

Press Statement

# Philippines: Toxic Waste Comes with US-Military Presence

Saturday 10 November 2012, by [KPD](#) (Date first published: 10 November 2012).

The Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya believes that while it is Glenn Defense Marine Asia that is legally answerable for the dumping of toxic wastes in Subic Bay, the root cause of this particular problem is the Philippine government's decision to allow US troops to return, contrary to the spirit of several provisions of the Philippine Constitution.

The latest dumping of toxic wastes that were collected from US naval vessels that participated in the latest US-RP war exercise happened early last month. This is just one case showing the adverse effects of US military presence' on the environment. On July 12, 2010, the Philippine Star published a photo of US soldiers detonating tons of defective ammunition inside a logging concession in Zamboanga del Norte and another photo of the billowing smoke coming from it. US military presence and especially their war exercises, especially those using live ammunition and bombs, are certainly destroying the ecosystem.

KPD is putting the government to blame for its neglect of duties not only in securing the environment but more so in protecting the lives and health of the people. But not only negligence, the government could be guilty of connivance! It is revealed that the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement attempted to block the investigation last year by the Environmental Management Bureau on reports of toxic waste dumping by the same US military waste contractor, Glenn Defense Marine Asia.

The government must not forget that hazardous wastes left from years of the bases' operations have caused deformities and lethal ailments among residents around Subic and Clark. In 1998, drums of chemical wastes were found in Clark in Angeles City and 21 out of 24 sites sampled for water by an environmental advocacy group had at least one pollutant that exceeded drinking water standards. In Subic, 11 out of 44 sites were contaminated at levels exceeding the standards of US Environmental Protection Agency. The US government has turned a deaf ear towards appeals for compensation of medical assistance for the victims of toxic waste pollution. And it has not cleaned up as its policy of no responsibility has remained.

The US military has a notorious record when it comes to managing its waste problem. In Afghanistan, they depend solely on their military contractors for their garbage disposal, which have resorted to open pit burning of all their solid waste.

A study placed the average waste of an individual US soldier at 4.5 kilograms. Imagine the bulk of waste – from many military exercises conducted annually in the Philippines – that a service contractor like the Glenn Defense Maritime Asia has to dispose. That would be an enormous amount of pollution of Philippine soil, air and water.

Truly, aside from infringing on our national sovereignty, from serving as magnet for attacks by US' enemies and from making our women and girls more prone to military sexual violence, US military

presence is continuing to give the Philippines its 'toxic legacy'.

The termination of the Mutual Defense Treaty, the VFA and the MLSA is long overdue. The Filipino people should assert their sovereign will before we die either from poisoning or explosion or both! assert their sovereign will before we die either from poisoning or explosion or both!

November 10, 2012

**Kilusan para sa Pambansang Demokrasya** (KPD, Mouvement for nationalism and democracy)

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