 alone, 30,922 families, or an estimated 200,000 individuals (Int'l Committee of the Red Cross for 1987 & '88), many of them children, have been uprooted, refugees in 35 (plus one city) of 73 provinces throughout the country; while hundreds of thousands of pesos worth of land and property have been destroyed.

In the years 1986-1988, an estimated 209,730 children have been counted as victims of the government's counter-insurgency program covering the entire country. They have been classified as:

- o those who have been forced to evacuate to refugee camps;
- o those whose parents were killed during military operations;
- o those who have been murdered and wounded through massacres;
- o those who have been arrested, tortured and detained;
- o those who now suffer from malaria/dysentery and other diseases;
- o and those who are victims of emotional/psychological stress from the trauma and effects of total war on broken families and destroyed communities. (GABRIELA Commission on Children and Family)

How much taxpayers' money goes to one major military operation? In the summer of 1987 the Aquino administration spent no less than P50 million in a counterinsurgency operation called

OPLAN RED BUSTER III in northern Luzon that lasted for 2 months. Some of the expenses incurred were the following:

Personnel costs equaled P3,450,000 (2,300 troopers x P50/day - a total of 8,500 men were reported for the entire operation); cost of ammunition used P9,388,000; fuel expenses P3,888,000. (EMJP Statement, Daily Inquirer, Oct 29, 1987; Medical Action Group Inc. magazine, Vol.IV No.4, Oct-Dec, 1987; "No Home and No Hope", peace poster sponsored by a consortium of multi-sectoral organizations.)

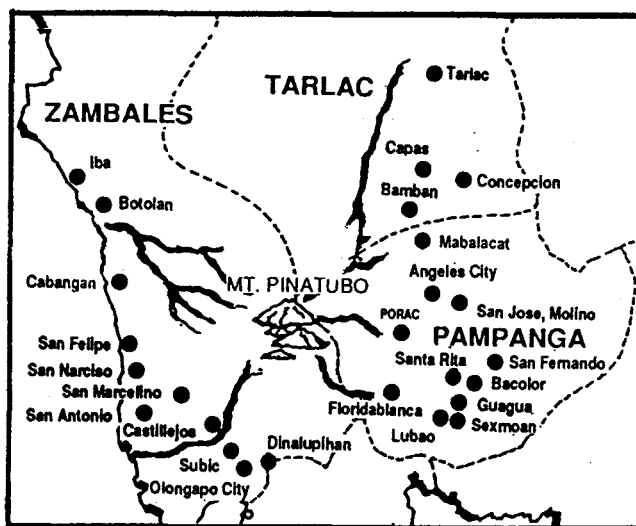
DUTCH GOV'T TURNS OFF AID TO RP

The Dutch government announced Tuesday it has struck the Philippines off its development aid budget because it does not approve of the Philippine policy on human rights.

Development Minister Jan Pronk said this following a decision by the Dutch government to slash its development aid budget by \$100 million for the first time since it started development cooperation over 30 years ago.

Other countries also stricken off the Dutch aid list were Sudan and Sri Lanka. Malaya 19 September 1991

MT. PINATUBO RISK AREAS



MAP: Philippine Daily Inquirer

PEACEFEST WELCOMES NDF UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE

SENATOR TELLS DELEGATES "TREATY IS DEAD"

Exactly one week before the historic rejection by the Philippine Senate of the US Bases Treaty, Senator Wigberto E. Tañada, in a statement to the International Peace Festival in the Philippines, Los Baños, September 9, 1991, told delegates that the Philippine Senate had received another letter from the National Democratic Front (NDF) reiterating the NDF's offer to declare a unilateral ceasefire "when the trend is clear that the Senate would reject the Treaty."

Delegates heard a quote from the letter which said:-

"The prospects of peace can be an impetus for unifying the nation towards building a new society from the ashes of civil war. Certainly, the rejection of the Treaty provides a favorable atmosphere in which the Government (GRP) and the NDF can tackle the questions of resolving the roots of the armed conflict towards a just and lasting peace. With the attainment of a just peace based on freedom and democracy, the

nation will be able to devote all its efforts towards overcoming present economic difficulties and adopting decisive steps for the advancement of the nation. The peace factor, therefore, offers much ground for healing, reconstruction and recovery."

Senator Tañada stated, "there is now a clear trend that the Senate will reject the Treaty ... my friends, I believe, this Treaty is dead!"

The Peace Festival warmly supported Tañada's statement that the unilateral ceasefire declared in a newsflash that morning, "is a most welcome development".

Tañada went on to say: "I believe we are capable of building a future different from the past and the present. We cannot remain in the old politics of the old world. We cannot be imprisoned by the past and present prejudices or fears of the past. The fight for peace is a just fight because peace will help decolonize our people."

GUWAT (Dislocation)

15X20 inches in Opaque Water Color
by BOY DOMINGUEZ 1990

Called Negritos or "little negroes" during the Spanish period, the Aetas of Zambales and Pampanga struggle amid the loss of their ancestral lands to two major American military bases and now, to the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo.

LAKAS is the acronym for the Negrito Peoples Alliance of Zambales, as well as meaning "power" in the Aeta language. By May 4, LAKAS was feeding and sheltering over 1,000 people in their evacuation centre. The major eruption one month later, recent floods and flows of lahar have stretched the budgets of local aid agencies to breaking point.

Please send donations to: PACF Aeta Appeal, 1st Floor, 300 Sussex Street, Sydney 2000. Tel: 02 283 3301.





NUKE MEANS DEBT, NUKE MEANS DEATH!

NFO NUCLEAR FREE PHILIPPINES COALITION

JOIN PASG QUEENSLAND OR SUBSCRIBE TO ITS NEWSLETTER

The Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (PASG) Queensland is a broadly-based solidarity group welcoming membership of individuals who support the struggle of the Filipino peoples for independence, freedom and democracy. It brings together people of diverse backgrounds and includes Filipinos and non-Filipinos. PASG QLD has close links with Filipino community organisations in Australia, the Philippines, and the Asia-Pacific region. It receives information on Philippine trade unions, the role of the churches (Christian and Non-Christian), women's groups, peasant organisations, rural conditions, teachers, environmental concerns, and the indigenous peoples in the Philippines. PASG in Queensland can provide resource material, slides and videos as well as speakers.

PASG QLD. aims to generate support in Australia for all Filipino organisations working for genuine democracy, freedom and sovereignty; to end Australian military aid to the Philippines and to oppose all forms of foreign intervention in the affairs of the Filipino peoples.

ATTENTION: PASG Co-ordinator, P.O. Box 174, St. Lucia Qld. 4067.

I would like to: have more information about PASG. make a donation of \$..... for solidarity work.
 join PASG (membership includes a one year subscription to the PASG Newsletter). I enclose payment of \$20.
 receive a one year subscription to the PASG Newsletter. I enclose payment of \$10.

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