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the global rush for farmland and peoples' struggles against it



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'What gains is Palace talking about?'

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The Daily Tribune (Manila) | 21 August 2009

By Charlie V. Manalo

"What should the people be grateful for?" asked a militant lawmaker yesterday in response to Malacañang's [boasting](#) of the so-called gains of President Arroyo's trips to the United States, United Arab Emirates, China, South Korea, Japan and other parts of the world.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said "there's nothing to be grateful on the so-called gains of Arroyo's globe-trotting spree. In fact, looking into the types of investment, these could further flame the mounting people's anger over Arroyo's and her entourage's lavish dinners."

Mariano issued the statement after Press Secretary Cerge Remonde yesterday released a "spreadsheet" showing the so-called "gains" of the President's trips abroad.

Remonde's list bragged about \$6.2 billion in investments and financial assistance from the US which included \$129 million worth of military assistance starting from the Estrada administration in 1999 until this year, and aid to Mindanao amounting to \$312 million from 2001 to 2008.

In visits to parts of Asia and the Middle East in 2007, the Palace said the country got \$873.4 million worth of "sales, investments and grants." A similar trip in 2008 generated \$399.9 million.

Following the countries listed in Malacañang's "spreadsheet," Mariano cited investments in the country involving the "sell-out of millions of hectares of lands" which he said "are direct and indirect results of Arroyo's visit to the countries listed in the 'spreadsheet'" as follows:

(a) June 2008 state visit to the US, 35-year supply contract with Libby's Fruits worth \$500 million in Bicol and Eastern Visayas, and another contract with Abundant Bio-Fuels which intends to invest \$200 million in Northern Mindanao.

(b) December 2008 state visit to Qatar, Arroyo announced the possibility of leasing at least 100,000 hectares of agricultural lands to the emirate (GRAIN, an international NGO, reported that a \$50-million project by the United Arab Emirates to develop a 3,000-hectare banana plantation in Mindanao, fish and cereal farms in Luzon and a pineapple cannery in Camarines Norte.)

(c) The aborted RP-China Farm Deals, involving 2 million hectares of lands.

(d) The land lease contract entered into by the DENR and PCA with Bio-Energy North Luzon Inc. to a subsidiary of the Japanese Pacific Bio-fields Corp., involving 600,000 hectares of land in the Ilocos Region for the production of coco-based bio-fuels.

(e) The reported land lease contract entered into by the local governments of Mindoro with Jeonnam Feedstock Ltd., a company owned by the southwestern province of South Jeolla, South Korea, covers 94,000 hectares of land for the production of corn for feed production.

(f) \$1 billion "food security" program covering 1 million hectares to be undertaken by Philippine beverage and food conglomerate San Miguel Corp. in joint venture with Malaysia's Kuok Group.

"It appears that offering our lands to foreign investors has always figured in the official agenda of Arroyo's numerous state visits to other countries since assuming office, presumably in line with her "2 million hectares agribusiness development program," Mariano said.

"We hold Arroyo principally responsible for the increasing global land-grabbing in the country that imperils farmers' rights to the land and people's hunger," said Mariano who also chairs the militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

Source: [Daily Tribune](#)

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Valmer

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-  Kerry

Very interesting work/list. So what is the pathway forward? What are the policy options? Social movement?
25 May 2018

-  John

Of all the agricultural land in Australia suitable for growing food what percentage is now owned by foreign investors? 5, 10, 15% or more and when do y...

25 May 2018

-  boucard

Comment se procurer ce film pour des débats publics. Peuples solidaires, association à laquelle j'appartiens. a organisé la semaine dernière une r...

11 May 2017

-  Elijah

Was pleased to read your article. I am however surprised that the story of the frustration that DFL is going through with the investor being harassed b...

10 Feb 2017

-  sebastian

Excelente trabajo de investigación. Se los agradezco mucho. Consultaré todas las fuentes que ustedes proporcionan para tener un informe más acabado c...

09 Dec 2016

-  Anonymous

La critique est facile mais l'art difficile; j'ai rarement vu des ONG créer des emplois et contribuer au développement socio-économique autant que d...

29 Nov 2016

-  Christopher Ajua

The same political and economic problems that existed in Cameroon during these crises persist and continue to plague the lives of Cameroonians, especia...

26 Nov 2016