# A CENTURY OF CRIMES AGAINST THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

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Distinguished colleagues and friends:

More than a century before the United States invaded and occupied Iraq, the Philippines had been America's first victim of aggression in Asia, first, as an object of colonization and, second, because of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against the Filipino people. The year was 1898. The Philippine Revolution - launched two years earlier by the Katipunan led by a worker, Andres Bonifacio - was about to end nearly four centuries of Spanish colonial rule when the United States intervened on the pretext of helping the revolutionaries. The invasion by the more barbaric colonial power would be justified by U.S. President William McKinley as an act of "civilizing" the Filipinos and teaching them democracy and self-rule.

The Philippines was of course subjugated by the United States not only because of its raw materials and its potential market for U.S. surplus products but also as a staging point for U.S. imperialist expansion and interventionism in Asia particularly in China. It was the period when the United States, as articulated by Theodore Roosevelt, would become a "Pacific power." Since then, therefore, the Philippines has served not only as part of America's global economic interests but, especially today, as the hub of U.S. military power projection not only in Southeast Asia but also throughout Asia and beyond.

It is in this context that, for the next century, war crimes would be committed by the United States against the Filipino people. By extension, the Philippines also served as America's staging base in pursuit of its policy of aggression against many countries, first, on the pretext of containing "communism" and, later, of fighting "terrorism." Based on U.S. colonial and neo-colonial policies, the Philippines – through the puppet governments propped up by the United States – became America's "unwilling" accomplice in committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in many countries, in violating these countries' independence, self-determination and territorial integrity. I am going to discuss this later.

## 1) The Philippine-American War and the "Pacification Campaign"

Our country, the Philippines, would have been Asia's first republic had not the United States intervened and then conquered and occupied it as a colony. But because the Filipino people rose in arms after centuries of revolts and uprisings against Spanish colonial rule and later sought to defend their victory in preparation for putting up their own republic, they again rose against the U.S. invaders.

Behind the back of the Filipino people and their patriotic and democratic aspirations, the U.S. secretly signed the Treaty of Paris with Spain in December 1898 under which it bought the Philippines for $20 million. By 1899, there were 75,000 U.S. troops in the islands. The U.S. troops - many of them actually mercenaries lured by promises of not only high pay but also war booty and pieces of land – would reach a peak of 126,000 a few years later. In the same year,

the Americans proclaimed the Philippines as an "occupied territory." The Philippine-American War and the subsequent "pacification campaign" broke out for the next six years. By the time the unequal war – some historians call it America's "First Vietnam" – ended, less than six million of the country's 7 million population would live to see their country subjugated again by a foreign power.

There are varying accounts on how many Filipinos were killed by the American forces and they range from 250,000 to 500,000 including women and children. A report by the New York Times in 1901 counted the dead at 600,000 people in Luzon alone. But 1901 was only the start of the so-called "pacification campaign" that lasted until 1913, when American forces pursued a scorched-earth policy in their campaigns in the islands of Luzon, Samar, Panay, as well as in Mindanao where hundreds of thousands of civilians became victims of revengeful genocide or died due to famine, disease and starvation in reconcentration zones. In the province of Albay alone, 300,000 people were "confined" inside garrisons; there were reports of wanton mass slaughters in Mindanao as well as astonishing death rates in what would be known later as Bilibid Prison.[1] An anonymous U.S. congressman during the period said: "They never rebel in Luzon anymore because there isn't anybody left to rebel."

Most recent accounts by independent historians put the death toll at 1.5 million. [2]

After suffering initial defeats under the hands of the revolutionary forces who had resorted to guerilla tactics, the U.S. would launch the "pacification campaign" in an attempt to deny them of the Filipino people's support. The main target of this scorched-earth policy were Filipino civilians reminiscent of the U.S. genocide campaigns against Indians and Cubans and in other territories where whole villages were burned, whole populations were reconcentrated inside hamlets, "water cure" and other torture methods were applied, and carnage became the norm. One account told of the use by U.S. soldiers of "dum-dum" bullets in contravention of the 1899 Hague Convention which, incidentally, the Americans conveniently failed to ratify. [3]

It would be laborious for me to enumerate the various accounts of atrocities as reported by some U.S. newspapers, by the Anti-Imperialist League (one of whose leaders was Mark Twain), U.S. legislative investigations as well as confessions of some American soldiers who became appalled at the sheer genocide committed during the war. I will just sum up these accounts based on the words of at least two American generals who were involved in the Philippine campaign: 1) Gen. William R. Shafter (1900): "My plan would be to disarm the natives of the Philippine Islands, even if we have to kill half of them to do it." 2) Gen. "Howlin' Jake" Smith to his soldiers (1901) in the notorious Samar campaign in Eastern Visayas: "Kill and burn, kill and burn, the more you kill and the more you burn the more you please me…(There's) no time to take prisoners." [4]

"This is not war," one British witness narrated, "it is simply massacre and murderous butchery." Indeed U.S. Senate hearings were held to investigate the atrocities along with a few court martial trials but mere denials and other justifications by generals left those accused mostly scot-free. Asked by a U.S senator whether this was "civilized warfare," Gen. Robert Hughes admitted he ordered the burning of villages and murder of women and children but he reasoned out that his victims were "not civilized." Describing the Filipinos in racist terms as "Chinese half-breeds," President Theodore Roosevelt who followed William McKinley in the White House, insisted that this was "the most glorious war in our nation's history." [6]

U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines was implemented through the imposition of acts and decrees designed to suppress expressions of patriotism and anti-imperialism among the

Filipinos. The mere display of the Philippine flag was prohibited as did "crimes" which the U.S. colonial administrators and their puppet agents considered as acts of treason, insurrection and sedition. To bury nationalist sentiments, U.S. colonial rule enforced an educational system which served to "Americanize" Filipino culture and propagate myths of American democracy. U.S. rule further relied on the support of the resurrected local Philippine elite, mostly landlords, compradors and bureaucrats, who were also trained to become pro-American political leaders.

In the early 1940s, the Filipino people were caught in the inter-imperialist rivalry in the Far East between the United States and Japan. Thousands of Filipinos were conscripted into the war and then integrated into the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). The Philippines suffered one of the most brutal offensives by the Japanese Imperial Army but this was partly because Gen. Douglas McArthur, commander of allied forces in the Far East, chose to use the Philippines as a major military outpost against Japan.

One cannot condone the atrocities committed by Japanese forces during World War II including the use of many Filipino females as "comfort women" but the U.S. should be equally guilty for war crimes and other brutalities that the Filipino people suffered in a war that was not their own choosing – to defend Mother America against an imperialist rival. For another, we should not forget the genocide committed by the U.S. forces against the Japanese people through the use of "fire bombs" which devastated half of the population in many Japanese cities including Tokyo and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In Manila alone between 1944-1945, 100,000 Filipinos died; in Bataan, at least 23,000 died. [7] Manila was the most devastated city next to Warsaw during the war. Including those who died of disease, famine and hunger. The death toll in the Philippines as a result of the U.S.-Japan war could reach a million or more.

## 2) Post-War U.S. Intervention in the Philippines and Crimes Committed

It is perhaps the biggest tragedy of the Filipino people to have experienced two major wars in just 50 years – the "pacification campaign" at the turn of the 20th Century and the U.S.-Japan war of the 1940s. The grant of nominal independence to the Philippines by its colonial ruler on July 4, 1946 did not write off more tragedies that would follow. The Americans made sure that the country would be tied to a neo-colonial relationship thus making its independence superficial and its sovereignty and territorial integrity subordinate to U.S. neo-colonial interests. Aside from ramming through a free trade act that tied the Philippine trade to the U.S., the Americans put into effect the Parity Rights amendment and later, the Laurel-Langley Agreement, that allowed U.S. investors equal rights to exploit the country's natural resources and own businesses, among others. In 1945, the Tydings-McDuffie Act gave the U.S. legal right to maintain military bases and armed forces in the Philippines beyond independence. [8] The Act was followed by the signing of the onerous Military Bases Agreement (MBA) in 1947. The Treaty of General Relations signed on "independence day" itself signified the Americans' withdrawal and surrender of possession, control and sovereignty over the Philippines "except the use of such bases, necessary appurtenances to such bases, and the rights incident thereto." [9]

Aside from the economic stranglehold that the former colonial ruler maintained in the Philippines, the country was preserved as a major springboard for securing U.S. economic and military interests, the projection of U.S. military power and the launching of wars of aggression in the region and elsewhere beginning in the late 1940s. For one, the country was in a strategic location for military and trading transit in the region.

In the light of the Cold War, many top secret memoranda and policy directives and recommendations issued by the U.S. presidency, the state and defense departments as well as by various U.S. congressional committees from the late 1940s until the Marcos years that have become available for research and other related purposes, referred to the importance of maintaining the Philippines as a country friendly to the U.S. and as an important staging base for U.S. security objectives in the Far East. It was clear to those who issued the documents, however, that it was politically imperative for the U.S. to maintain and support a pro-U.S. government (read: puppet government) in the Philippines. [10]

On the pretext of containing communism, the U.S. government became deeply involved in counter-insurgency operations from the late 1940s-1950s. Alarmed by the resurgence of what it claimed the Soviet-communist inspired Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB or the People's Liberation Army) of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP), the U.S. militarily intervened through its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (Jusmag) while preparing for the takeover of the presidency by "American boy" Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay. In the anti-Huk campaign, the U.S.-assisted Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) escalated military operations through the bombing and strafing of suspected Huk targets. At times with clandestine support by the U.S. Air Force from their Clark Airbase in Angeles, Pampanga, Philippine air force planes dropped napalm bombs and undertook incendiary raids against the guerillas. [11]

Both the US and Philippine governments made sure the number of deaths and wounded including civilians as a result of the U.S.-assisted anti-Huk campaign is kept a secret. Suffice it to say, however, that the AFP's intensification of counter-insurgency operations backed by psy-war operations by CIA and Jusmag operatives and advisers, led to the indiscriminate shooting of thousands of civilians. It should be remembered likewise that units of PLA guerillas (known then as Hukbong Mapagpalaya Laban sa Hapon or People's Liberation Against the Japanese) who fought the Japanese forces were deceived of surrendering their arms under an "amnesty program" by the USAFFE right after the war but were later massacred.

It was during the 20-year rule of Ferdinand Marcos (1966-1986) that saw the deepening of U.S. intervention in the Philippines and the intensification of counter-insurgency operations that led to the loss of a large number of civilian lives and the commission of countless human rights violations. Marcos rule saw the surge of nationalist struggles in the Philippines highlighted by the calls for genuine agrarian reform, the dismantling of the U.S. military bases in the Philippines, the advance of democratic rights and civil liberties and many other issues. The economic crisis and intra-elite rivalry that emerged during the early part of the Marcos presidency led to the rightist coup d'etat engineered by Marcos himself and the US – the imposition of martial rule that would end in February 1986 through a people's uprising.

The U.S. government knew beforehand that Marcos would declare martial law and it was no surprise that it would support it by pouring big amounts of economic and military aid. With U.S. military assistance, Marcos built a strong armed forces and police force and a brutal intelligence network all of which he used as an instrument of repression against the Filipino people, to silence his political enemies and to mount numerous and prolonged counter-insurgency operations against both the New People's Army (NPA) and the Moro rebels in southern Philippines.

To the Americans, Marcos held the key to a strong U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia. He served as the U.S.' spokesman in Asia. His presidency was important not only in suppressing the local Marxist armed revolutionary movement but also in endorsing U.S. armed

aggression in the region, particularly in the Indochina war, and elsewhere through the use of its military facilities in the Philippines. Despite – or because of – the fascist dictatorship, U.S. Vice President George Bush, Sr. in a state visit in the Philippines in 1984, congratulated Marcos for "his style of democracy."

There were admissions by top U.S. officials that although U.S. military bases in the Philippines were supposed to defend the Philippines against external aggression, they were also used to support local military forces particularly in the war against the armed revolutionary forces. In 1969, the U.S. Symington Committee revealed the admission by U.S. military commanders of sending supplies, weapons, ammunition and other war material to the AFP for its counter-insurgency campaigns. It was also revealed that the US Agency for International Development (or USAID) and Jusmag were involved through the Military Assistance Program (MAP). [12]

During the Marcos dictatorship, U.S. military support increased through the turnover of Huey gunships, napalm fragmentation bombs and other weapons. While officially U.S. forces were only advising the AFP, they were actually deeply involved in military operations against the NPA. From 1970-1974 alone, about 411 U.S. Special Forces took part in combat operations in several provinces in Luzon, Visayas and Palawan. U.S. Marines were also seen in combat operations in Bataan in 1981-1982. [13]

Many Filipino political prisoners during martial law would learn later, through the admissions of arresting units, that the water cure, electric shock and other torture methods used against them and recently in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq were learned from U.S. military training schools.

The support extended by the U.S. government to Marcos particularly to his armed forces allowed the dictatorship to commit with impunity military and police abuses not only against suspected guerillas but also against civilians, including women and children. The atrocities ranged from illegal arrest, torture, rape, extra-judicial executions and forced disappearances to forced evacuation and hamletting of communities, massacres, and food blockades. These had been amply documented not only by Philippine human rights groups but also by lawyers' groups, Amnesty International, ICRC, the UN Committee on Human Rights, International Commission of Jurists and other reputable organizations. The finding of culpability against Ferdinand Marcos by the U.S. Federal Court in Honolulu in the landmark class suit filed by 10,000 human rights martial law victims attested to such crimes by the dictatorship and the U.S. cannot claim to be innocent of these atrocities.

Those illegally arrested and imprisoned without charges for at least one week totaled about 500,000 while those incarcerated for one month to several years were 70,000. Reports also estimated the number of persons summarily executed and disappeared at more than 100,000. [14] The total number of civilians who were dislocated at the height of military operations throughout the archipelago would reach millions. This is so not only because of the reach and extensiveness of these campaigns but also because many of the rural populations affected were punished several times and have until today remained militarized. The number of displaced persons at the peak of the AFP war against the MNLF separatist rebellion in southern Philippines alone was over one million.

If justice remains elusive to the victims of the Marcos dictatorship, it is equally so during the post-Marcos presidencies from Corazon C. Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos, Joseph Estrada and now, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Aquino supported the renewal of the bases treaty and under

her, the US-supported AFP launched the American-designed "low intensity warfare" doctrine and the total war policy against the NPA and Moro rebels. Ramos was instrumental in restoring and extending U.S. basing rights in the Philippines (that ended with the non-ratification by the Senate of the proposed military bases treaty renewal in 1991) through the midnight signing of the onerous Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) in February 1998 in violation of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. Estrada, who also saw the ratification of the VFA, launched his own total war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Mindanao. In all these presidencies – supposedly under a post-Marcos restored democracy - the number of human rights violations continued on an alarming scale.

It has been under the Macapagal-Arroyo administration that the scale of U.S. aggression in the Philippines has been stepped up particularly by its commitment to U.S. President George W. Bush's "war on terror" and allowing the use of the Philippines as the war's "second front." Macapagal-Arroyo it was who became the first leader in the region to pledge all-out support for the U.S. aggression against Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11 and, later, in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. On Sep. 12 she wrote US president George W. Bush: "We extend whatever support we can muster… We will help in whatever way we can to strengthen the global effort to crush those responsible for this barbaric act." [15] Then on March 20, 2003, the day after the start of the US attack, President Arroyo immediately declared: "We are part of the coalition of the willing… We are part of [the] global coalition against terrorism." [16]

These presidential commitments led to the increase in the number of deployment of U.S. forces in the Philippines in the guise of war games and the inflow of military logistics suspected to be in preparation for a "temporary-permanent" U.S. military presence. They allowed U.S. forces to engage in combat operations against the NPA and Moro rebels in violation of the VFA and the Constitution. Macapagal-Arroyo also allowed the use of Clark, Subic and other airfields and harbors in the Philippines including Batanes, Mactan and Gen. Santos City as staging and logistics base for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the invasion cum occupation of Iraq and as a member of the so-called "Coalition of the Willing," the President Macapagal-Arroyo also sent a Philippine military contingent in the guise of "humanitarian mission." The Philippines is also providing technical assistance in so-called governance/democracy-building efforts. Among others, this has included PNP officers joining in training members of the Iraqi police force and having a team of Iraqis come to the Philippines for a seminar on "democracy" organized by the Philippine Department of Interior and Local Government's (DILG) Local Government Academy. [17]

Although Macapagal-Arroyo, due to public pressure at home, has pulled out the contingent earlier than the termination date of its mission because of the Angelo dela Cruz hostage crisis last July, reports are that another contingent will be sent to Iraq, this time under the guise of the country's commitment to a UN Security Council resolution approved last June in relation to the "turnover" of U.S. control of Iraq to its authorities. It remains as her valuable contribution to the illegal U.S. military occupation of Iraq the deployment of 4,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) who perform military-related auxiliary services and logistical support mostly in U.S. military bases inside Iraq. The deployment of OFWs in Iraq violates the Philippine government's avowed labor-export policy of placing OFWs only in peaceful and secure countries and only for employment purposes. As a result, the OFWs – one of four of whom are women – face the constant threat of military attacks in the midst of the ongoing Iraqi resistance to the U.S. occupation.

Mrs. Macapagal-Arroyo's commitment to Bush in using the Philippines as the "second front" in the war against "terrorism" has given the former colonial ruler the right to develop further the country as a hub for projecting U.S. power in Southeast Asia as well as launching wars of aggression toward the Persian Gulf and other countries. She also violated the principles of the Rome Treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the VFA itself by giving immunity from prosecution before the ICC to U.S. forces in the Philippines. In May 2003, she signed with Bush the US-RP Non-Surrender Agreement, one of over 80 such bilateral agreements the U.S. has with other countries as a precondition for continued U.S. support.

Domestically, however, it has further changed the nature of the civil war by treating the CPP and NPA as well as the MILF as mere "terrorist groups" and hence, subject to criminal laws rather than to well-established doctrines that consider rebellion as a political act. This has given the Armed Forces and the national police a carte blanche to commit further atrocities against NPA hors de combat, suspected sympathizers as well as Moro rebels and their civilian supporters. And yet not a single soldier or policeman has been prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. It was also because of Macapagal-Arroyo's own endorsement and trickery to force the armed Left to capitulate that the United States along with the EU Council and a few other Western allies of the U.S. continue to falsely tag NDFP chief political consultant and the CPP-NPA as "terrorists" in contravention of the 1998 GRP-NDFP bilateral agreement known as Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRHIL) and international law. Her own "war on terror" has terrorized Filipinos quite unprecedently by the continued suppression of their democratic rights and civil liberties including the threat to impose an anti-people, anti-democratic "anti-terrorism law."

Mrs. Macapagal-Arroyo's support for the "war on terror" has virtually made the Philippines an unwilling partner and accomplice to the U.S. wars of aggression not only against Afghanistan and Iraq but other countries targeted by the U.S. in the war blueprint crafted under Bush. She herself stands guilty for violating the independence and sovereignty of these countries as well as the Philippines' 1987 Constitution which mandates a peaceful foreign policy, its own commitment to the United Nations and to international law to use peaceful measures in resolving conflicts between nations and the prohibition of acts of aggression by one state against another.

Clearly, Macapagal-Arroyo's blind support for Bush's "war on terror" relives the collaborative acts of her own predecessors in using the Philippines through the use of U.S. military facilities in not only meddling in local counter-insurgency operations but more so in launching wars of aggression in the region and beyond.

### 3) The Philippines as Staging Base for U.S. Wars of Aggression in Other Countries

Throughout the 20th Century including particularly during the U.S.-engineered Cold War, the U.S. used its military facilities in the Philippines – often in complicity with Filipino presidents - as staging base for wars of aggression in the Far East and other regions. In effect, the Philippines through its presidents committed acts of aggression against sovereign peoples and states that can be classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Such commitments to the U.S. were supposedly governed by several treaties and agreements with the American government including the 1947 MBA, Mutual Defense Pact of 1951, the 1954 Southeast Asian Treaty (Seato) and the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) of 1999. Although these treaties referred to mutual defense cooperation or multilateral security relations in the context of self-defense, they were used by the U.S. often in cooperation with Philippine presidents to launch offensive operations against many countries in the Far East and, later, in the Persian Gulf.

As early as 1900, the U.S. used its military facilities and forces in the Philippines to suppress the "Boxer Rebellion" in China in order to guarantee "open door" for American trade. Then, in 1918-1920, the facilities were used to send U.S. troops in Soviet Siberia and, in 1927, to secure a Western settlement in Shanghai, China.

The use of Clark airbase, Subic naval base and other military installations for launching wars of intervention became more active in the 1950s until 1991. Clark was used to send bombing missions during the Korean War of 1950-1953 and in the bombing of Sumatra during a rebellion by the Indonesian army in 1958. Clark also figured in the deployment of U.S. forces in the Quemoy-Matsu area off the Taiwan Strait.[18]

In violation of the Geneva Agreement of 1954 that sought to recognize the sovereignty of Indochina following the defeat of French colonial forces under the hands of the Vietminh guerillas, the United States began a long war of aggression against the Indochinese people who were fighting for their independence and sovereignty including in Vietnam. From 1955-1986, U.S. military bases in the Philippines were used frequently for bombing missions in the war, the training and deployment of U.S. troops, as communication links as well as for rest and recreation of tired U.S. servicemen. In all, U.S. air missions in Vietnam alone were said to have dropped 25 million tons of bombs or several times more than the total number of bombs dropped by Allied forces during World War II. [19] The U.S. military campaign in Vietnam led to the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians through indiscriminate bombings and strafing, massacres and other crimes against humanity.

Apart from allowing the use of the U.S. bases, Ferdinand Marcos – just like Macapagal-Arroyo today - became an accomplice to committing acts of aggression by sending at least 2,000 Filipino troops to Vietnam under the pretext of engineering construction through the Philippine Civic Action Group (Philcag).

In 1979 at the height of the Iranian Revolution, a number of Iranian students took over the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held as war criminals its occupants including a number of Marines. (The Shah of Iran was then a puppet of the U.S. that in turn supplied his despotic regime with unparalleled military aid.) Subic and Clark figured in U.S. retaliatory measures by the deployment of warships in the Persian Gulf and in a failed commando mission to rescue the war prisoners. The act would be repeated in 1991 when President George Bush, Sr., along with the British military, ordered the bombing of Iraq. Clark and Subic were used for U.S. military missions against Iraq at the time when the Philippines and the U.S. were negotiating for the renewal of the bases treaty.

This presentation about the use of the U.S. military facilities to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity in many countries will not be complete without mentioning the criminal acts committed by U.S. servicemen inside the Philippines itself. In the past, there had been several accounts of U.S. servicemen shooting to death Filipinos for mistaking them for "a wild pig" and other flimsy reasons. Often, criminal charges filed before Philippine courts

proved futile as the suspects would be quickly spirited away by base commanders. From Dec. 1985-Dec. 1986 alone, 258 cases were filed against American servicemen in Olongapo courts. Of the total cases filed, however, 168 were dismissed, three were archived and one resulted in acquittal. For the same period in Angeles City, of 43 criminal cases three were dismissed while nine were classified as "pending arrest" since the accused were flown by U.S. base authorities to another country. [20]

Criminal acts where U.S. servicemen were involved included homicide, assault and physical injuries, rape, drunkenness, malicious mischief and possession of marijuana and other prohibited drugs. One of the worst murders documented was that of a woman by her American serviceman boyfriend. The woman's body was found with part of her uterus scraped out by a broken bottle and with three barbecue sticks stabbed into her vagina. Other suspected killers got away by paying victims' families with a few dollars and sent away by base commanders. [21]

The dire social costs are unimaginable. Sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) were widespread particularly in Olongapo and Angeles where there were about 50,000 "hospitality girls" at the peak of the Vietnam war. It was also in these cities where AIDS infection cases were first reported in the Philippines. Tens of thousands of Amerasian children remain today most of them left for good by U.S. fathers who had long gone. Many people including children have died of leukemia and other incurable diseases as a result of contamination to toxic wastes abandoned at or near the U.S. bases. The U.S. government has refused to either indemnify the victims or to fund the rehabilitation of areas suspected of containing toxic materials.

**Conclusion**

Friends, ladies and gentlemen based on the foregoing: I find the U.S. government accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity it committed and continues to commit against the Filipino people and peoples of other countries in over more than a century of colonial and neo-colonial rule in the Philippines. To this day, the U.S. government has not apologized for the crimes it committed against the Filipinos and peoples of other countries in the region.

Answerable likewise for such similar crimes should be the Philippines' past presidents – including the incumbent – for serving as an accomplice to the litany of barbaric atrocities committed by their patron, the U.S. government. I find it simply disgusting that until today, every person occupying the Philippine presidency is willing to allow a foreign power to continue to infringe into the country's sovereignty and independence by not only allowing the military presence of U.S. forces but also using the Philippines as a hub for launching continuing wars of aggression against independent states in contravention of the country's own Constitution, Geneva Conventions and other international laws.

These violations and atrocities have only tightened U.S. neocolonial control of the Philippines and exacerbated the civil war resulting in the further loss of lives and economic displacement. As a nation, the Philippines remains poor and underdeveloped – and often without dignity and integrity that all independent states on earth are supposed to enjoy.

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