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NPA strikes in Panay!

*AFP casualties:
4 dead, 13 wounded*

ILOILO-CITY, July 18 (BMP) -- Fighters of the New People's Army have opened a new front in the nationwide struggle for liberation, engaging government troopers in pitched battles in the mountain regions of Panay.

Reports reaching this city said a captain and three other soldiers were killed and 13 others were wounded in two encounters last June 6 and 9 in Calinog and Bingawan, Iloilo province.

There were also reports of clashes in remote mountain areas but no details could be had immediately.

Earlier, PC commanders had been belittling the liberation movement in the re-

gion, alternately saying it was "under control" and "non-existent".

When they finally realized that peasants in the highlands bordering Iloilo, Capiz, Aklan and Antique were joining the revolutionary movement in large numbers, the PC commanders launched what they called "nip in the bud" operations.

These operations got under way last May 18, with the use of mortars and machine-guns.

The AFP drive was soon taking its toll of non-combatant civilians. On May 30, for instance, three schoolchildren and their teacher were killed when a trooper threw a handgrenade at their schoolhouse in barrio Nenán, Tapaz, Capiz.

The AFP operations are reported to be the most extensive launched in this area since the NPA established a foothold in Panay in 1972. Part of the reactionary force

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were two battalions composed of elements of the PC and army, and of trainees and local policemen.

The NPA was ready for the mercenaries when they got to barrio Camalonggo, Calinog, Iloilo, last June 6. The people's forces reportedly killed two AFP troopers and wounded eight others in a clash that lasted from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The mercenaries were said to have used some of the barrio residents as shields while firing blindly into suspected NPA positions in bamboo groves and sugarcane fields.

In the June 9 clash, in barrio Cincalan, Bingawan town, two other soldiers were reported killed and five others were wounded. The battle took place between 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The AFP troopers used mortars and machineguns in the assault on the barrio, which they suspected to be an NPA base. As a result, two farmers were killed and several others were wounded. Several houses and other properties of the barrio people were destroyed.

In both encounters, the NPA units reportedly were able to slip through the encirclement of enemy troops.

Other reports reaching this city said there had been more encounters in remote mountain areas, but no details were immediately available.

Military sources were tight-lipped, but all sorts of talk could be heard from AFP troopers, including such fearful appraisals as "there are thousands of them (NPAs)", that they all carry high-powered firearms, and that some are led by sharp-shooting women commanders.

Meanwhile, as part of its efforts to suppress and crush the NPA in Panay, the military has been employing harsh measures, including outright terrorism against the people.

All residents 15 years old and above are required to carry residence certificates on their person at all times. Those found without one are detained and beaten up.

As part of the "economic blockade" set up against the NPA, residents of mountain barrios are prohibited from buying more than one ganta of rice and one tin of salt per family at any one time. Purchases of other food items, kerosene and medicine also have been restricted.

Relatives of suspected NPA members in this city and in various municipalities have been detained and tortured. ●

PC rob, massacre Leyte barrio folk

TACLOBAN CITY -- Hundreds of PC soldiers swooped down on a small Leyte barrio, killing at least four adults and several children and burning down the houses of the barrio folk.

The massacre came on the heels of the killing of three PC soldiers by the barrio folk who resisted the abuses and atrocities committed by the soldiers.

The massacre took place on May 22 in barrio Ugisan, MacArthur, Leyte. This was seen as part of an intensified campaign of repression conducted in recent months, especially when preparations were being made for the arrival of the Marcoses for the San Juanico bridge inauguration.

According to reports reaching Balita ng Malayang Pilipinas, the PC soldiers went to Ugisan to look for activists. They were led by a Sgt. Ponce of the Military Intelligence Group (MIG) under the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (ISAFP).

Finding no activists in the place, they committed abuses and atrocities on the barrio folk. The troopers beat up the menfolk, molested the women and took away their chicken and other possessions.

After the killing of the three soldiers, the menfolk left the barrio to avoid further abuses and retaliation from government soldiers.

Learning of the incident, the PC provincial headquarters launched operations in the area, mobilizing 200 to 300 soldiers from various detachments in the province. A command force was also sent after the Ugisan residents.

Failing to get their quarry, the PC soldiers vent their ire on those left behind and started a bloodbath as they indiscriminately gunned down the helpless barrio folk.

Among those killed were a 70-year-old peasant, two women aged 35 and 60, a 22-year-old youth, and several children. A 60-year-old peasant was kicked in the face before he was shot, according to the witnesses.

Before leaving the barrio, the troops seized the chickens, pigs and other posses-

sions of the residents, then burned down their houses.

In the neighboring barrios of Lanawan, Kabukawon, Sta. Isabel, San Vicente and San Antonio, the state troops conducted a "sanitation" drive. They herded the people into six-by-six trucks and brought them to this capital, forcing them to leave untended their crops and animals.

On the road to Tacloban, the PC soldiers fired indiscriminately into the countryside, in a desperate effort to flush out the menfolk of Ugisan. They were heard vowing to take 10 lives for every PC soldier killed.

The PC was also said to have been the source of the rumor that the people of Ugisan were out to kill Marcos.

Mass arrests of suspected activists and their sympathizers have since been stepped up in Leyte. Prisoners were reported to have been thrown into dungeons, tortured and kept without food.

The "witchhunt" in Leyte reached a peak towards the end of June, when dictator Marcos and his wife arrived with their guests in Tacloban for the inauguration of the San Juanico bridge and the celebration of Mrs. Marcos' birthday anniversary last July 2. ●

NEW TAX SLAPPED ON MASS MEDIA

In spite of its claim to have liberalized press regulations, the Marcos martial law regime is tightening its grip on the mass media industry..

A special levy on all mass media establishments has been imposed by the Media Advisory Council to finance its operations. Upon its formation, the MAC was given the authority to exercise overall supervision of the mass media by the dictator Marcos.

Meanwhile, the International Press Institute, meeting at its 22nd assembly last month in Jerusalem, passed a resolution protesting the Marcos regime's suppression of press freedom and categorically stating that "a free press does not now exist" despite declarations by Marcos that censorship has been eased.

The levy was imposed by the MAC on all establishments publishing newspapers, magazines, journals and comicbooks, as well as those operating radio and television stations. Public relations and advertising agencies are also included.

All these establishments are required to secure licenses from the MAC, once every

six months, to enable them to operate.

The MAC levy is equivalent to one per cent. of 10 per cent. of the gross income or the total billings in the case of advertising agencies. In real terms, this means ₱1,000 for every ₱1 million, payable yearly. This is in addition to the usual income and other taxes and fees paid to the government.

While the MAC has started to collect the levy, it has not defined the penalty for non-payment.

In the absence of definite rules and regulations, the MAC compels compliance from the mass media firms through its power to issue and cancel licenses to operate.

Aside from issuing licenses, the MAC exercises other forms of control:

1. It goes over all advertising copies proposed to be inserted in any newspaper, magazine and other printed media and on all copies for commercials on television and over the radio;

2. It passes on brochures prepared by commercial and industrial firms;

3. It reviews motion pictures in coordination with the Board of Censors for Motion Pictures;

4. It checks on the media-related activities of public relations units of private firms and all printing presses; and

5. It issues permits to newsmen, radio and television announcers and commentators prior to their employment in media.

The MAC took over from the Mass Media Council which was formed by Marcos after he declared martial law in September, 1972.

Three other agencies of the Marcos martial regime which continue to impose themselves on media are the military, the Department of Public Information (DPI) and the National Media Production Center. ●



Anti-Marcos drive in US mounts

Filipinos and sympathizers from the US and Third World countries demonstrated in Washington, DC, last June 12 to condemn the Marcos dictatorship, assail the blacklisting of some 150 Filipinos and Filipino-Americans in the US, and demand that US aid to the Marcos regime be stopped.

The demonstration was organized and led by the National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP).

Marcos was roundly condemned by the speakers led by defecting Consul Ruperto Baliso of Los Angeles. The other speakers were Dr. Daniel B. Schirmer, prominent historian from Boston, and Mrs. Ruth Prudente, wife of Dr. Nemesio E. Prudente, former president of the Philippine College of Commerce.

They exhorted Filipinos and Americans to help fight for the restoration of freedom in the Philippines.

Senator Allan Cranston of California and Rep. Bella Abzug of New York sent telegrams to the NCRCLP promising to work for an immediate end to US aid to Marcos.

Related reports from the United States received by Ealita ng Malayang Pilipinas:

1. The Filipino community in Hawaii took out a full-page advertisement in the Honolulu Advertiser calling for a boycott of the Philippine consulate in protest against the suppression of freedom in the homeland.

2. Baliso, who resigned his post as acting Philippine consul general in Los Angeles last May 18, asked the United Nations Human Rights Commission to investigate violations of human rights by the Marcos regime. Baliso has been on a speaking tour in the United States exposing and denouncing the dictatorship at home.

3. Former Senator Paul S. Manglapus has stepped up his anti-Marcos campaign by scheduling speaking engagements in Hawaii and San Francisco where there are sizeable Filipino communities. He started speaking up against the Marcos regime last May 15 in New York.

Participants in the June 12th demonstration had earlier marched to the Philippine embassy before proceeding to Lafayette Square in front of the White House. They carried banners and placards denouncing Marcos as a "new Hitler" and demanding an end to US aid to the dictator. Some of the Filipino demonstrators had come from Bethesda in Maryland, Philadelphia in Pennsylvania and Norfolk in Virginia, and other neighboring cities.

Addressing the assembly, Mrs. Prudente, of the United Methodist Church, said, "It is useless thinking that we can keep quiet...even if our people are suffering tremendously...Sooner or later, we will (have to) come out and do our part -- if we truly love our people." Her husband is being hunted in the Philippines by agents of the dictatorship.

Dr. Schirmer, author of "Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War", denounced what he called "the small, powerful clique in the US who finds it profitable to support a dictatorship like Marcos' and who in doing so brings the American people into another Vietnam". He exhorted the American people to "help the courageous Filipino people in their fight against this monstrosity -- the Marcos dictatorship".

In his message to the NCRCLP on the occasion of the demonstration, Senator Cranston denounced the fact that "America is (once again) following a self-defeating policy by funding a corrupt dictatorship".

Rep. Abzug, for her part, pledged to do "all that is in my power" to help restore the freedoms "that the people of the Philippines so rightly deserve". Abzug is among the prominent American liberals included in the White House secret-list of "Nixon enemies", bared recently in the investigations into the Watergate scandal.

The demonstration was organized by the NCRCLP (East Coast). It was participated in by several activists as well as religious groups such as the American Friends Service Committee. The speaking tour of Baliso on the East Coast is also being sponsored by this arm of the NCRCLP.

Meanwhile, Baliso charged before the UN Human Rights Commission that the Marcos martial law regime has imposed "illegal and arbitrary restrictions on the Filipinos' freedom of movement". He urged an investigation into these violations of human rights.

Manglapus, for his part, advised Filipinos in the US to ignore the Marcos regime's "idle" threats of cancellation of passports, revocation of visas and extradition.

The US, he pointed out, is a signatory to a multilateral convention on political refugees. Article 33 of the convention prohibits the expulsion or return of a refugee to his country or other countries where "his life or freedom would be threatened on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion."